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MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

VOLUME 11 | ISSUE 9 | JANUARY 2018

## Women in Government

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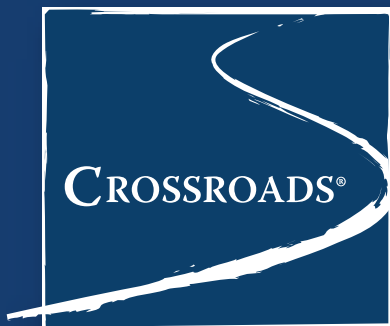
  
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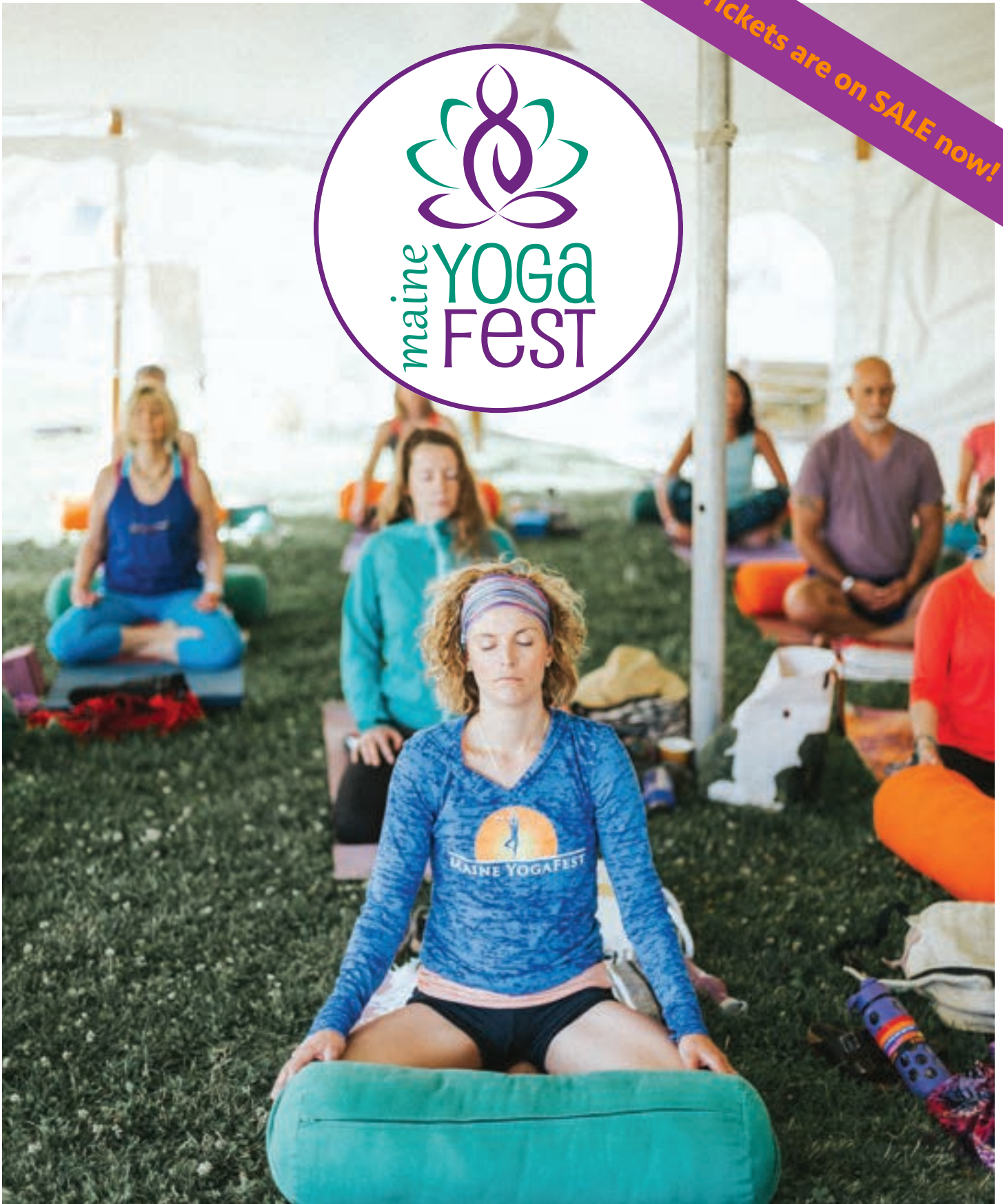
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# Our Voices

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*Lee Hews*

Senator Susan Collins has a message for Maine women: “Go for it.”

Collins, arguably one of the most influential women in the country right now, sat down with us in her Bangor home several weeks ago, in between voting, long sessions and committee meetings. Sen. Collins has a long and successful career in both state and federal government, and while we may agree or disagree with some or all of the votes she casts, she is a Maine woman who has made a huge impact in government. In our meeting, we found her to be charming and approachable as she spoke to us about her journey, some obstacles along the way and some solid inspiration and insight. She wants more women to “go for it, and take the risk” to run for office, telling us that, “not having a sufficient number of women makes a difference in public policy.” Collins goes on to talk about women as strong collaborators and pragmatists. You can read more in our feature on page 16.

As we go to press on this issue of Maine Women Magazine, we are reading headlines and hearing dozens of voices every day about “women rising” and women finally being heard. It is very timely for us to be publishing our first Women in Government issue, which is all about some of the Maine women who use their voices to make a difference in policy on many levels, here at home and nationally.

Maine state Sen. Amy Volk was successful in getting legislation passed a few years ago for victims of sex trafficking. Volk says sex trafficking is a modern day form of slavery and she worked hard to have impact when most people didn't believe that sex trafficking even existed in Maine. Read more about Volk and what she is working on now on page 36.

Kathryn McInnis-Misenor does not work in

state government, but she has spent her life fighting for the rights of people with disabilities. If McInnis-Misenor sees an injustice, she acts on it. At 21, she was elected to Saco City Council, and at the time was one of a few people with a disability ever elected to public office. Because Saco City Hall was not wheelchair accessible, McInnis-Misenor made it her mission to change that. And she didn't stop there, taking her mission to the national level. Read more on page 30.

Maulian Dana, Ambassador to the Penobscot Nation, was raised by strong women and her father was Penobscot chief when she was a teenager, so advocating for her people runs through her blood. Dana uses her voice to educate, raise awareness and create change for the Penobscot people in Maine. She tells us “social change isn't easy,” but she is more than ready and dedicated to the cause. Read more on page 26.

We don't all choose to use our voices in a public way. Many of us stick to creating change for ourselves, perhaps in raising our children or being active in our neighborhoods or religious communities. Sometimes just pointing out an injustice or helping a friend to raise her voice can be effective. We all can make a difference and create positive change in our daily lives. When we hear a sexist, racist or discriminatory comment, we can speak up. And, if you do want to venture out a bit, we've got a lot of information in this issue of Maine Women Magazine on how you can make a difference by getting involved. And, as always, there's plenty more tucked into the rest of the magazine, including great recipes, things to do and places to go. Let us know what you think, connect with us via email, phone or social media anytime.

## ON THE COVER

U.S. Senator Susan Collins learned early that you can't stay on the sidelines if you want to get things done. Read more on page 16.

*Photo by Lauryn Hottinger*





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AT THE HELM

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# Telling Stories

*Suzi Pond launched Redbird Media Group  
to tell stories that matter*

Written by Mercedes Grandin | Photos by Molly Haley



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Using her company to tell stories that matter, Suzi Pond says she's honored to have found work she can get behind and that has an impact.

**S**uzi Pond began sowing the seeds of her own video production company more than a year before she felt ready to leave her full-time job. In 2015, she was the chief storyteller at United Way of Greater Portland. But on evenings and weekends, she sought out independent clients and side projects, shooting and editing film in her spare time. It was an exhausting but necessary effort to transition to running her own company full time.

"I had faith that my work was going to resonate with people, but you don't know until you put yourself out there," says Pond, who is 39 and lives in Freeport. She launched Redbird Media Group as a full-time operation in November 2016. "I knew I had made the right decision when, after I left [the full-time job at United Way], my son said to me, 'You're not

always in the office.'"

The leap to business ownership came after years of skill building. As a journalist and editor for Boston Magazine and Philadelphia Magazine, Pond came to Maine in 2004 with a skill set that included coding and experience with digital platforms, an asset many journalists at the time didn't have. In 2007, she began working for the Portland Press Herald as the newsroom's first online content producer, helping them transition from print to the digital era and training journalists in blogging and multimedia production. It was there she developed her passion for video production, a medium not many print journalists were then working with. An alumna of the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies' radio program, Pond also developed a love for sound and storytelling, but she saw a bigger market and

more professional opportunities in film.

After five years at the newspaper, Pond became chief storyteller at United Way of Greater Portland, helping create audio and video stories to support the nonprofit's work and get its message out more effectively to new audiences. The job honed her desire to "be able to effect change and have an opinion on the content," she says. "I also wanted to help organizations express themselves in a unique way." She learned to make do with minimal resources and a small crew, which she says gave her a sense of independence and freedom that were helpful when starting her own business.

Running a one-woman business is no easy act. One of Pond's biggest challenges has been balancing the planning, filming, editing and management of her multiple projects—



and learning when to delegate. “Don’t be afraid to ask for help when you need it,” she says. She has sought out and relied on a network of talented local independent contractors, such as Portland lighting expert Phil Cormier, who assists with lighting for her shoots. “I felt like I needed to know everything about lighting, but I don’t. I know people who are really good at what they do and when I finally asked for help, it took that weight off my shoulders and was liberating.” Pond does all of her own film editing, but has learned that “collaborating with and trusting people—and developing a working style together—allows my product to be so much better.”

Pond also needed to carve out a space at home where she could work undistracted by her husband and two young children. “As a working mom, I needed a space to create, so I took over a guest room at my house as my office,” she says. “Now I have a beautiful work space that’s peaceful and necessary.”

Pond acknowledges herself as a black sheep (or a red bird) in a male-dominated film production market. “Because of my background in technology and web development, I was used to being the only female in the room. That said, initially it was intimidating to try to enter a market where I could point to no one and see a role model in the field or seek advice about balancing the business with being a mom,” she says. “I don’t believe women always have to have women mentors, but if you can find people you relate to on many levels, it can make things easier. I’m pretty much self-taught, and often the men in this business know more than me.”

Her clients include Wolfe’s Neck Farm, MaineHealth, Telling Room and Girls on the Run Maine, Bangor Savings Bank and Maine Community Foundation.

The company’s logo is a red bird that’s a fusion between a scarlet tanager and a cardinal. The title came from a Mary Oliver poem Pond loves, “Red Bird.” The first stanza reads, “Red bird came all winter firing up the landscape as nothing else could.” For Pond, the red bird represents herself “standing out and being bold in a climate that’s not always welcoming. The red bird is about having hope and resilience and fostering empowerment,” she says. “I finally feel like I found that thing I want to do that fulfills me and allows me to give back. I feel incredibly proud and grateful to be able to do that.”

