

# MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2021

MEET Colby's

## Jordia Benjamin

*Connecting People  
through Art*

**INTUITIVE EATING**

*for the New Year*

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*Kate Hruby Says*

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*Grow Your Own Roses from Seed!*

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## GO FORTH AND SCIENCE

Kate Hruby is an avid sailor, a science educator, artist, and website/podcast creator.



Happy New Year! It's 2021.

I sit here and wonder, "Have the smiles on our faces disappeared?" Are we so consumed with this current situation that joy has been removed from our brains?

Life has a way of presenting choices. We have such power over our own being. We can find joy in every situation, or we can look at each situation as a chore.

Oh, I sure have chosen "chore" many times. I think *chore* and complain to myself.

But when I tell myself "This is a joy, not a chore?" Everything changes. Yes, everything!

Most of all, if I change my presence at the moment, the folks around me change.

I no longer hear in my head, "Damn, I don't want to do this!" I instead play "Whistle while you work!" I laugh at myself. I begin to feel the joy of the moment. I look for the opportunity and decide to reach for joy.

So as the new year unveils itself? Oh yes, I want to get more fit . . . walk more, pray more. I will just find the joy and no longer will use the word "chore." I will turn my chores into joy!

It's time we give our minds a break from the pain.

As we start this new year, I know there are so many amazing women out there! We want to find you and share your stories. Today I ask you to embrace your story. Love the moment you're in.

Thank you for all your many phone calls and your letters. Please keep your ideas and love coming our way.

There are so many, many women in Maine who are just so cool!

Love you all, and remember: it's a joy, not a chore.

*Mary Frances Barstow*

*Publisher*

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*Maine Women Magazine neither endorses or critiques the women featured in our magazine based on their belief system or political viewpoints. We wish that political and personal differences be respected and used to start conversations based on curiosity and learning. We believe in freedom of speech.*

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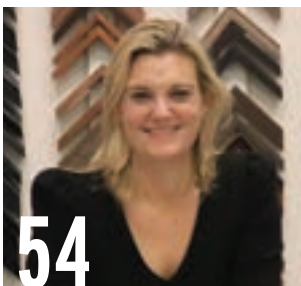
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| LETTERS TO THE EDITOR |

I truly love reading your gem of a magazine! The diverse and inspirational stories perfectly capture the independent and strong-willed spirit of Maine women. Recently, I enjoyed reading about Audrey Lovering in your November issue. Audrey's compassion and creativity are a testament to the hard working and resilient women of Maine.

—Faith McCaughin, Bath

The article on Lisa DeSisto was so wonderful. She is such a wonderful example of great women. You should also feature her style. I LOVED her jacket and jewelry.

—Carol Wedle

I love receiving your magazine in my newspaper and have so enjoyed your articles.

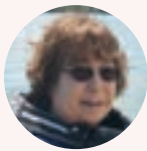
I especially love hearing about the intrepid Holly Martin's travels. I would so love it if you added a little map each time an article comes out on her, so we could really understand where she is!

Please keep up the great work. Only suggestion might be that you interview older women once in a while (said by a young 75 year old!). Best to all,

—Holly Lord, Portland

**We love to hear from our readers!**  
**Contact us at [mary@mainewomenmagazine.com](mailto:mary@mainewomenmagazine.com).**

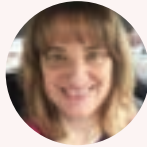
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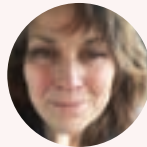
by the Maine Press Association and the New England Outdoor Writers Association.

**Jodi Hersey** is a freelance writer from Hermon. She has worked in television, radio and print for more than 15 years. She is a military wife, mother of twins and a huge fan of vintage cars, especially Ford Mustangs. When she's not writing or deep into a good novel, you will find her and her family participating in a classic car show or cruise in somewhere in Maine.



**Avery Hunt** spent 30 years in New York City in publishing, and has worked both as an award-winning journalist for *Newsday*, and a magazine executive for *Newsweek*, *Business Week*, *Esquire*, among others. She has also written for major magazines and newspapers. In 2001, she and her husband, now deceased, moved back to the coast of Maine, where she spent many childhood summers.

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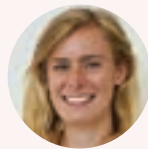
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**Amy Paradysz** is a freelance writer and editor from Scarborough who <3s words and pictures.



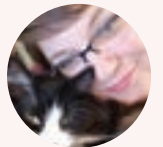
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**Michael Andrew Shyka** is an artist, textile designer, and fashion designer based in Portland, represented by Sandra Nunes of Collecting Colour of NYC. With the onset of the pandemic, he has been writing a novel, *Abra: Earth Goddess of a Starseed*, based on his life inside the world of high fashion. For more information, visit [michaelshyka.com/blog/](http://michaelshyka.com/blog/).

**Christine Simmonds**

grew up in Coastal Maine. She was a teacher for many years, but she was always told she had missed her calling as a writer. Now she enjoys being able to dig up local news for *The Courier-Gazette* and investigate fascinating stories for *Maine Women Magazine*. She enjoys spending time with her family and her cats and attending Cross-Fit classes.