Standing out hasn’t prevented Pond from being successful and pushing herself to learn and grow in her field. She feels comfortable experimenting and learning in a field that’s constantly evolving and changing. “I was motivated to find something I could get behind and feel like I could change the world and make an impact. I needed to honor that this is a medium I can and am doing that in.”

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

#### WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Are you (or do you know) a woman who is running a business in Maine? We’d love to hear more for a possible feature in Maine Women Magazine. **Email [letters@mainewomenmagazine.com](mailto:letters@mainewomenmagazine.com).**

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# Beat the Winter Blues

*7 fun things to do this January*

Written by **Amy Paradysz**

# 3

## Ice Bar

*Portland Harbor Hotel,  
468 Fore St., Portland*

Jan. 25–27, 5–9 p.m. | Tickets are \$30 for Thursday, \$35 for Friday or Saturday

**[brownpapertickets.com/event/3176221](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/3176221)**

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Photo courtesy of L.L. Bean



Photo courtesy of Jamie Walter

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**[llbean.com](http://llbean.com)**

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## Sugarloaf Charity Ball

*King Pine Room, Base Lodge,  
Sugarloaf, Carrabasset Valley*

Saturday, Jan. 27, 5–10 p.m. | Tickets are \$100

**[sugarloafcharitysummit.org](http://sugarloafcharitysummit.org)**

The Sugarloaf Charity Ball, the biggest Sugarloaf bash of the season, aims to raise a mountain of money to support Maine Cancer Foundation, the Martha B. Webber Breast Care Center and—new this year!—the Dempsey Centers. The Ball includes a family-style dinner and silent and live auctions. Afterward, enjoy the music upstairs in the Widemaker Lounge.

## 2 Maine Video Portland (MVP) Awards

*One Longfellow Square, 181 State St., Portland*

Friday, Jan. 19, 7–9:15pm | Tickets are \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door

**[musicvideoportland.com](http://musicvideoportland.com)**

Remember the MTV Video Music Awards? Maine's first video music awards show goes way back there for its inspiration. Judges will have narrowed the entries to the top three finalists in each of nine categories, then the audience gets to judge. Dress for the red carpet—rocker, punk, retro glam, whatever feels fun—enjoy the videos and vote for your favorites. Host Cherry Lemonade, local first lady of drag, will award the coveted Golden Lobster.







Photo courtesy of Matthew Murphy

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## “Shaping Sound: After the Curtain”

*Merrill Auditorium, 20 Myrtle St., Portland*

Friday, Jan. 26, 8 p.m. | Tickets are \$45–\$70

[porttix.com](http://porttix.com)

If you know Emmy Award-winning choreographer Travis Wall from “So You Think You Can Dance,” you can imagine how incredible this contemporary dance production will be. “Visual musicians” tell the story of a man fighting to find his creative voice after the death of his one true love.

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## “Tell Me the Truth: Exploring Cross-Racial Conversations”

*R. W. Traip Academy, 12 Williams Ave., Kittery*

Sunday, Jan. 28, 2–4 p.m. | Admission by donation

[surjism.org](http://surjism.org)

Shay Stewart-Bouley, from the blog “Black Girl in Maine,” and Debby Irving, author of “Waking Up White,” will talk about how they became friends and maintain their cross-racial friendship, then open up the dialogue to the audience. Hosted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Southern Maine/Seacoast.

## Maine Women’s Expo

*Hilton Garden Inn Auburn,  
14 Great Falls Plaza, Auburn*

7

Saturday, February 3, noon to 5 p.m. | Tickets are \$5

[mainewomenexpo.com](http://mainewomenexpo.com)

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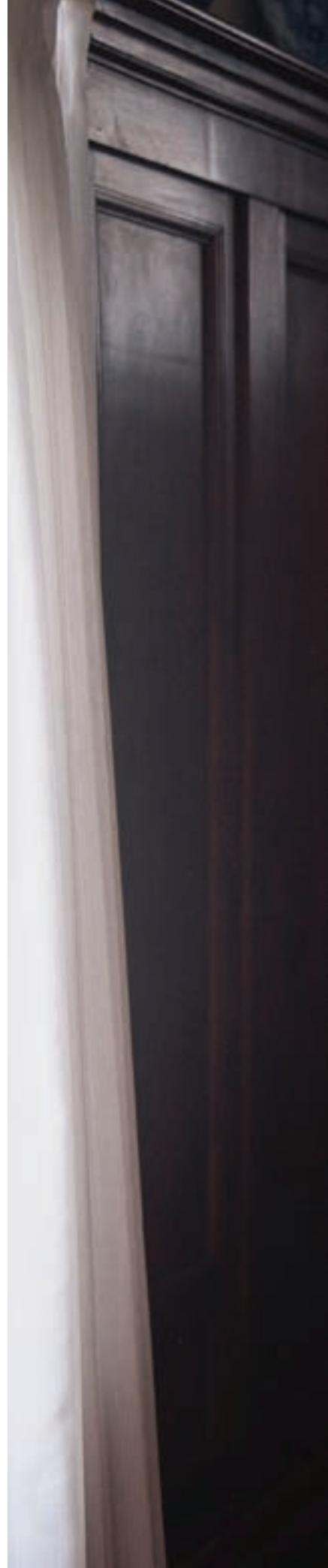
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# CENTER STAGE

**Maine's influential U.S. Sen. Susan Collins  
on women's positive role in government**

Written by **Patricia McCarthy** | Photos by **Lauryn Hottinger**







**D**uring a dental exam when she was about 10 years old, U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, told her dentist that she might like to do what he did for a living.

“I was firmly told, ‘You can’t be a dentist! Girls lack the physical strength to pull out teeth!’” Collins recalls during a recent interview from her home in Bangor.

She jokes that dentistry certainly hasn’t lost anything by her lack of participation, but that being told she was limited because of being female made an indelible impression. It made her want to spread the opposite message at every opportunity.

“I still love visiting schools and telling young girls, especially, that they can grow up and be anything they want, including a U.S. senator.” And, she says, that message is still relevant for grown women, too, especially those considering a run for public office.

“I’m always telling women to go for it and don’t be afraid to take the risk. What I hear over and over from women is ‘I don’t feel quite ready.’ I’ve

Trustees member. Her father served in both the Maine House and Senate.

Her parents taught her that staying on the sidelines wouldn’t work if you want to get things done, she says.

Her next important influence was the legendary Margaret Chase Smith, the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress, who had a powerful impact on an excited but nervous 18-year-old making her first trip to Washington, D.C. Collins was one of two Mainers chosen for the Senate Youth Program for outstanding students interested in public service.

“It was 1971, and I’d never been on an airplane, never met a senator. We flew to Washington to meet our senators, Edmund Muskie and Margaret Chase Smith. Sen. Muskie was very nice, took the generic photo and sent me on my way. Sen. Smith invited me to her office and talked with me for two hours! That’s hard to imagine now as my day is broken into 15-minute segments and I would’ve been interrupted 18 times!”

Collins, who framed Smith’s initial invite and the letter Smith wrote in response to her thank-you note, says she left that meeting thinking

**“I HOPE FOR THE DAY WHEN IT’S  
UNREMARKABLE THAT THERE ARE  
SO MANY WOMEN IN THE SENATE.”**

never heard that from a man! Had I not taken the risk again after losing to my dear friend Angus King in 1994 (in the race for governor), I’d never have achieved my dream of serving Maine.”

Collins says she is more than aware of the real obstacles women face beyond that lack of confidence. “I do know how hard it is. When I was running in 1994, I gave up my job at Husson (University) and couldn’t afford health insurance. I didn’t know how I’d pay for anything. I’m not exaggerating. I do recognize there are a lot of real obstacles to running, especially for women. But if you really want it, you have to have faith in your own abilities and get help from some role models like I did. I’ve learned the importance of good role models.”

Collins didn’t have to look far for encouraging influences as she started to consider public service. Both parents served as mayor of Caribou, where she grew up. Her mother was on the school board and served Maine in many capacities, including as a University of Maine Board of

“women could do anything.” Collins sought Smith’s advice over the years and considered her a “great, gracious and encouraging” mentor.

“She always referred to herself as a senator, not a woman senator,” Collins says. “I hope for the day when it’s unremarkable that there are so many women in the Senate. Not having a sufficient number of women makes a difference in public policy.

“I’ve found women senators to be more collaborative than their male counterparts. I think they’re more pragmatic and more interested in getting to a solution in general.”

So Collins has carried on the tradition of another mentor—retired Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Maryland—of bringing together the 21 women currently serving in the U.S. Senate for dinner every five or six weeks.

Whoever hosts pays, and Collins hosted her last one at the Library of Congress.

“These dinners build bonds of trust. We get to know each other as hu-



Patricia McCarthy interviews Sen. Susan Collins at Collins' Bangor home.

man beings. And there are three rules: No staff. We can talk policy but it's not a time to get work done. And...no leaks to anyone outside the room."

"We talk about family, the challenges of living in two places, about how we can be more effective. When I was brand new, Barbara, though I was not of her party, took me under her wing. She taught me things about how I could get projects funded for Maine. I knew the procedural, but she taught me the behind-the-scenes—to write a letter to the chair and ranking member of a subcommittee, to let them know I wanted to be a productive member of Congress, to have my staff follow up on meetings, to speak up. I wouldn't have known to do some of these things without her guidance."

This kind of cross-party collaboration and support is especially important now, Collins says, when the country is "much more divided" than when she began, when "hyper-partisanship" is the norm and "there's been a coarsening in public dialogue."

"It's been challenging for people like me who believe in compromise."

Asked what's been most satisfying in her Senate career, Collins says she's proud of work she's done on behalf of veterans in Bangor, toward the revitalization of Bangor's waterfront, and on public policy issues related to health care, homeland security, and funding for diabetes and Alzheimer's research.

"And I know that my efforts to bring people together—senators of both parties—makes a difference. It resulted in a tripling of funding for diabetes, for example."

On what drives her now, after two decades in Washington:

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“I don’t know that it’s really different from when I started. It’s the same commitment to wanting to make a difference. In the arena of government, you do have the ability to affect people’s lives.”

And asked what she has sacrificed or if she has any regrets, Collins says she, like fellow women in Congress, often has struggled to maintain a healthy balance.

“I haven’t always gotten the home-work balance right. My family has always said I work too hard, too many hours. And that’s more evident now. My parents are both in their 90s, and my father has Alzheimer’s. I’ve often felt guilty about not getting up there enough.”

When she has the rare chance to relax, she chooses quiet.

“I love our camp on Cold Stream Pond in Enfield. I love going kayaking on the glassy clear water, and I recently finally decided to leave my cell phone behind when I kayak. That’s made a big difference. And I love to cook.”

What’s on the menu?

“Ah, I have an excellent recipe for slow-cooked spare ribs on the grill from (U.S. Sen.) John McCain. Then there’d be roasted potatoes, fresh corn on the cob, a salad and, for dessert, Melt-In-Your-Mouth Maine Blueberry Cake.”

*Patricia McCarthy is a long-time writer and editor. She has three daughters, lives in Cape Elizabeth, and also has a photography business ([patriciamccarthy.com](http://patriciamccarthy.com)).*



U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, who has served in the Senate since 1997, at her home in Bangor.







Mattie Daughtry was elected to represent her hometown of Brunswick in the Maine House of Representatives in 2012. She was 25 and, at the time, the youngest representative in the state.



# JUST RUN




**Mattie Daughtry wants young women's voices to be heard**

Written by **Bailey O'Brien** | Photos by **Lauryn Hottinger**

**S**tate Rep. Mattie Daughtry, D-Brunswick, has simple advice for young women considering entering politics: “Do it. Just run.” If you’re anything like her, you just might win.

In 2012, Daughtry was elected to represent her hometown of Brunswick in the Maine House of Representatives. She was 25 and, at the time, the youngest woman in the Maine Legislature. “It’s definitely not what I thought I’d be doing when I turned 25,” Daughtry laughs. She graduated from Smith College in 2009 with a degree in studio arts, a passion for photography and a love for all things Julia Child. These days, she has her own photography business (Matthea Daughtry Media), an upcoming Brunswick-based brewery (Moderation Brewing), and a passion for whipping up her favorite Child recipes (crêpes suzette, in particular). Well, all that plus a thriving political career in Augusta.

“I always thought I’d want to get involved in politics, but at a later age. I didn’t think it was something available to someone in their early 20s,” she says. “When the seat became available, I just realized there was so much at stake. I was passionate not only about my hometown but also about Maine and wanting to make a difference. It was the perfect time.”







Rep. Mattie Daughtry has a lot going on in addition to her political career. She stands in front of the future home of Moderation Brewery on Maine Street in Brunswick, which she is opening with fellow Brunswick resident Philip Welsh.

“EVERYONE HAS SOME PIECE OF POLICY THEY’RE PASSIONATE ABOUT OR A LIFE EXPERIENCE THEY CAN BRING TO THE TABLE NO ONE ELSE WILL.”

Daughtry’s political career officially began in 2012, but her political activism began long before her name appeared on a ballot. “Every election since I can remember, my parents would have me volunteering and doing voter registration,” she says. “I had a lot of really amazing women (and men) around me from an early age who got me passionate about politics and social justice.” One of those women is Daughtry’s godmother, who served as a state representative in Daughtry’s youth.

She became familiar with the ins and outs of the State House before her appointment, first as a page for her godmother and again just before her election. “I worked for an organization called Maine’s Majority that did a lot of work on Maine politics,” she says. “I had been up recently in the State House doing legislative research and following bills.” Once she was elected, “I thought, ‘Oh, I’m familiar with the building, that will help lessen the learning curve.’”

Did it? Daughtry laughs. “Nothing can really compare to when you first get elected,” she says. “Some of my colleagues described it

as being put in front of a fire hydrant as they open it with just how much is coming at you.” However, the pressure didn’t deter Daughtry. In keeping with her character, she embraced the chaos. “That’s one of the reasons I wanted to do it. I’m a lifelong learner. I’m always curious. But even thinking I was prepared...you’re never truly prepared for everything that goes along with this.”

To ease her transition, many of her colleagues and role models rallied around her. “When I announced my campaign, the amazing women who’ve run at an early age, like Emily Cain, Hannah Pingree and even Olympia Snowe, were all really supportive,” she says. And now, at age 30, Daughtry wants to empower young female politicians in that same way.

“Maine actually has a really nice tradition of younger reps, but the catch is we don’t have many young women. Right now, there are only two of us in the Legislature.” Maggie O’Neil of Saco finally usurped Daughtry’s title of youngest representative in 2016, “which I was very glad about, but there should be more,” she says.

Beyond her education policy work (she’s an active member of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs), Daughtry devotes her time to encouraging other young women to join her in politics, often by going straight to the schools. “I’ll ask the students, ‘Who wants to run for office?’ When the young girls raise their hands, I say to them: ‘Don’t lose that dream. Make sure you don’t lose that dream,’ ” she says. “We need more young women.”

The proof is in the numbers: according to legislature.maine.gov, just 34.4 percent of Maine legislators are women, and a minute percentage are 30 or younger. Daughtry wants young women’s voices to be heard, whether it’s as congresswomen, state representatives, city councilors or school committee members. “Everyone has something to offer,” she says. “Everyone has some piece of policy they’re passionate about or a life experience they can bring to the table no one else will.”

And, according to Daughtry, the first step is to “do it. Just run.”

***Bailey O’Brien is a Portland-based freelance writer and editor. In her spare time, she can be found in tiny bookstores, on top of mountains or beside the ocean.***

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# AN ENDURING FIGHT

**Penobscot Ambassador Maulian Dana  
learned early on to speak her truth**

Written by **Lori Douglas Clark** | Photos by **Laurn Hottinger**





**M**aulian Dana feels the voices of her ancestors thrumming through her blood and bones. Recently appointed as Ambassador to the Penobscot Nation, she endeavors to honor the past and address present-day tribal issues—all while keeping her eyes focused on the future.

“I come from a long line of tribal leaders, and I was raised by strong women,” Dana says. “Both of my grandmothers had leadership positions in the tribe, and my father was Penobscot chief when I was a teenager. Seeing my dad’s experiences as chief—there were some dramatic and scary moments—helped shape who I am today.”

Soft-spoken and insightful, Dana, 33, took the reins of leadership at an early age. After serving a year on the Penobscot Tribal Council (the tribe’s decision-making board), the newly created ambassador position presented itself. “The work I’ve been doing for most of my life led up to this. [The job] feels like a perfect fit and I am grateful to be chosen,” she says.

Sworn in as ambassador in September, Dana has embraced all aspects of the position. From talking with civic and school groups to meeting with politicians and government officials, she uses a multi-faceted approach to strengthen the political profile of the Penobscot Nation.

**“SOCIAL CHANGE ISN’T EASY, BUT THIS IS A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT.”**

“Maulian is a tireless advocate for our people,” says Donna Loring, Dana’s great-aunt and former tribal representative to the Legislature. “She has vision and imagination along with intelligence. I consider her the consummate diplomat.”

In the very public role as ambassador, Dana carries on work that began in her teens and now unfolds on a larger canvas. She has been instrumental in the push to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People’s Day, educating town councils and the public on the history of genocide and mistreatment of Maine’s native people. Many cities—including Portland, Brunswick and Orono—have passed Indigenous People’s Day, and the momentum continues.

“Social change isn’t easy, but this is a marathon, not a sprint,” she says.

Dana may be best known as the local founder of the “Not Your Mascot/Maine” movement in Skowhegan and other towns. She clearly remembers how it began one winter day in her early teens, watching the televised state basketball tournament with her father.

“It was the Warriors vs. the Indians. People were covered in fake war paint, whooping and dancing in a really offensive way,” she says. “I turned to my dad and said, ‘Is that how they think of us?’ That was my wake-up call.”

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By the time she was 16 and a student at John Bapst High School, Dana began visiting schools and participating in panel discussions, explaining that Indian mascots demean her heritage. She often faced boos, catcalls and angry shouts, but the experiences strengthened her resolve. Few Indian mascots remain in the state today, and she intends to persist until they are all eradicated.

“I learned early on to speak my truth,” she says. “I know Indian mascots are harmful and disrespect our culture. When things get hard, I remember facing those angry crowds when I was a teenager, and I find my courage.”

Other pressing issues that came with the ambassador job include the tribe’s struggle over watershed rights to the Penobscot River, the opioid crisis and a recent surge in overt racism. Driving all of her work is the enduring fight for recognition of the Penobscot Nation’s sovereignty.

“Maulian is persistent. Beneath that quiet exterior lies the spirit of a badger,” says Loring, whom Dana names as an influential mentor. “She comes from a long line of Wabanaki women who have fought for social justice for our people.”

Through her parents and extended family, Dana’s childhood was steeped in the language and culture of the Penobscot tribe. Today she lives with her young daughters on Indian Island where she was raised; her mother Julia is the long-time teacher at Indian Island School.

Serving as ambassador to the Penobscot Nation can be both exhilarating and daunting. Dana draws on her spiritual connection with the land and water to sustain her. “I feel so fortunate to live on Indian Island. This community nourishes me,” she says. “When I walk in the forest and sit by the river, I can feel my ancestors with me.”

Grounded in her culture and guided by her own quiet courage, Maulian Dana hopes to help make the future brighter not only for her daughters, but for all the children of the Penobscot Nation.

**Lori Douglas Clark is a journalist, poet and community volunteer who lives with her family in Readfield.**

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# WHY GET INVOLVED?

**Here's why these Maine women made politics a part of their lives**

Written by **Lucinda Hannington**

*People come to politics for reasons that are personal and unique. Their stories of how they came to serve and the roles in which they serve speak to a diversity of paths to becoming a force for change within our communities.*

**Lauren Supica, 37, Bangor, City Councilor**

"I work in food service. I wait tables and I tend bar, and in the city of Bangor, 6,160 people work in food service. That's one-fifth of our population and that is definitely a voice that needs to be heard on council. We aren't just in a job that you do to go to college then quit and move on. There's a lot of people who choose this as a career. We are buying houses in the area, we are starting businesses in the area and we need to be heard; our voices are valid. We know that women tend to be more reluctant to run for office, and making the choice to run was a long process for me. Having a diverse group accurately representing our population is how we ensure a robust democracy. Being involved, especially on a local level, is one of the best and most rewarding ways to enact change and better your community."

**Ashley McCurry, 30, Portland, Finance Director for the Maine Democratic Party**

"I was very active as a student at the University of Southern Maine. It was infuriating to me that the students weren't getting involved. People tend to get involved when something affects them, not so much when you're trying to warn them about what might happen. After being a student leader, I went through Emerge (a training program that seeks to increase the number of Democratic women in public office) thinking I would run for office. And nine years later I'm still here as a fundraiser. Politics is strange in that the work is run by young people. Party staffers are young people because they're willing to work 90 hours a week, knocking on doors. I'm technically old for political staffers because I'm 30."

"There are still so few women in politics. You can't be what you can't see. We are getting more leadership, it is changing a little bit, but we're still not half represented, even though we're half the population. Having women there starts to set the precedent that women are there, doing the work effectively, and people will stop comparing women to the men who were there before. A lot of young women aren't seeing a gender gap when they're right out of college, but then they get to a mid-career mark and they realize the upper level positions are dominated by men. Representation has to constantly be a priority, and it shouldn't be on the one woman in the room (as is often the case) to carry the burden of representing all women."

**Lois Galgay Reckitt, 72, South Portland, Representative for House District 31**

"My political interests began watching my parents' arguments over the political divides in Boston in the 50s and 60s. That interest grew in the 60s while in college—and bloomed in the women's movement in the 70s. As I struggled to advance the cause of equality and justice for women, it became clear that politics—and the men who controlled that sector—must learn to listen to women and the realities of our lives. My path to political activism was through organizing and the promise of feminism to make the world a better place. I devoted my 'free' time to that cause and miraculously, upon retirement, Social Security enables me to take the leap. My current service in the Maine Legislature representing part of South Portland, albeit frustrating in the current 'climate,' has enabled me to be heard, and I hope to move Maine forward towards economic and social justice."