**Amy Taylor Grimm, RDN, LD**, is a registered dietitian and co-owner of Kaleidoscope Eating Disorders and Diet Recovery Center in Portland. She believes that health can be found at all sizes and that recovery from eating disorders and repetitive dieting is possible and just about the most freeing thing women can do for themselves and each other. She has been in practice for over 20 years.



**Lynette L. Walther** is the GardenComm Gold Medal winner for writing, a five-time recipient of the GardenComm Silver Metal of Achievement, and recipient of the National Garden Bureau's Exemplary Journalism Award. Her gardens are in Camden.



**CORRECTION:** We inadvertently omitted a photo credit for the December 2020 article on The Makers of Maine podcast on pages 22 and 23. The photos were taken by Justin Smulski. We regret the error.





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## Holly Martin's Solo Voyage Around the World



Holly Martin sailing the *SV Gecko* in the Fakarava atoll outside the pass. Inset: Pamplemousse (grapefruit) from Makemo atoll. Photos by Jarne Schmitt

# At the Makemo atoll

BY MARY FRANCES BARSTOW AND JAJA MARTIN

**H**olly Martin, 29, is doing what fewer than 300 people have ever done: sailing alone around the world. The first woman to accomplish this feat was Krystyna Chojnowska-Liskiewicz, from Poland, who completed her two-year trip in 1978.

Holly bought her boat in Connecticut after a long and careful search and christened it the *SV Gecko*. The boat is a Grinde, 27 feet long and 10 feet wide, built in Denmark in 1983. She then, back in Maine, gave it a thorough, ten-month overhaul, working intermittently on far-flung research vessels to earn and save mon-

ey. Holly set out from Maine last fall. Even with the travel complications that arose with the pandemic, she has sailed now through the Panama Canal and across much of the Pacific, reaching the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia. She is spending the cyclone season in that area before sailing on to New Zealand in the spring. We are following her journey in *Maine Women Magazine*, with the help of her mother Jaja Martin, an expert sailor herself. They are able to talk occasionally by a satellite phone. Here, Jaja generously shares the news of what Holly has been up to and where.

-----  
Holly is currently working her way northeast (NE) through the Tuamotus islands and atolls. Atolls are circular islands with lagoons at their centers, or chains or reefs of such islands, formed of coral. She is headed NE in order to get away from any potential storms which can come through during cyclone season. "It's nice to be able to stop at some of the atolls to break up the trip," Holly said. By heading NE she is sailing directly into the trade winds, with the current against her. "It's also fun to see the different atolls. They are each unique in so many ways: the fish and marine life, the locals, the

livelihoods of the people and the settlements themselves. Plus, it's great to get a full night's rest!"

"When cruisers arrive at the settlement of an atoll, the first thing they must do is check in with the mayor," said Holly. "But it's all the honor system, and not everyone complies. There is a daily fee of 50 cents which must be paid. I love going into the office and paying my 50 cents. I get so much back for that small amount. I get to meet some locals, ask any questions I want, and they are always so welcoming and hospitable. I've had offers of dinner, rides around the island, and even fresh fish!"

Sailing between the atolls can be tricky. The currents are unpredictable. They change direction and intensity depending on the wind and atmospheric pressure. It's important to be vigilant regarding your course, heading, and position. Because the atolls are ring-shaped islands, cruisers have to sail inside through a pass in order to get protection from the ocean swells. The passes, too, can be challenging because the tides and currents roaring in and out of them. It's important to hit the slack tide so that you are not sucked in too fast. Coming in too fast puts you at risk of getting washed into an underwater coral head. "With limited engine power, it's easy for the current to overcome my ability to maneuver *Gecko*," said Holly. Conversely, if the tide is streaming out, it can be hard to motor against it.

"One difficulty of sailing alone is that I can't have a look-out on the bow," said Holly. "The lookout can point out underwater *bombies*, or coral heads. Since the *bombies* aren't charted, there's no way to know their location. Sometimes, I run up to the bow, have a look, and run back to the helm quickly, but I can't always do that. There's definitely a small element of risk." Holly has learned to see where the *bombies* are by noticing the color of the water and the finding the "greasy look of the water just above the coral heads. On the way out of the pass, I always get local knowledge as to the best path to take."

Once safely anchored and checked in, Holly usually meets the locals as she walks around the settlement. "Everyone



Holly celebrating her 29th birthday, which is Dec. 12, on Makemo atoll. She'll be at sea on Dec. 12 heading east for Heo atoll, so she celebrated early. Photo by Jarne Schmitt

stops, smiles, and says 'Hi,'" said Holly. She describes how "fishermen often come out to the boats either to sell fish or give it away. Sometimes I'll go spearfishing with a group of local fishermen. It's important to find out which fish are safe to eat, and the fishermen can always tell you."