*Lucinda Hannington is a transplant to Maine from Vermont. She is an avid reader, cook, eater and lover of all things historical who lives in Portland with her husband and dog.*







# RABBLE-ROUSER

**Activist Kathryn McInnis-Misenor fights for the rights of people with disabilities and injustice**

Written by **Amy Paradysz** | Photographed by **Lauryl Hottinger**

“I was a working-class child, and I saw the income inequalities around me,” says Kathryn McInnis-Misenor, 59, of Saco. “As a reader of history, I came to hate all injustice. As a teenager, I knew I could take action and make a difference in the world, and I did. And I have never stopped, and I never will.”

Of all the injustices McInnis-Misenor has fought to right, the closest to her heart has been rights for people with disabilities. A quarter-century after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, President Obama invited her to the White House, and she brought her daughter Sara, who is now 18.

“Sara is hearing impaired, so to bring her to the White House and to hear her say, ‘Mom, what you all did is incredible’—she understood that her life had been changed because of those who had fought before her,” McInnis-Misenor says. “That was one of the proudest moments of my life.”

“The first time McInnis-Misenor made national headlines, she was surprised to be newsworthy. It was 1980 and she’d been elected to Saco City Council. At 21, she was the nation’s youngest person to be elected to public office—not to mention the youngest woman and one of the only people with a disability elected to municipal office at that time. And Saco

Kathryn McInnis-Misenor fights to right all kinds of injustices, but the closest to her heart has been rights for people with disabilities.



City Hall wasn't wheelchair accessible—yet.

"I won the fight," McInnis-Misenor says. "They moved the meetings, and soon we made City Hall accessible."

Kathy was the sixth of a dozen kids in a Scottish-Irish family in Saco that had been justice-minded for generations. "I was an active 5-year-old," McInnis-Misenor says, explaining that with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, she went from using bandages to crutches to a wheelchair. "When I was no longer able to stand, I shucked corn or fed and changed the babies. When people suggested I go to an institution, Mom said no, they wanted me to be strong and independent."

The family made the school district hire private tutors, because the

Saco schools weren't wheelchair accessible. But when McInnis-Misenor was going to miss out on following her siblings into Thornton Academy, Mrs. McInnis had another idea.

"She got the football team to carry me up and down stairs," McInnis-Misenor laughs. "I just went to my 40th high school reunion and we realized it's different now for students with disabilities. And it's because of parents like my mother. She's the reason that I graduated high school with everyone else."

McInnis-Misenor joined the Maine Association of Handicapped Persons, and in 1981 MAHP organized the first civil rights convention for people with disabilities in the nation. More than 500 Mainers came.





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“It was breathtaking and game-changing,” McInnis-Misenor says, talking about the power in uniting people with different disabilities. “We issued a statement demanding our civil rights. My God, we were so kickass!”

In 1981, South Portland was buying new buses that would be just as inaccessible as the ones being replaced. As a community organizer, McInnis-Misenor helped craft a campaign that began with town hall meet-

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ings and escalated to radio ads with Maine humorist Marshall Dodge saying, "You can't get there from here, dear." The South Portland bus company was selling side-of-the-bus ads, and MAHP ordered bus advertisements proclaiming: "If you can't walk, you can't ride. Support access for all."

The day that the new (but still not accessible) buses went into service, MAHP members made their point another way, with direct action—a bus slow-down. McInnis-Misenor explains, "Those who had crutches or whatever took their sweet time walking onto the bus and saying, 'Oh, I was going to go to the mall today, but since my friend can't get on the bus, I don't think I am.' And then passing out flyers explaining that disability rights are civil rights."

MAHP sued South Portland, Portland and Westbrook to make all public buses accessible to people with disabilities and won at the state level. Maine became the first state to declare access to public transportation to be a civil right. The inaccessible buses were replaced, and McInnis-Misenor marveled that she—and hundreds of other Mainers—could go where they wanted to go, independently and without advance notice.

Then the fight shifted to the national courts. In 1985 MAHP sued the U.S. Department of Transportation and won, forcing them to release regulations regarding accessible transportation. When the regulations didn't call for full accessibility, McInnis-Misenor says, "we combined every disability group working on accessible transit in the nation and we filed before the First District Court. And we won." That was in 1989.

Building on her experience with coalition building, McInnis-Misenor worked with a large consortium of disabilities rights groups that spearheaded the ADA legislation that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life.

"That was one those take-your-breath-away moments," says McInnis-Misenor, who was there at the Senate chamber in 1990 for the historic vote. "The cheers were so deafening that the walls were just reverberating."

At that moment, McInnis-Misenor was desperate to call her mother to tell her the news but was unable to fit her wheelchair into a phone booth. "My friend, who was a little person, jumped up on the seat and put the coins in for me," she says. "We laughed and I said, 'Never again will we have to do this.'"



Armed with a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Southern Maine and a master's degree in social work, community organizing, public policy, planning and financial administration from

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AGER, I KNEW  
I COULD TAKE  
ACTION AND  
MAKE A DIF-  
FERENCE IN  
THE WORLD,  
AND DID. AND  
I HAVE NEVER  
STOPPED.”**

Boston College, McInnis-Misenor says she has evolved from a “rabble-rouser” to a “professional organizer leading social justice movements,” from union organizing in Virginia to anti-apartheid in South Africa.

These days, McInnis-Misenor and her husband Brett Misenor are going with Sara on college visits. McInnis-Misenor is advocating for indigenous people in many parts of the world, doing genealogical research to reunite families, teaching financial independence and, as always, working as a community organizer and activist.

“Anywhere you can make a difference, make a difference,” she says. “Even if it’s small, it matters.”

**Amy Paradysz is a freelance writer based in Scarborough.**

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# MODERN-DAY ABOLITIONIST

**Senator Amy Volk works to protect victims  
of sex trafficking in Maine**

Written by **Amy Paradysz**





**F**our years after successfully proposing legislation to better protect victims of sex trafficking in Maine, Sen. Amy Volk, R-Scarborough, is fine-tuning a few related proposed bills.

"This is modern-day slavery," Volk says. "Sex trafficking certainly looks different in the United States than it does in, say, India or Thailand, where many times families will sell the girls and maybe choose to believe their daughters are going to a better life. A commercial sex act (here) could be as simple as a trade off for a place to sleep or for their next fix. Or it could be as dramatic as this person controls every move you make."

Through the group Survivors Speak, Volk has met Maine women who have been sex trafficked, including middle-aged women who were trafficked as teens. Some more recent victims are the ages of her own three daughters, the youngest of whom is 13.

"It's just unimaginable," Volk says.

Volk has long been aware of sex trafficking around the world. Her church, The Rock Church in Scarborough, regularly raises money and awareness for Love146, a nonprofit that fights against child trafficking and exploitation.

Four years ago, she was reading news that referenced the Shared Hope International scorecard on preventing sex trafficking and bringing justice to victims. Seeing that Maine ranked poorly, Volk—who was then serving in the House of Representatives—made phone calls to see how she could make a difference.

Her first attempt at legislation in this area was rejected along party lines in 2014 because some legislators weren't aware that sex trafficking exists in Maine. But that rejection sparked conversations and awareness statewide, which led to training for law enforcement, truckers and hotel workers. And a month later, when the bill finally made it through the process, it passed unanimously.

Because of the legislation she put forward in 2014, a person accused of prostitution in Maine may not be charged if she (or he) was actually a victim of sex trafficking.

"If you were a victim and were basically forced to commit a crime, should you be punished for that crime?" Volk asks. "And for how long? This is about enabling people to move beyond. You're so much more than the worst mistake you've ever made."

Volk plans to propose two related pieces of legislation this winter: one that addresses labor trafficking (which includes people who are forced to work in homes as domestic servants or farmworkers coerced through violence) and one that would make it possible for someone who has been convicted of a non-violent crime to request that the conviction be dropped from the public record four to seven years after the crime (depending on the severity), one time only.

"If you were a drug addict when you were 21, and you've been clean for eight years, I don't think that needs to be on your record forever," Volk says. "I think people make lots of mistakes when they're young that they shouldn't have to pay for for the rest of their lives."

**Amy Paradysz is a freelance writer based in Scarborough.**



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Alicia Garza, one of the co-creators of #BlackLivesMatter, speaks at Maine Women's Summit on Economic Security, "Forging Our Future. Together" in October. Photos courtesy Maine Women's Lobby



# WE'LL BE THERE

**The Maine Women's Lobby has advocated for women in Maine for nearly four decades**

Written by **Emma Bouthillette**



Danna Hayes, director of public policy at the Maine Women's Lobby, speaks at press conference before a public hearing at the State House.



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"[We've] come a long way over 40 years," says Pat Ryan, a founding member of Maine Women's Lobby, an organization advocating for women's freedom from violence and discrimination, access to healthcare and economic security in the Maine Legislature.

Ryan was among the women inspired by the historic 1977 National Women's Conference held in Houston, Texas. Ryan says, "We felt emboldened."

Immediately stepping into action back in Maine, the group of about a dozen women set out to secure state funding to shelter women subject to domestic violence or abuse. The proposed bill had bipartisan support, giving the group such confidence they decided to go home while the appropriations committee continued to discuss matters well into the night, Ryan says.

"We came back the next day and expressed

our surprise" upon learning a last-minute adjustment left the program on the cutting table. "A legislator said, 'Well you weren't there.' We decided that would be the last time we wouldn't be there," Ryan says.

With pluck and \$2 membership fees, the group founded the Maine Women's Lobby in 1978. Enough membership dues were collected to fund a part-time employee who would be the voice in the halls when the Legislature was in session.

Executive Director Eliza Townsend, agrees that the lobby has made great strides, but she counters, "Every time we look at a newspaper or another piece of media, we're reminded these issues are very much still around."

Recently the lobby partnered with other organizations to implement a level of protection for victims of domestic violence or assault. Townsend says, "We learned it was common

practice for employees to be fired."

The bill received widespread support and legislation was implemented, giving victims the right to take unpaid leave to attend court proceedings, doctor appointments and legal counsel. Furthermore, employers who fire victims can be fined \$1,000 and ordered to pay damages or offer the employee her position back.

Currently, the lobby is working on legislation to develop a system of paid leave when an individual gives birth, adopts or experiences some other major qualifying situation, such as significant care of an elderly family member. The program would be funded in part by payroll deductions, creating insurance for individuals to draw upon if needed because, as Townsend explains, "Most people can't afford to take unpaid time off."

"Public policy is a way to impact people's lives on a greater scale and make long-lasting differences," says Kathy Kilrain del Rio, 43, the lobby's director of program development. "We have a real range of women involved. Some members have been with us for decades, and we also have young members who met us through the 2016 election."

Kim Simmons, a professor of women and gender studies at the University of Southern Maine, is one of those volunteers. She discovered the lobby in 1996 when she sought out like-minded feminists.