Tropical fish sometimes have a toxin called ciguatoxin. It causes food poisoning called ciguatera, which is a debilitating condition. "The funny thing is that the fish you can eat on one atoll are different from those you can eat on its neighboring atoll. Sometimes, you can eat the blue spotted grouper and not the red spotted ones, and sometimes it's the other way around."

An exciting day on any atoll is the day that the supply ship comes in. This is the day to go to market. Overpriced but still-welcome vegetables are usually what most cruisers are after. There is a carnival feeling in town as everyone lines up to see what the ship has brought in. "It feels like stepping back into to past," said Holly.

Holly is on Makemo atoll right now. I'm not sure where she's headed next. Holly will be spending the holidays on her boat anchored somewhere. "I'll probably spend the day with a few friends and locals." She's not sure exactly where she'll be that day, but I know she'll be having a good time with boundless holiday cheer! •

# Jordia Benjamin

## Expanding the reach of a museum's outreach

### *Instilling Resilience through Art at Colby College*

BY RACHEL ROMANSKI

It is good to meet Jordia Benjamin. She's the Mirken Senior Coordinator of Audience Engagement at the Colby College Museum of Art.

What's in the job description, you ask? Jordia focuses on the museum's public programming—the many events and outreach opportunities that get planned, offered, and coordinated every year. Some of these are what might be expected, such as talks, tours, and openings, while some are more innovative approaches designed to make the museum a true community asset.

In other words, Jordia Benjamin is in the business of making connections. The goal? For the Colby College Museum of Art to be interactive—in-touch in a meaningful way with its two main audiences: the academic community of Colby (including students, faculty, and staff) and the greater Waterville community. With Jordia and her team on the job, the museum is not an isolated and remote entity. It is part of a strong network, alive with teaching and learning opportunities.

As you can imagine, this work has taken on a new life since COVID-19. The pandemic has fundamentally changed the way we all interact and gather. Luckily, and with foresight and good sense, Jordia has been creating resilience in the museum since starting at Colby in 2016.

In the pre-pandemic era, she was busy laying the groundwork for the museum's current outreach programs. She focused on making and strengthening connections with local community members, small business owners, and folks in other towns around Maine.

Simultaneously, she was ahead of the curve when considering online programming, designed to reach a wider audience. Recognizing that the museum's location in Waterville made for a long commute for many potential visitors, she aimed to expand the *reach* of the outreach.

Being a liberal arts college in a rural Maine town meant getting creative when it came to engaging people and weaving together the area's co-existing communities. Inspired by Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, Jordia has been devising ways to entice people into the museum, especially people who might otherwise not have felt connected to the institution.

One example of this expansive approach is the *Let Art Inspire* wellness initiative. It promotes events like *Artful Movements*, a collaboration with School Street Yoga that provides free yoga classes inspired by artworks in the museum's collection.

Jordia has also coordinated movie nights at Railroad Square Cinema, working with the theatre staff to choose films that reflect themes presented in the museum's exhibitions. And there's the popular multimedia program *Visual Art + Conversation*, engaging museum staff, faculty members, and guest speakers to discuss a variety of fascinating and contemporary topics with their audiences in innovative ways.

While the movie nights have been postponed for now, the rest of the programming has turned towards virtual connection. October's *Artful Movements* has over 7,000 views online, for example. And the Colby College Museum has been working with Waterville Creates!, the Kennebec Montessori School, and Waterville Public Schools to make *Art Kits for All*, an effort designed in response to the pandemic to help keep families engaged and entertained at home by providing free art supplies and instructions for art projects.

In the midst of such challenging times, Benjamin is asking hard questions about what it means for an art museum to be truly engaged with the local community. She told me, "Museums are often seen as the cultural gatekeepers, but when we let that role go, we're able to work on the same level, be united, and be more effective."

Art is in Jordia's DNA. She was born and raised in the Bahamas, and her aunt, Dionne Benjamin Smith, and uncle, Jolyon Smith—both artists—were influential. Her childhood was spent in fascination of the paintings and sculptures hung throughout her grandfather's home.

When we discussed the Venn Diagram that exists between her birthplace, an archipelago that many would call an "island paradise," and her current home in Vacationland, she said, "There are more similarities than differences . . . There is town knowledge, and the pride that folks have in their local surroundings. The ability to know everyone and build these close networks of support—I understood that language immediately."

COLBY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART





The Student Advisory Board hosting a screen printing night for Colby students in the Museum's Mirken Education Center in 2018.  
*Photo by Peter Brown '20, Colby College Museum of Art Student Photographer*

She continues, “There’s a saying on the island, ‘We live where you vacation,’ and it’s the same thing here. It’s resilience. Even though we’re in much different places [in relation to the equator], nature can be grueling. It’s got gorgeous benefits and breathtaking scenery, but it also has a harshness to it. On the islands, we have hurricanes year after year. That’s when you see the overwhelming strength of unity. And here in Maine when the power is out or the snow is up to the top of your door, you need to depend on others to shovel you out. We all need one another, especially in times of crisis. No one is an island.”

It’s from this perspective that she aspires to bring local knowledge, history, and culture into the museum, tipping her hat towards greater Waterville’s tapestry of multicultural heritage, which includes a strong lineage of Wabanaki, Franco-American, and Lebanese peoples.

Before coming to Maine, Jordia was awarded a fellowship at the Saint Louis Art Museum in 2014. It was there that she worked with Renee Brummell Franklin, the renowned Director of Audience Development. Through this mentorship, among others, Benjamin honed her knowledge of how to create



Miriam Valle-Mancilla, Linde Family Foundation Coordinator of Academic Access at Colby College Museum of Art, and Jordia Benjamin dancing to the live music of a local band Suzy and the Smelts at Community Day in April 2017. *Photo by Jason Paige Smith*

bridges with the community and fresh, inviting entry points into the art museum. She connects with people who may not yet feel a strong pull towards the arts or the museums that house them.

This work means weaving together a constellation of ideas, activities, and forms. Are you interested in activities relating to health and wellness? Perhaps you’d like your yoga with a side of Surrealism. Do you enjoy canoeing? Fashion? Jordia

coordinated a Wabanaki led canoe trip and a fashion show, both events to coincide with the museum’s 2019 exhibition, *Wíweniḡan . . . the beauty we carry*, which featured contemporary art by First Nations people of Maine and Maritime Canada.

In addition to the planning and coordination of events and outreach, Jordia has been helping to instill resilience in the student body of Colby College. As a mentor, she sees students who come to the museum with light, dedication, and passion—qualities that Jordia calls the “secret sauce.”

She’s the staff advisor for the museum’s Student Advisory Board and teaches a course titled “Citizenship and Community.” Through the lens of art, students are learning to engage with their community. They create partnerships and work collaboratively in Waterville, and, as they move on to new locations, they will have the foundational wisdom to consider who is already a part of their new community, what groups might be reached, and the benefits of inclusiveness.

In Jordia’s world, these skills are profoundly related to the role of art and artists during this tumultuous social and environmental landscape. As she put it, referencing Nina Simone, “An artist’s duty [ . . . ] is to reflect the times. It’s



Artist Leonardo Drew was the Museum’s annual Miles and Katharine Culbertson Prentice Distinguished Lecturer in 2016. Drew discussed his recent work and *Number 104, 2005*, which at the time was on view at the Museum. Jordia was Leonardo’s point-person and organizer for the lecture. The lecture brought together 300 guests, made up of the local and academic community. *Photo by Jackson Hall '17, former Colby College Museum of Art Student*

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their choice, but I *choose* to reflect the times and situations in which I find myself. That, to me, is my duty.” And she sees that the museum can amplify the work of the artist and be relevant and essential, as we deal with the most pressing issues of our time.

Museums in general are shifting towards a more expansive future and away from an archaic past of stolen artifacts and misrepresented histories. A recent Colby Museum exhibition of Guyanese-British artist Hew Locke featured art that deals with issues of the environment, globalism, and colonial histories, while taking artistic form as beautifully ornate sculptures, paintings, drawings, and installations. Jordia said about the topic, “Art can ignite conversation. It can break down our subconscious walls which limit us from interacting with or getting to know others from different backgrounds.”



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Jordia Benjamin leading students on a tour of the 2019 exhibition *Zanele Muholi: Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail the Dark Lioness* in March 2019. Photo by Joseph Bui '22, Colby College Museum of Art Student Photographer

For all of this dedicated work of spinning intricate webs of connection and opportunity, Jordia is finding inspiration within Maine. She celebrates the work of Indigo Arts Alliance in Portland, an organization that supports artists of color in a city that has an increasingly diverse population. She also recognizes Wabanaki REACH, which advocates for Wabanaki self-determination by strengthening the cultural, spiritual, and physical well-being of Native people in Maine. On the national stage, Jordia is looking at socially engaged artists like Theaster Gates and Maya Lin, both of whom have had a relationship with the college in recent years, and organizations like For Freedoms, MassAction, and ChangeTheMuseum.

Jordia Benjamin's own "secret sauce" does not go unnoticed. Her colleague Miriam Valle-Mancilla, the Linde Family Foundation Coordinator of Academic Access at the museum, wrote, "Jordia embodies #BlackGirlMagic; in my eyes, she's one of the most influential beings I have encountered in Maine. . . She is a visionary and really exemplifies leadership in a motivational and inspirational role, not only for me but also for other young people of color."

Jordia radiates a warm, confident, and inspiring presence, even from under her mask. Because of Jordia Benjamin's dedication and expertise, Colby, Waterville, and Maine continue to become a more expansive, informed and, yes, resilient community. •

## Lightning Round

*Questions and Answers  
with Jordia Benjamin*

Q: Three people, dead or alive, at a dinner party?

A: Shirley Chisholm, Prince, Aretha Franklin

Q: Who would play you in your biopic movie?

A: Yara Shahidi

Q: Superpower?

A: Teleportation or a Rogue/Mystique hybrid

(the ability to touch something and become that thing)

# Dating During COVID-19

## PART TWO

BY CHRISTINE SIMMONDS

**C**atfish. It is more than a weird aquatic animal with whiskers that is tasty when lightly fried. It is now, thanks to a popular documentary and MTV television show, also a term in the dating world.