"I started volunteering and fell in love. Their mission is my mission," Simmons says. "I cannot personally keep up with every proposed bill, every awesome idea coming from another community or every serious problem that is shaping women's lives," she says. "Knowing the Maine Women's Lobby is paying so much attention and will alert me when I can be of use is a huge benefit for me."

Mainers can support the lobby through donations or membership dues, which in essence crowd-funds the organization's mission. "Or we can jump in to help testify on bills, organize events and grow our own leadership with the support of others," says Simmons, who is also a former board member.

Townsend adds, "We'll always welcome women who want to speak up, talk about their story and share with political leaders why these issues are important."

**Emma Bouthillette, a Biddeford native, is the author of "A Brief History of Biddeford." She loves a good book and walking the beach with her corgi. [www.emmabouthillette.com](http://www.emmabouthillette.com)**



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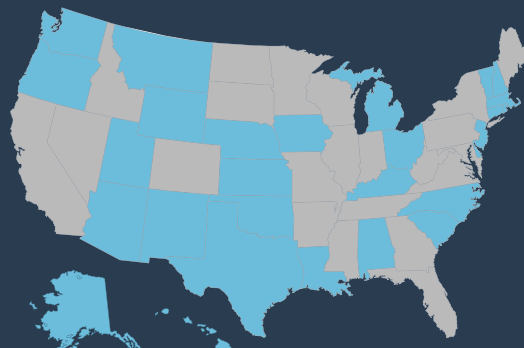
**SHE Leads and Emerge Maine help more women run for office**

Written by **Heather D. Martin**

"When women hold public office," says Sarah Skillin Woodard, "they are more actively involved in a variety of gender-salient issue areas, including health care, the economy, education and the environment. Women legislators are more responsive to constituents, value cooperation over hierarchical power and find ways to engineer solutions in situations where men have

trouble finding common ground. Everyone wins."

Skillin Woodard is a Democrat who has served in leadership roles on several key campaigns and is currently the executive director of Emerge, Maine—the state affiliate of Emerge America, an organization that works with Democratic women interested in running through an intensive six-month (70 hour) training program.

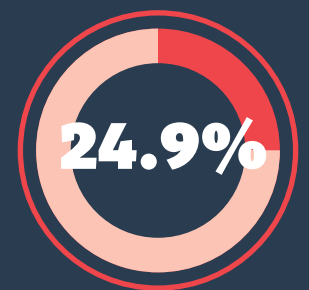


**39**

The number of women who have served as governors in 28 states. Maine is not one of them.



The percentage of women serving in the 115th Congress. It's a record number, although women represent 50 percent of the American population.



Women make up 24.9 percent of all state legislators nationwide. Approximately 1,843 women serve in the 50 state legislatures.

**Margaret Chase Smith**

Smith was the first woman to serve in both houses of the United States Congress and the first woman to represent Maine in either—U.S. Representative from 1940–1949 and a U.S. Senator from 1949–1973.



# HISTORICAL WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

"I think we force a perspective that sometimes isn't thought of," says Rep. Ellie Espling, R-New Gloucester, the assistant minority leader of the Maine House of Representatives who is now seeking a state Senate seat.

"In general, women are... better listeners. They may just look at things a little differently than men do."

Espling is co-chair of SHE Leads, a statewide organization that provides Republican women interested in running for office with focused trainings and networking opportunities over weekend conferences and workshops.

While on different sides of the political aisle, Espling and Skillin Woodard both believe that government, like life, benefits when women are equally represented and in positions of leadership.

"I am always looking for women who are in the place where they want to step up," says Espling. "The soccer mom who is running the PTA or the booster club...or running the free community meals down at the pantry. They may not be ready to [run for office] yet, but someday in the future."

"We like to see somebody who is engaged in their community, who is volunteering and committed," notes Skillin Woodard. "We don't look for any particular 'type' of person, we like to see diversity."

Even with recent political wins for women and active recruiting, it is still challenging to enlist women to run. "Women are more than half the population, but hold less than a third of elected offices," says Skillin Woodard. "The United States currently ranks 104th in the world in the number of women serving in their national legislatures. We are behind Mexico, China and Pakistan. Only 37 women have ever served as governor across the United States. Only 27 states have ever had a woman governor."\* Maine is not one of them. And on a national level, "women make up just 19.4 percent of the U.S. Congress and 24.8 percent of state legislatures," Skillin Woodard says.

Generational assumptions still play a role as well. "I still run into the expectation that it is the woman's job to make sure the kids are OK," says Espling, who was once asked by a reporter how she managed to juggle raising her children while serving in Augusta. She sent him down the hall to ask that question of a male colleague. "We have to push back as women and not just answer the question."

These assumptions are not only in the minds of men. Women are often "culturally conditioned" to be uncertain about their right to a seat at the table. It is an oft-cited statistic that a woman must be asked 10 times before they will even consider running, far more than men. Part



1872

Victoria Woodhull ran for president of the United States on the Equal Rights Party ticket, supporting women's suffrage and equal rights. Abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass was her running mate.

1916

Jeannette Pickering Rankin becomes the first woman to hold federal office in the United States. She was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives by the state of Montana in 1916 and again in 1940.

1922

Dora B. Pinkham wins election to the Maine House of Representatives as the first woman member of the Legislature.

1968

Shirley Chisholm (NY) became the first black woman to be elected to Congress. She later made a bid for the Democratic nomination in the 1972 presidential campaign.

1996

Maine has two women as U.S. senators for the first time (Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins) and is the second state in history to have that distinction.

2007

Nancy Pelosi becomes the first woman to lead the House of Representatives.

of the work of both organizations is instilling the awareness within the women themselves that they deserve to be there. Their work may, however, be paying off.

According to a recent CNN report, "About 19,000 women contacted Emily's List about standing for election in the entire 2016 cycle ... She Should Run has had an average of 15,000 inquiries since the 2016 election," and applications to Emerge America are up 87 percent from

2016.

\*As of Dec. 2017, this number is now 39 women governors in 28 states.

**Heather D. Martin lives on the coast of Maine with her honey, two sons and assorted animals. When she's not working with various museums, art programs and nonprofits on community building, she's usually off causing mayhem with the above mentioned crew.**

# WINTER ADVENTURES

**3 ways to embrace the snow this season**

Story & photos by **Shannon Bryan**

*Winter has its lovers and its haters. If you're excited by thoughts of skiing, snowmen and sledding all afternoon, then these adventures are yet another way to celebrate the season you already enjoy. If winter means nothing more to you than slippery roads, frigid toes and way too much time scraping ice off the windshield of your car, maybe they'll help you find the snowy silver lining to a season that really can be a load of fun. The key is to get out into it.*



## ICE CLIMBING, SNOWSHOEING AND SKIING IN ACADIA

You may have explored Acadia's mountains, beaches and carriage trails on a warm summer day, but it's worth checking out this national park in the winter, too. Hit the carriage trails for some cross-country skiing or snowshoeing and revel in the winter scenery, frozen ponds and solitude. Or try ice climbing with local outfitter Acadia Mountain Guides Climbing School. They'll supply all the gear and know-how, and you'll have a memorable winter adventure that'll challenge and surprise you. Rates start at \$45 per person for a half day, depending on the number of people in your group. **FMI: [acadiamountainguides.com](http://acadiamountainguides.com)**

*\*If you're looking for a fun group to ice climb with, check out the ice climbing adventure on Feb. 24 with Maine Yoga Adventures. The day includes ice climbing, a snowshoe hike, warm food, and a soak in the hot tub at Atlantic Oceanside Hotel & Event Center. \$185.*

**FMI: [maineyogaadventures.com](http://maineyogaadventures.com)**





## FULL MOON HIKE

Breathe in the crisp winter air and hike under the light of a full moon! There are a number of guided full moon hikes around Maine this winter—some even include hot cocoa and s'mores. These hikes are generally easy-going, so they're great for families and folks who aren't avid hikers (but you will want to make sure to dress warmly, bring a headlamp or flashlight and appropriate footwear for the conditions—be that snow boots, traction or snowshoes).

**Kennebunkport Conservation Trust** will lead full moon hikes on Jan. 1, Jan. 31, and March 1 on three miles of trails at Emmons Preserve. The hikes are free and you're welcome to bring a beverage to enjoy in the headquarters after the hike.

**FMI:** [kporttrust.org](http://kporttrust.org)

**Hidden Valley Nature Center** in Jefferson is hosting full moon hikes on Jan. 30, Feb. 28 and March 29. The group will hike 2.5 miles to the pond to see the full moon rising. Snowshoes available to borrow, and the hike will end with a hot drink and camaraderie at one of the heated cabins.

**FMI:** [midcoastconservancy.org](http://midcoastconservancy.org)



**Royal River Conservation Trust's** annual Pisgah Hill Full Moon Trek is Feb. 1. It's a family-friendly hike to the summit of Pisgah Hill in New Gloucester, where a bonfire, hot cocoa and marshmallow toasting await, along with stupendous views of the full moon. The hike is free. **FMI:** [rrct.org](http://rrct.org)



## SKI, SWIM & SAUNA AT BETHEL INN RESORT

Cross-country skiing, an outdoor heated pool and the splendid sweat of an end-of-day sauna. It's a winter trifecta that combines a bit of outdoor activity with plenty of well-deserved relaxation. And then more relaxation. Toss in a pit stop at the tavern for a beer and a burger and you've got yourself a day worth writing home about. The ski-swim-sauna package is offered by the clever folks at The Bethel Inn's Nordic Ski Center—they understand how the addition of an outdoor heated pool makes every adventure even better. Especially in the winter. The package costs \$27 and includes trail access and use of the health club, outdoor heated pool and saunas. Skis are available to rent if you don't have your own (\$18 for adults, \$15 for seniors, \$12 for youth & \$10 for 6 and under). **FMI:** [bethelinn.com](http://bethelinn.com)

*Shannon Bryan is an editor of Maine Women Magazine and is always up for an adventure.*



Workers gather around Margo Walsh, the business founder and owner of MaineWorks, during 6 a.m. circle.





# In this moment

## *Heather Lunt moves forward from addiction to recovery*

Written by **Anna E. Jordan**  
Photos by **Joanne Arnold**

**A**fter a warmer than usual fall, the cold bites. The recent time change means the 6 a.m. circle is going to be in the dark. But the workers, 20 or so, come. They come in carpools and on foot, and they gather around a small fire pit in the MaineWorks parking lot off Forest Avenue in the middle of Portland. Except for Margo Walsh, the business founder and owner, Joanne Arnold, spiritual mentor and baked goods provider, and Heather Lunt, the group is all men.

The conversation around the circle is about safety equipment for the day, warm clothes, food and water, and housing. One of the men has been sober but is couch surfing. He cites a lost phone as the reason he hasn't claimed a bed in a local sober house. This is unacceptable to Walsh. "You need to tell him," Walsh instructs her operations manager after the circle. "He either finds a bed in a sober house by tonight or he takes a 10-panel test tomorrow." The test will screen for cocaine, heroin, meth, marijuana, PCP and five prescription drugs.