The film *Catfish*, released in 2010, follows filmmaker Yaniv “Nev” Schulman as he embarks on an online relationship with Megan. As the film progresses, it is revealed that Megan is not who she claims to be online.

The term comes from a moment in the movie where Vince, husband of the person pretending to be Megan, relates a story about cod and catfish being shipped across the world. It is a confusing and touching moment that will make you say, “Wait, did he just compare his wife to a fish?”

To catfish means to pretend to be someone or something you are not. Often it involves using another person’s picture and information. Sometimes the purpose behind this facade is to scam money, and sometimes it is just a person with low self-esteem who is unhappy with his or her own life and appearance.

During my time experimenting with online dating, I was catfished. Kind of.

It started when I received a message from Jay. I met Jay on the dating app Plenty of Fish. If you read the first part of my story (November, *Maine Women Magazine*), you may remember that I hate POF because there are no restrictions on who can send you a message.

It was the first message I had received on POF during this experience from someone that I might actually be interested in! Jay seemed to check the boxes on what I was looking for. He had a sense of humor. He appeared to be attractive in his pictures. He had a steady job. He lived close by. He could hold a conversation. He seemed to be interested in pursuing a relationship without immediately crossing my boundaries.



**Christine, 35**

Journalist and Writer  
University of Maine at Farmington  
less than a mile away

The first message he sent me said that journalists are all liars. So, he had at least read my profile. This belief he expressed can be a common sentiment in the day and age of “fake news media,” so I was a little annoyed but responded anyway. I gave him the benefit of the doubt that he was trying to be silly and flirty.

I told Jay that I actually worked very hard to present the truth in my stories and not allow my opinions to sway anything that I write.

Jay fired back that I must not be very good at my job, then. At this point I should have recognized that Jay was attempting a common tactic called “negging,” where you put a woman down in order to gain her interest. The theory behind this approach is that women prefer men who treat them badly. But it was late at night, and I had been trying to find someone decent to have a date with for almost a month at this point.

I informed Jay that my editors never had an issue with my work, which is really all I care about anyway.

Our conversation continued, and eventually we traded phone numbers to message a bit more easily. Jay appeared to give up his attempts to insult me into being interested. We had a pleasant conversation about our lives and got to know each other.

I was always honest with anyone I communicated with on these dating programs. On my profile, I listed my job as a reporter and a writer. During the course of any conversation with potential dates, I revealed that I was going to be writing about my experiences.

When I told Jay this fact, he wanted to know more. What were my experiences with these dating apps?

I told him that with POF my experience had been mainly a lot of sexual harassment and weirdos. He was curious and asked for more details. “Will you include me in the sexual harassment list or in the weirdos list?” he asked.

I told him I hoped he would be in neither list and that he could possibly be the nice local guy I met and went on dates with.

At this point we had been trying to make plans. Well, actually, he had been trying to convince me to come over. To his place. In the middle of the night. In the middle of a pandemic. Instead, I suggested we meet up the next day, in the daylight and outside—preferably in a crowded place with lots of witnesses and possibly a security camera.

He asked if he could come over. I told him he could not. He said I was being mean. Was I? I don’t think so.

Jay wanted to know more about my article. How exactly were these men harassing me? How were they weird? I explained that some of them sent me a lot of messages, and some of the messages were explicit. I explained I never answered, but some of

these men continued to write to me.

Jay wanted to know why I had answered his message, then. I said I thought he was cute, and he had not tried to sexually harass me.

“So, it’s all about the look, I guess,” he said. I attempted to explain that his accusation was not true, but he was convinced it was. Then he revealed he was not actually interested in me.

“You’re really, really shallow,” he wrote. “And I was just wasting time with you, listening to your hypocrisy . . . Gotta learn to be humble and see the heart of things, not just looks and material.”

That was the last text I got from him. It left me feeling weird. Was I shallow? Had I been materialistic?

The short answer to both questions is: no. The longer answer to both questions is: nooooooooooooo!

As women we get a lot of mixed messages. We are supposed to provide people with what they want. We are trained to be people-pleasers and caretakers, and often that comes at the price of ourselves. I had dared to refuse to waste my time with men I knew I was not interested in, and Jay had attempted to knock me down a peg. He failed.

It is 100 percent *not shallow* to be interested in someone based on their looks at first. After all, there has to be an attraction for a relationship to start. You cannot know a person’s heart just by looking at him. You can know if you find him attractive, and that is a start.

You do not owe any man anything. Or woman, if that is your sexual preference. You do not owe him or her a date just because they ask you out. You do not owe them a message just because they wrote one to you. You are a rock star, and your time is too valuable to waste with that nonsense.

It is also not shallow to want to date someone who has a job and stable finances. A relationship is meant to be a partnership, and one partner should not carry all the load in any aspect.