The circle conversation turns to an evening event that everyone has been asked to attend at Day One, a program for teen substance use prevention and treatment in Maine. MaineWorks is getting an award and this is a chance for the workers, in their 20s and 30s, to speak with teens. "What would you tell your 16- or 17-year-old self?" Walsh asks the circle. Most agree that there was little their teen-self, full of bravado and indestructible, would have listened to.

Heather Lunt agrees.

Addiction can start early. Her first drink was as an 11-year-old. She took sips of her mother's sweet, milkshake-like, premade

mudslides in single serving bottles and liked the effect. "It made me more of what I wanted to be—more outgoing, more talkative." Everyone saw her as fun. "But," she says, "no one wanted to hang out."

Addiction is loneliness. She found her connection and validation with older alcoholics. They became her community and provided her with a place to stay. By 13, her drinking led her to a 23-year-old boyfriend. By 17, her mother kicked her out of their home. By 19, she was pregnant and stopped drinking for a while, but a back injury resulted in a prescription for 272 30-milligram pills of oxycodone. She told the physician she drank, but didn't tell him she was an alcoholic because she didn't think she was one. Her 20s were a clichéd slippery slope from prescription pills to crack to heroin.

Addiction is work. In order to procure and pay for the next drink, she spent most of the day in the structure of addiction. "I was always planning and thinking where the next high would come from and who I'd need to manipulate or rip off," Lunt says. As a young teen, she stole from her mother and had random sexual partners who she now realizes were pedophiles. "A heroin addict is the most motivated person in the world," says Walsh.

Addiction and logic do not exist together. "Addiction makes it feel like you have to use to survive. Your life, your kids don't matter. People who don't understand think that you make a choice to use over [caring for] your kids, but it feels like there's no choice at all," says Lunt. "At one point, I actually thought that shooting coke would be better than smoking crack because there'd be no second-hand smoke for my kids, but I couldn't see that it would be a lot



“Always have hope and never give up.” It’s advice one MaineWorks worker says he’d give to his younger self. Anthony “Moose” Elkins had the word “hope” tattooed on his hand.

worse if they found me dead in the next room.”

Addiction is hard to understand. “Take your phone,” says Walsh, “and put it in the middle of the table. If it dings, don’t pick it up. If it rings, don’t pick it up. If it buzzes, don’t pick it up. That feeling of tightness and urgency you have in your body, that’s addiction. Imagine feeling that way—all the time.”

“I’m a violent drunk,” Lunt says. Assault was the primary reason for her arrests and jail sentences. Each time she got out, she’d start the work of addiction again. When her probation officer suggested keeping her out of trouble by keeping her in jail, she off-handedly agreed. Now, Lunt sees this as her turning point. “As I met people with strong recovery, things started to feel more stable, and I started to feel more capable of making things work. Looking for a job felt so overwhelming. I’m a felon, I look

horrible on paper—who would hire me?”

Walsh and MaineWorks did. MaineWorks is a for-profit temporary staffing construction and landscaping company that provides authentic, recovery-based employment. Many employers won’t hire someone with a history of jail and substance abuse. Walsh, a recovering alcoholic, has a mission to “dignify the transitional employment time for young people in recovery and reentry from substance abuse disorder.”

Generally, the construction and landscaping jobs are temporary—a three to 12-month stop on the way to more permanent positions elsewhere. But some employees have ended up working for MaineWorks full time, including members of the leadership team. “I don’t want them to return by default, but because they choose MaineWorks,” says Walsh.

Lunt, like many new MaineWorks workers, started with demolition jobs

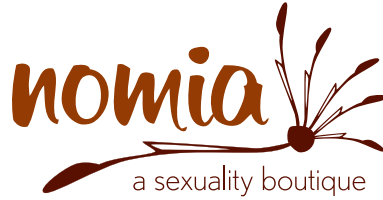
“My children are my main motivation, but now I know I owe it to myself to get sober. I’m worth it.”

and construction cleaning. “I thought, I can do that stuff,” she says. “I can do anything I’m taught.” She was often the only woman on the jobsite and sometimes felt that she had to prove herself. Soon she moved on to landscaping. The men who were her co-workers became her friends and her support. “At MaineWorks, you stand shoulder to shoulder in circle, starting every day together. It’s like a hug. It doesn’t matter where you come from, if you’re part of the MaineWorks crew you’re family.”

Anything and everything can derail the work of recovery. The lack of money for gas or car repairs might cause a person to miss an AA meeting, which means that person won’t meet the requirement for their sober house and might not have a place to live. Some women in recovery have the added responsibility of children. A trip to DHHS often requires an entire day of waiting and missed wages and usually ends not with benefits received, but with another appointment at DHHS. In addition, if a recovering addict has landed a job, income guidelines for state and federally sponsored childcare often penalize women when they start to make a living wage or marry. “A single mom is definitely better off at DHHS,” Lunt explains.

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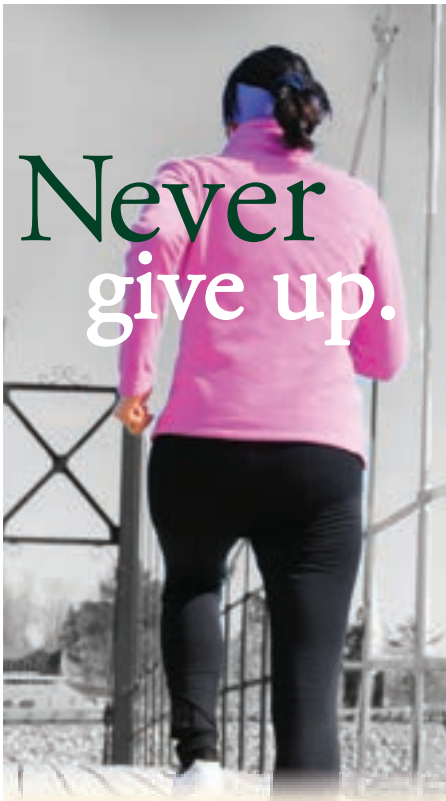
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## IT HAPPENS HERE



Heather Lunt draws in the sand with her daughter, who was diagnosed with leukemia last March.

Recovery understand that the problems facing a recovering addict require immediate solutions. If a person has to wait for a place to live, a heavy jacket, a phone or a meal, those problems snowball and become overwhelming—another reason to find the next high. “In many cases, substance abuse starts at 16, 17, 20 years old,” says Walsh, “and so those are really important developmental years for young [people] and they’ve never really developed their executive functions and reasoning... MaineWorks is committed to wraparound services.”

Lunt agrees. “You come to [MaineWorks] battered and broken, they embrace you and they say, ‘Come here, I’m going to teach you.’”

Heather Lunt did move forward. After many false starts, she met people serious about recovery, found a place at a sober house, and soon became the house manager responsible for 12 other women. She tests their sobriety and makes sure they do their chores. “If you can’t take accountability for cleaning your room or making your bed, how can you take accountability for the other parts of your life,” she says. She also makes sure the residents have a recovery sponsor, attend meetings and recovery activities and

work on their 12-step programs. She hopes to someday work in a treatment center with adolescents and looks forward to pursuing the education to get there.

Portland provides Lunt with more access to meetings and other resources, so her three children stay 30 minutes away with her mother. They see each other on weekends and talk or video chat every night. “My children are my main motivation, but now I owe it to myself to get sober. I’m worth it.”

Even as she gains the tools to move forward in her 30s, Lunt is experiencing setbacks. She hurt her wrist and was unable to continue the labor-intensive work at MaineWorks. Then last March, when she thought her 7-year-old daughter was resting and recovering from pneumonia, it turned out that she was suffering from leukemia. Symptoms of fatigue and a lack of appetite are often mistaken for a cold or the flu in these cases.

At the Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital, Lunt spent nights sleeping with and comforting her daughter and, like all parents who have to care for a profoundly sick child, getting a crash course in medicine. In this case: hematology and oncology. Frequent and erratic appointments for blood transfusions and

chemotherapy made it impossible for Lunt to work a regular job. Now, eight months later, her daughter is improving and they both look forward to more manageable monthly appointments.

Walsh calls Lunt a “pioneering woman,” but Lunt is quick to thank Walsh. “She’s

.....

“At one point, I actually thought that shooting coke would be better than smoking crack because there’d be no second-hand smoke for my kids, but I couldn’t see that it would be a lot worse if they found me dead in the next room.”

.....

always saying, ‘what can we do in this moment to help you move forward?’ When my daughter got sick, Margo helped me with rent, food, even a cup of coffee when I needed it most.” It’s that little break, and a belief that someone can succeed, that can make the difference between addiction and recovery. “Addiction is loneliness. Recovery is connectedness,” Walsh says.

Back at the circle in the MaineWorks parking lot, another worker raises his hand. He says that he’d tell his 16-year-old self to always have hope and never give up. No matter what life throws at her, through her strength and tenacity, that’s just what Heather Lunt is doing.

**Anna E. Jordan** ([annaejordan.com](http://annaejordan.com)) is a writer and rowing coach currently working as Editor and Special Project Coordinator at Islandport Press in Yarmouth, Maine. Follow her @annawritedraw for news about #kidlit, rowing and politics.

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Susan Pye and her mustang, Burt, at their home in Pownal.

# Susan Pye & Burt the Mustang

Written by Susan Pye  
Photos by Lauryn Hottinger

Three years ago, I adopted Burt, a 3-year-old mustang who had been captured in Wyoming as a foal. After losing my first horse, Finn, I ended up at Ever After Mustang Rescue in Biddeford with the intent of adopting a horse with saddle experience. After working with a couple of the other horses and not feeling a fit, I asked to work with Burt, who had recently arrived at the rescue—and that was it. I'm not a horse trainer, but I decided I was going on this journey of training a horse, and soon after I signed the adoption papers. A year later, I had sold my



condo, bought a house in Pownal and moved Burt home.

Burt is now 6, easily charms people and is a very curious and smart fellow. I'm still working on my horse training and Burt is patient and forgiving. It has been a journey of discovery and slow training. I have learned far more than I have taught Burt, and I don't mean just about horse training. I have become a calmer, more patient person, and I may have lost some of my type A personality—but not all! It's hard to describe this journey, but nothing beats walking into the pasture and having

Burt walk up to me and sniff my face, or going on our first trail ride knowing how far we have come. It's about far more than riding—although we are still working on progressing with that—it's about building trust and having a partnership. I've also had to overcome some confidence issues after a couple of small falls, but I believe in riding, as in life, getting back in the saddle after the hard landings allows us truer growth.

***Burt and Pye live in Pownal. They have not gone it alone on all their training as they***

***have had the guidance of some of the best trainers in Maine. Pye works in Portland as a financial advisor. Burt resides in the pasture with Rockin, a Tennessee Walking Horse.***

#### **NOTE ABOUT THIS THING I LOVE**

We want to know what makes you feel fantastic, powerful, on top of the world. And we'll highlight you in these pages. Email MWM editor Shannon at [sbryan@mainewomenmagazine.com](mailto:sbryan@mainewomenmagazine.com).



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# I Like It Raw

## *A Honey Gin Martini*

Story & photo by **Jessie Lacey**

I have always loved Barr Hill Tom Cat Gin, which is aged for a few months in charred oak barrels, giving it a sort of whiskey feel. It is completely drinkable on its own, and I say that as a person who has quite a list of liquors I like more than gin. Up until now, I hadn't had the pleasure of tasting their regular gin, Barr Hill Gin, which is made with raw honey, added just after distillation. And since I managed to score a jar of raw honey, I decided a raw honey-inspired cocktail was in order.

**Amateur Hour tip:** Don't use honey that is not raw. It doesn't mix well, no matter how

long you shake it. I learned this after making quite the mess and ultimately decided that raw honey mixes much better, especially if you "dry shake" it first (as in, you leave out the ice).

This drink is simple, with only four ingredients, and that's refreshing considering the drinks I have been having lately, which usually require something set on fire. You will not have to set anything on fire, unless you really want to.

**Jessie Lacey lives in a bunker in Portland, waiting out the winter.**

## RECIPE

2 ounces Barr Hill Gin  
1 ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1/2 ounce raw honey  
A few shakes of Fee Brothers Jasmine water

*Pour gin, lemon juice and raw honey into a shaker and dry shake (that means with no ice) to mix. Add some ice in the shaker and shake, then strain into a martini glass and garnish with a lemon peel.*

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# Getting Hygge With It

*Two recipes to fill you with warmth and happiness*

Story & photos by **Candace Karu**

**H**ygge is a Danish word that is hard to say and even harder to define. At its most basic, hygge (pronounced hue-guh) embodies the concept of coziness. But it is so much more than that. Hygge is sitting by the fire, wrapped in your favorite blanket, next to your best friend while the snow blows outside. Hygge is sitting with friends in a café, lingering over lattes and pastries. Hygge is taking care of yourself with healthy foods, plenty of sleep and time with loved ones.

Maine winters, while not for the faint of heart, offer us the unique opportunity to slow our lives down and live in the moment, to savor the simple pleasures of food and shelter from the elements. Like the Danes, Mainers have a leg up on embracing the true meaning of hygge.

In the spirit of hygge, this month's recipes feature comfort food that nourishes the body while warming the spirit.

Our first recipe is for a rösti (pronounced rursch-ti), a dish that originated in Switzerland and has spread around the globe. There is no definitive rösti recipe, but the basics are grated potatoes and butter or duck or goose fat. Röstis are like hash brown cakes and, made properly, are a thing of culinary beauty.



Röstis are like hash brown cakes and, made properly, are a thing of culinary beauty.

## MUSHROOM & ONION RÖSTI

Here is my take on a Mushroom and Onion Rösti. I like to top mine with a fried egg and serve with a colorful slaw of red cabbage, white cabbage, carrots and apples.

### INGREDIENTS

3 medium russet potatoes, parboiled and chilled overnight  
1/2 large yellow onion, sliced thin  
5 ounces button or cremini mushrooms, cleaned and sliced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons butter  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
4 eggs (optional)

### INSTRUCTIONS

Grate chilled potatoes on the largest hole of a hand grater or use a food processor (yield 4-5 cups).

Heat a 10-inch cast iron or non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add one tablespoon of butter and 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Sauté onions and mushrooms until onion is translucent and beginning to caramelize, about 10 minutes. Add garlic

with one minute remaining. Set aside.

Wipe skillet out and add remaining butter and olive oil and set over medium-high heat. When skillet is very hot, add half the grated potatoes in an even layer, pressing down with a spatula.

Add the onion, mushroom, garlic mixture in an even layer on top of the potatoes. Then cover with the remaining grated potatoes. Press down with spatula. Cook until bottom is golden brown, about 8 minutes.

Place heatproof plate on top of skillet and turn rösti onto plate, cooked side up. Slide the rösti back into the skillet, cooked side up and continue to cook the bottom side, another 8-10 minutes, until desired golden brown (I like mine very dark and crispy.)

Serve rösti, as is, with salad. Or divide into four portions and top each with a fried egg.



The Butternut Squash, Carrot and Roasted Garlic Soup is the definition of Maine hygge.

## BUTTERNUT SQUASH, CARROT & ROASTED GARLIC SOUP

This next recipe for Butternut Squash, Carrot and Roasted Garlic Soup is the definition of Maine hygge. All the key ingredients—squash, carrots and garlic—come from my garden. I make this soup in huge batches and freeze it to enjoy all winter long. It is hearty, satisfying and full of wholesome ingredients. Serve it with crusty bread and a salad of roasted beets and pomegranate seeds drizzled with olive oil and a splash of lime juice. Toast with a local craft beer and you're in hygge heaven!

### INGREDIENTS

1 large butternut squash, peeled, seeds removed, diced (about 3-4 cups)  
 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided  
 6 large carrots, trimmed, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces  
 1 large onion, diced  
 1 large head of garlic (remove the loose papery layers, trim the top 1/4-inch off the head, and drizzle the exposed cloves with olive oil)  
 5 cups vegetable or chicken broth  
 Salt and pepper to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.  
 Wrap the oiled head of garlic tightly in aluminum foil, roast in oven for about 30 minutes, until cloves are browned and very soft. Set aside to cool.  
 When cooled, squeeze cloves into a small bowl and mix into a smooth paste. *(Note: Roast an extra head of garlic and spread the paste on warm bread to accompany your soup.)*  
 Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Toss diced squash with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread squash in a single layer on baking sheet and bake until fork tender, 20-30 minutes. Set aside to cool.

In a large saucepan, heat olive oil over medium heat and cook onion and carrots until onion is translucent, 8-10 minutes. Add broth and bring to a boil.

Reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook until carrots are fork tender, about 10-12 minutes. Cool the onion and carrot mixture to room temperature.

Blend all of the ingredients, including garlic paste, in batches with some of the cooking stock in food processor or blender and place in a large bowl. Add additional stock if soup is too thick.

Adjust seasoning and enjoy as is or garnish with a dollop of sour cream, Greek yogurt or scallions.





SLAP ladies at the 2015 Portland Pride Parade, where they brought their arm-wrestling table, Eliminator, on a flatbed truck and had an impromptu match. Photo courtesy Tina Lewis

# A show of strength

## *The Superhero Lady Armwrestlers of Portland*

Written by Amy Paradysz

“There’s a thing that most women know about, where we try to take up less space,” says Tina Lewis of Portland. And that, she says, is the exact opposite of being a Superhero Lady Armwrestler of Portland.

“We can come out here and be who we want to be a little while, unapologetically,” says the 34-year-old SLAP member, who is known as Tina Machina. “The arm wrestling is real. But it’s also a way for women to be creative, and

the theatrics make it more interesting and make the crowd buy in. The whole purpose, in the end, is to raise money for these charities. If you can do that by losing—that, to me, is even more impressive.”

SLAP puts on about three events a year, raising money for community groups such as Family Crisis Services, the Locker Project and the Maine Tool Library. Eight lady arm wrestlers make their entrances, each with a persona,

entourage and theme song. During the single-elimination competition (with an undercurrent of improv comedy), each entourage collects donations on behalf of their lady arm wrestler. And the lady who fundraises the most wins the Crowd Favorite title.

It’s a model that plays out from coast to coast, with Portland’s SLAP being just one of about two dozen leagues in the national Collective Lady Arm Wrestlers (CLAW).

Every two years, lady arm wrestlers from across the country get together for a convention called the SUPERCLAW—and the chance to win the national title.

When a SLAP posse headed to SUPERCLAW in Washington, DC in 2014, Maine lady Kate Squibb—aka Lumbersmack Sally or “the one with the chain-saw”—made it to the final rounds.

Lady arm wrestler Jenna Keys, a 40-year-old Portland mother of three, was inspired by what she experienced in the nation’s capital.

“Being part of a national community of lady arm wrestlers and women who are involved in social justice, that carried me,” says Keys, who is still known by her original superhero persona of Voom Voom. “This is more than a local thing, and that feels really good.”

At SLAP’s second trip to the national championships, Mary Devou of South Portland secured the national title. Her usual persona, Slammin’ Sista Mary, complete with an entourage of naughty school-girls, had to be cloistered, as the SUPERCLAW already had the popular Sister Patricia Pistolwhip from Los Angeles in the nun category. As an alternative, Devou transformed into her lifelong fantasy—a mermaid named Pearl of the Atlantic. All glittery and with long red curls, Devou won the national title based on her arm wrestling—something that didn’t come easily to her when she first discovered SLAP.

“But I wanted to win,” she says. “I wanted to get up there and take down Black Mamba.”

To improve her skills, Devou joined 207 Armsports, a co-ed (but mostly male) arm wrestling club that competes in Maine and New Hampshire. Since winning a SUPERCLAW and being deemed a professional—because she won first place in her weight division with 207 Armsports at the Maine Call to Arms last June—Devou has shifted focus to training new and prospective lady arm wrestlers.

“I’m working with more ladies who are coming in on how to be safe on the table using their whole bodies, not just their arms,” she says.

With hopes of recruitment, SLAP hosted a workshop in November with a twofold focus—arm wrestling skills and character development.

“I love the arm wrestling,” says Devou, who is back to being Slammin’ Sista Mary. “But through it, my character has grown. Once I won, I started ripping off my habit, with a dress underneath.”

Meanwhile, Keys competes as Fannie the Fight Attendant, just dripping sex and flanked by a male entourage of pilots, entering to the tune of “I Get Lifted” by George McCrae.

And the badass character of Tina Machina is completely unapologetic—exactly the opposite of Lewis’ demeanor in the hospitality business.

“I always say that each character is born in each woman because it’s something that doesn’t get to see the light of day in real life,” said Lewis, who joined the national board in 2017. “Here, there’s nothing we can’t say or be or do. It’s a place to explore where your boundaries are—and to step over them too. And it’s empowering.”

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



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*Photo by Christina Jorro*



Photo by Paul Schafer



# Minimalist Lingerie

## *Organic simple cuts from Brook There*

Written by **Katie Bingham-Smith**

**B**rook DeLorme started Brook There in 2007 as a clothing business. But after looking for simple lingerie you could wash and wear—easy pieces that made you feel beautiful and comfortable—she couldn't find what she was looking for. So she started designing and creating pieces herself. "I could never find undergarments that I wanted to wear and in which I felt comfortable, so I started producing them through the brand. They were immediately popular, and about four years ago we

officially focused the business in that direction," she says.

DeLorme's brand, which is sold at Étain and Portland Dry Goods in Portland and Daughters in Rockland, as well as online, infuses comfort by creating durable design that come in a broad range of sizes—something that is hard to find while shopping for bralettes. "We offer up to nine sizes versus the standard S/M/L, which is industry standard. Every woman is unique, and their bras should be treated with the same individualism," she says.