By this time, it was well past midnight, and Jay and I had been messaging for hours. He had, indeed, wasted my time. However, he also taught me a valuable lesson and caused me to do a bit of soul-searching. In the end, I found myself not at all wanting. •

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# *Hermon High Students Earn Associate Degrees— Weeks before Graduating from High School*

BY JODI HERSEY



While most people would like to forget all about 2020 and the pandemic that changed our lives, Hermon High School seniors Brooklyn Brown and Malaya Jelks are choosing to focus on what they gained, not what they lost, during the last 12 months. Together, these friends each earned their associate degrees from Eastern Maine Community College (EMCC), weeks before graduating from high school.

"We shaved off two years of college. If we go for another two years, we could have our bachelor's degrees at 19 years old," Brooklyn says.

The two enrolled in the One Campus, Two Schools program offered to high school students through the United Technologies Center and EMCC in Bangor, after a little coaxing and encouragement from their parents.

"I didn't want to do it at first, but my parents said it was a good opportunity," Malaya explains. "I also thought about the money aspect and how I wouldn't have to pay that much for college [in the end, if I did this program.]"

Little did they know just how helpful navigating online college classes would become when their high school, and so many other schools, went to all remote learning in March due to COVID-19.

"The most challenging course for me during all of this time was accounting," Malaya says. "I was used to going to school and then doing my online classes when I got home." With a harder course, it was harder for the students to learn all the content in the online format. "But," she says, "we Facetimed each other, which was helpful."

Instead of giving in to "senioritis" that many students feel during their last year of school, Brooklyn and Malaya worked harder. They put their time management skills to the test and spent countless nights plugging away at their liberal arts degrees.

"I have always been the type of student who gets her homework done, but I personally did not think I could do this. It was not easy," Brooklyn recalls. "In college, you have to have your work in by the deadline. In high school, they're a little more lenient, but in college if you don't get your work in, you get a zero. So dual

enrollment really toughened me up a bit and made me a better person."

EMCC President Lisa Larson said the One Campus, Two Schools program is an innovative and creative program that provides students the opportunity to explore careers while achieving college credit.

"Our goal is to create success for students. The UTC instructors are really great to work with. They are excellent instructors, advisors, mentors, and partners who work closely with students to determine who has an interest and is prepared for college-level work," Larson explains. "We have started small, five to eight students a year per program, and we will continue to grow as we are able."

Brooklyn and Malaya are now attending "in person" classes at Husson University in Bangor, where they are both pursuing bachelor's degrees. Malaya is majoring in marketing communications and Brooklyn is studying business.

"I think taking college classes while I was in high school was a huge success," Malaya says. "I honestly feel like I am breezing through college right now, and many of the courses I took counted towards my major."

The pair's former guidance counselor at Hermon High School, Leslie Smith, says she is proud of their accomplishments.

"Hermon High is very proud of Brooklyn and Malaya. Their amazing ability to complete this program shows incredible commitment, dedication, maturity, strong work ethic, and fiscal responsibility in making decisions for their future. We are so happy for them and miss them terribly," Leslie says.

The two 2020 high school graduates aren't shy about sharing their experience with others. They hope to inspire students in their community, and within their own families, to follow in their footsteps.

"Our brother and sister are going to do the same thing, so we're calling them the new Malaya and Brooklyn," Brooklyn said with a smile. "I recommend the program 110 percent. Just have someone with you. It doesn't matter who it is, and the two of you will grow so close. Malaya and I are now best friends. So, I got college credits and I got a friendship out of this." •

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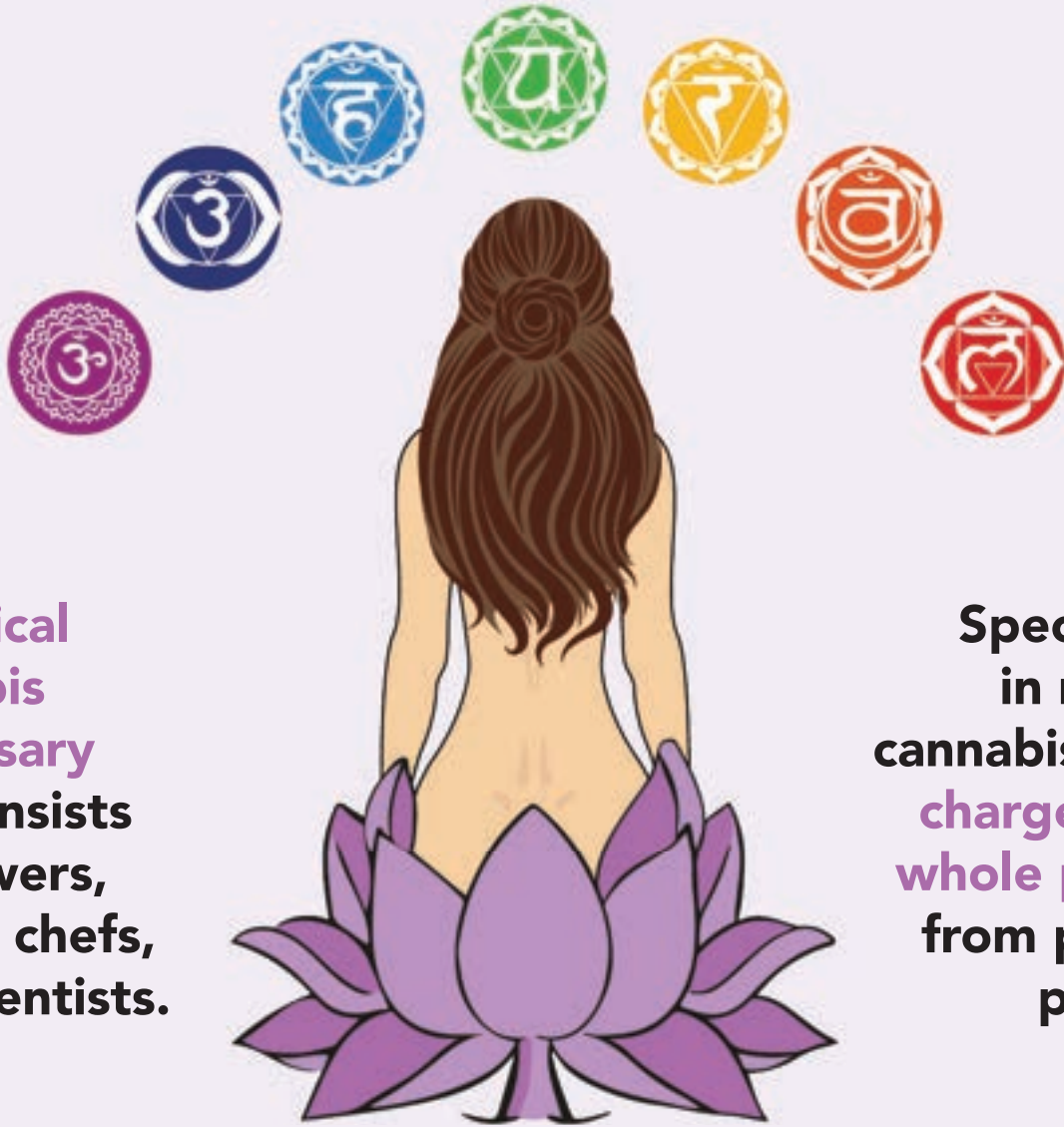
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# MAINE ARTIST *Evelyn Dunphy*

*Building on a strong design—  
in her painting and in her life*

BY AVERY HUNT



Evelyn Dunphy, now a widely respected West Bath artist, always believed in her heart that she *was* an artist. As a little girl growing up in rural Nova Scotia, she held onto that dream, and throughout the next half century she kept the faith and kept working to become what she knew she was. Finally, today she can say with assurance that some dreams do come true.

For a woman who didn't start actually painting until the mid-1990s, Evelyn has come a long way. Her work has been exhibited and awarded in juried art shows throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, most recently by the North American Biennial New England Watercolor Society Exhibition. She is a Signature Member of the New England Watercolor Society, and a member of multiple other guilds and associations. She has also been featured in the *Boston Globe*, the *New York Times*, the *Maine Sunday Telegram*, and many art magazines.

Evelyn Dunphy is best known in Maine and New England for her iconic landscapes, especially of Mt. Katahdin. In 2006, she was part of a group of Maine artists who worked to help save Katahdin Lake and the precious wilderness around it. They donated their art-work and time—and contributed their presence and energy—to the huge fund-raising campaign. The artists, together with the Maine Department of Conservation and the Trust for Public Land, raised the needed \$14 million (\$11.5 million, plus \$2.5 million in state funds) to buy the 6000-acre property from the Gardner Land Company, a Maine timber company. Now much of the land is part of Baxter State Park, with other portions administered by the Department of Conservation. Evelyn and all the Maine-based artists involved in this preservation effort were an important part of its success.

None of this heady success was even remotely in Evelyn's game plan when she finally began to paint at age 50, pursuing that path that to her seemed predestined.

Evelyn grew up, one of five children, in a remote region on the Shubenacadie River, north of Halifax. The nearest store was 10 miles away. It was a hardscrabble but beautiful place. She went to a tiny grade school and remembers being chosen to decorate the blackboards every morning and being delighted by those colorful chalks. Materials were hard to come by, and these were her first medium. There were no other art supplies.

She was an avid reader and a bit of a dreamer. At nine, she was writing "novels" in which she was the heroine and traveled the world. In her imagination, she was always on an exotic journey, never stuck in a dull office. At 11, her family moved to Halifax, and she left her isolated existence behind. She had friends, piano lessons, and a paper route. Life moved on. "I didn't look back for many years," she says.

In high school, Evelyn had aspirations to be a nurse, but after graduating at 16, she found she'd have to wait until she was 19. There were no college possibilities, so she worked in a bank office to save money for nursing school. Then came a surprise offer to work as a flight attendant for Air Canada. "It was my dream opportunity to travel. Any idea of being an angel of mercy went out the window!"