## MAINE STYLE

Working in Maine, DeLorme is surrounded by nature and pulls inspiration from trees, cliffs, water and the sky. “Maine has a long tradition of simplicity, individualism and pragmatism, a disdain for traditional status symbols and frugality,” she says. These values have influenced her work—her line is about comfort rather than status. She also wants the line to speak to women who aren’t afraid to get dirt under their nails while being outdoors all day and who also want to feel beautifully feminine.

DeLorme has been making clothing since she was 12 and knew then that was her niche. Her designs favor function over form. “Clothing should be forgotten about as soon as one puts it on,” she says. “I care intensely about comfort, because that is the first requirement to forgetting about what we are wearing. I care about aesthetics, in the sense of being at one with the surroundings or environment, as well as standing out as an individual in a fitting way.”

After attending Maine College of Art, she met her husband and business partner, Daniel. The couple spend time in Portland as well as visiting lots of quiet cabins in the woods, which helps DeLorme infuse her craft.

When dreaming up a design, DeLorme begins with a simple line drawing. The designing continues when the fabric is in her hands. “The actual process of sewing and making adjustments on the machine or the mannequin is very important to me,” she says.

She stays away from synthetic materials and only uses organic cottons, silks, wool and rayon that are manufactured in the United States. “The majority of our garments are cut in Fall River, Mass., with some styles hand-dyed by me,” she says. All garments are machine washable and maintain their size and shape. DeLorme wants women to move freely in her designs, whether they are rock climbing or wearing them under their favorite dress.

**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.**

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# Love Bombed

## *Review: 'A Beautiful Terrible Thing, A Memoir of Love and Betrayal'*

Written by **Amy Canfield**

**J**en Waite woke up in the middle of every woman's nightmare. The man she fell fast and hard in love with, her soul mate, the father of her newborn daughter, was a cold, lying, cheating manipulator. A psychopath, she says.

His lies began to unravel when she found a suspicious email that led her, after much incredulity, to find that her husband was involved with another woman. To make matters worse, he vehemently denied the affair. To this day, he neither has admitted his betrayal or myriad other lies.

Waite writes about the "before" and "after" of her relationship in "A Beautiful, Terrible Thing," from their courtship to the black hole she plummeted into when she realized she'd been living a lie and how she slowly emerged from it as a better person.

When the truth starts to come to light, Waite takes her infant daughter from their New York home and goes back to Maine to her parents' home, where she grieves and learns more about her husband's other life. She sees a therapist, conducts her own research and determines she was "love bombed" by a psychopath, seduced by him as prey. She takes a hard look at herself to find out why she was vulnerable to being love bombed in the first place.

Waite's story is one you don't want to be true, yet here is an intelligent, put-together woman telling you it is. Her honesty as she tells of her struggle to believe her husband and explain away his behavior is cringe-inducing. But, Waite writes it "for every woman who has been cast aside like yesterday's trash after placing her life in the hands of a man she trusts." "A Beautiful, Terrible Thing" should be required reading for any woman seeking a romantic relationship.

Just a few years removed from her nightmare, Waite, 31, is happily single, working in Portland and living in South Portland with her daughter. She spoke with Maine Women Magazine about her memoir.



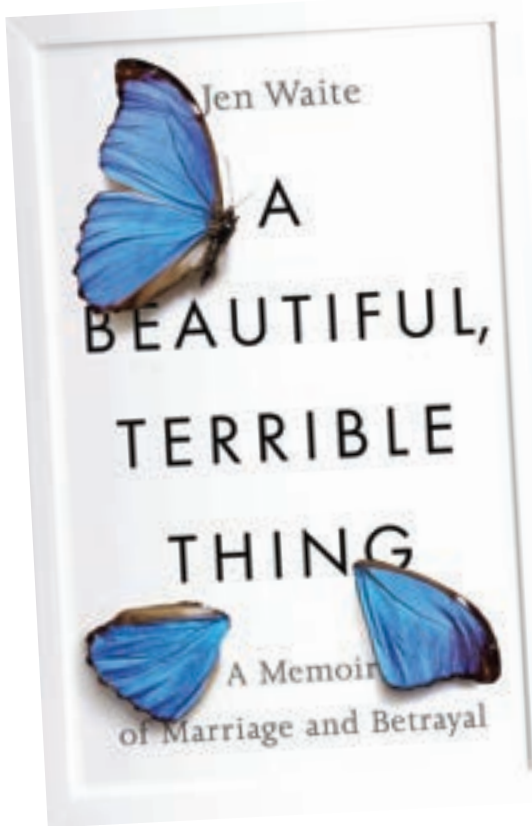
Photo by Erynne Morin

**Q** You've said it may sound "cheesy," but that this horrific experience was the best thing that ever happened to you. How does that manifest itself? How have you changed?

**A** I had a really great childhood in Maine ... nothing "bad" had happened to me and so I had a very happy-go-lucky, optimistic attitude—not that there's anything wrong with that! But my optimism verged on delusion—I refused to see the whole picture and I filtered out a lot of negative data in order to fit my paradigm; I am much more open now and I think more realistic about the human experience in general.

When I found out that I had been living a lie for five years, and that the most important person in my world was not who I thought he was, it forced me to re-examine everything I thought I knew. It shattered my reality. I had to put that reality back together, but this time with beliefs and thoughts that were mine, instead of my parents' or society's. It was extremely liberating, throwing out a bunch of beliefs and constructs that I had internalized but didn't actually align with my empirical data. A huge part of my process was uncovering how the way we raise girls and boys has created this enormous gender problem that reverberates across every aspect of our culture. Women are taught to value (or devalue) themselves according to inherently sexist societal standards. On the opposite side of the same coin, "toxic masculinity" (manhood defined by dominance, control, aggression) is ingrained in our culture. I believed my self-worth relied heavily on having validation from a partner and so I ignored signs at the beginning of my relationship with my ex-husband that something was not right.

Listening to myself, trusting my gut instincts, and disengaging when someone or something does not feel "right" have been the most simple, yet most difficult, actions I have ever taken.



“A Beautiful, Terrible Thing, A Memoir of Love and Betrayal”  
Jen Waite  
Plume

**Q** It took some months before the “haze lifted” in the wake of discovering the truth about your husband. At what point did you decide to write this memoir?

**A** I started writing about four months after finding out that my husband was leading a double life. I was writing almost in real-time, and getting it all out on paper is what ultimately lifted the haze. When I started writing, I did not intend to write and publish a book, I only knew that I had to figure out what happened. Putting it all down on the page was part of my process in understanding how I had gotten to that point (from married and pregnant in New York thinking everything was wonderful to living with my parents in Maine as a single mom).

I know that the general sentiment is “write from your scars, not your wounds,” but I wouldn’t have done it any differently—it was vital that I wrote about this experience while it was happening. I wrote for myself, not for an audience, because I was desperate to understand what had happened and through that process the “haze lifted.”

**Q** Is the anger gone? Do you/can you forgive your ex?

**A** I have no anger, but I wouldn’t use the term “forgive” in relation to my ex. I

learned from the experience and I grew as a person and for that I am grateful; however, I don’t think it makes sense to forgive someone on the psychopathy spectrum—it’s important to keep in mind what he/she is and how he/she operates in order to protect yourself in the future. I look at my ex clinically now, and when I think of him, I feel nothing, not anger, not sadness, just a bit of wariness.

**Q** What has been the reaction to your book from other people who knew you, both of you, during those fairy tale years?

**A** So many friends have written or called to say that they’ve read the book and have been incredibly supportive. ... It helped in a strange way to have other people be almost as shocked as I was; to know that I was not the only one who was completely blindsided.

**Q** What feedback have you heard from readers in general?

**A** I’ve received hundreds of messages, both heartbreaking and awe-inspiring, from other people (mostly women) who have been through similar experiences. Obviously not every break-up involves someone on the psychopathy spectrum, but I think most people have been in a toxic relationship that left them feeling broken for a time and the memoir seems to be resonating. I’ve also been surprised to hear from therapists who are now using the memoir in their practices as a way to gain a deeper understanding into the gaslighting and cognitive dissonance that occurs in these types of relationships.

**Amy Canfield is a writer, editor and bibliophile. She lives in South Portland.**



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# They're your kids, not your BFFs

Written by Maggie Knowles

**P**op quiz: Who is your best friend? Susanna from Pilates? Maddie from bookclub? Don from cribbage?

Those are all acceptable answers. If you said, "My kid!" head to the back of the class and sit in the corner while you read on.

Yes, your children are cool and smart and funny. All the great qualities of a BFF. But you are 40 and they are 12. And while you can have all the fun shopping and hiking together, you have to draw a line in the parental sand and find someone your own age.

I know! Making adult friends is hard. Co-workers are too boring, people at the gym are too sweaty, everyone at the coffee shop is too awake. Your children are there, all of the time. They have to listen to you complain how you hate your bangs and that their dad has a new fiancée or they won't get dinner.

Parent-child dynamics exist for a reason. Your job is to teach the littles what a mature, functioning member of society looks like. Their job is to tell you you're wrong about everything. That distinction becomes very muddled when they are hearing about the too-intimate details of your personal life. Friendships are based on being equals, and children are not equals to their parents. If you have established a bestie aura, how will they ever obey when it is time for chores, homework, bed or being grounded for sneaking out?

Building peer-to-peer friendships is paramount for development. They need buddies they can share the challenges, hopes, concerns and joys of being a certain age at the same time with. Your child may feel an extended loyalty to you and shy away from making friends at school.

It is already daunting that children seem to be growing up too fast these days. If they are constantly hearing about your "adult struggles" (much of which is probably over their head) it is an extra-confusing burden for them to carry—especially since there is nothing they can do to help you.

What are you getting out of having your child as your confidante? I don't imagine they are helping you solve your deepest problems. Is it just easy because they can't escape?

Rather than depending on them for emotional support, show them what building an appropriate friendship looks like. Join a class, volunteer, go to the dog park—there a lovely people everywhere looking for platonic connection. Plus, it's good for your body!

According to a 2016 Mayo Clinic study, adult friendships are vital for enriching your life and improving your health: "Adults with strong social support have a reduced risk of many significant health problems, including depression, high blood pressure and an unhealthy body mass index."

Some of my closest friends are ones who approached me at music class and said, over crying toddlers, "This may be weird, but can we hang out sometime?"

So tonight, when you want to talk about some big adult-y thing with your kids, give them a kiss and make them do their homework instead.

**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.**

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Photo by Carol MacLeod

### The New Year

It  
begins in the dark  
The  
possibilities endless, as the no limits could be seen  
It  
begins with a walk  
One  
step following another  
One  
day following another  
It  
begins with friends  
Some  
near and dear  
A  
reunion of sorts with others  
Some  
new  
All  
familiar in that way that comes when sharing a journey  
It  
begins at the edge of the land  
Appearing  
to be an end of things  
It  
begins with the sun coming up  
Lighting  
a path across the water  
Calling  
me forward  
It  
begins with my shadow stretching out behind me  
Like  
memories that are a part of me  
Showing  
me a way forward  
It  
begins with the sun on my face  
And  
hope in my heart

By Sara Karam, Lewiston

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**Sarah Skillin Woodard**  
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Executive Director, Maine Women's Fund

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