After two years of jetting throughout Canada and the US, she met and married her husband of over 50 years, Hugh Dunphy. Together they raised five boys, and they now enjoy 11 grandchildren. Along the way, there was always time for some sort of art. In the





*December Snow, Katahdin*

beginning, it was applique. With no formal art training, Evelyn began designing, cutting, and stitching quilts and wall hangings. She made intricate constructions of seascapes, landscapes, and Bible stories. Armed with nothing but a few samples, she approached the Smithsonian Museum shop and was awarded a commission for 75 baby quilts.

In 1989, the Dunphys moved to Maine from New York (40 min from the city) where they raised their sons. Hugh went to Bowdoin, so Maine was very familiar to them. Evelyn recalls, “We came to visit friends on vacation and on the second day we were here, we bought the house we have been in ever since. Best thing we ever did!” They spent the next several years renovating their classic 1830s-era farmhouse. Hugh built her a little red studio behind their house for inspiration. She began to devour art theory books and spent hours creating a lush palette of perennial gardens around their property.

Evelyn soon came to grips with the fact that studying art was only half the battle. As she put it, “While I was always thinking that one day I’m going to paint, I did everything but!” In 1996, she took the plunge. For three years, she worked diligently, washing watercolors onto paper and honing her skills. She studied with a few select Maine artists, attended workshops, and sought out private tutors. Of all the works she created during that time, she didn’t try to sell a single one. “People would ask me if they could buy a painting, but I couldn’t. I was so afraid I wouldn’t be able to do another one.”

Luckily for art lovers, she overcame that fear. In addition to showing paintings in her studio, she put on her marketing hat and began actively selling them. Today, an Evelyn Dunphy original commands significant prices, and her reputation continues to grow. Not resting on her laurels, she still heads for her studio most mornings and works until late afternoon. She tries to keep a regular schedule. “If I don’t, it just doesn’t happen,” she says. In fact, rigorous discipline is clearly part and parcel of Evelyn’s artistic endeavors.

As her body of work increased, she added pastels to her repertoire because she likes the immediacy of that medium (much like the chalks of her childhood). She also produces some of her originals in limited, high-quality giclée prints.

Evelyn explains her painting process succinctly: “My first step is deciding on a ‘concept’—a subject, a particular color combination, a



Top: *Sun Seekers*

Bottom: *We Were Beautiful Once, Parrot Tulips*



mood or atmosphere, or maybe just a combination of shapes that excites me. Once my concept is clear, I plan the composition and values and explore the colors that I want to include. Building a strong design is the first step to create a painting that will be more than just a ‘pretty picture.’”

In addition to her painting, Dunphy has also been teaching small workshops in her studio for the past decade. Last year, finally outgrowing her space, she moved to the West Bath Grange, where she held weekly classes and invited guest art-

ists to give workshops. In September 2019, an Australian art video company with a global reach made their first US East Coast visit. Dunphy, one of six artists chosen (and the only Mainer) was filmed for a segment on their international channels. The subject was a painting of Katahdin.

For her dedicated students, she has been holding workshops in Europe for several years, working with Escapade, a French art tour company. Dunphy was one of the first American artists to lead two workshops in Cuba in 2016.

Today, in the midst of the COVID pandemic, in-person classes have come to a stop. Not one to give in, Evelyn, who is already social-media savvy, has taken a new route: teaching art via Zoom. Working with the head of French Escapade, which had to shut down travel operations in March, Evelyn has become one of a small team of global artists holding virtual art classes with students from all over the map. With two weeks of expert help on upgrading technology, she is now holding intensive classes three days a week, each month. Exhilarated by the whole process, she says, "At first I thought this would be a poor substitute for what I had been doing, and of course I miss the actual travel, but there are surprising benefits." Her students are tuning in from Maine, Canada, Alaska, and throughout the United States, 16 at a time.

"The schedule of teaching and travel that I had planned for 2020 evaporated overnight," Evelyn says, "so this opportunity to stay engaged with artists in an online format has been a great 'silver lining.'"




Evelyn at her easel, painting at Rhodora, the remote Frederic Church camps on Millinocket Lake, where she's been teaching workshops for many years.

Thinking about her recent experiences she says, "For me, one of the most important aspects is meeting so many new artists, many of whom have become friends. As one artist/student from Toronto wrote to me, 'One day we will get together in person, and it will be as if we have known each other all our lives.'"

*For more information about Evelyn Dunphy, please check her website or email her at [artist@evelyndunphy.com](mailto:artist@evelyndunphy.com).*

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# The UNITED STATES CADET NURSE CORPS *in World War II*

*When the Nation Needs Them, Nurses Answer the Call*

BY SHEILA D. GRANT

The lack of nurses during World War II led to a massive advertising campaign, an abbreviated path to become a Registered Nurse (RN), and federal funding to cover tuition. About 120,000 women, including many from Maine, stepped up to fill the nation's nursing needs and went on to have long careers well after the war ended.

In the book she co-authored, *Maine Nursing: Interviews and History on Caring and Competence* (2016), writer Juliana L'Heureux, BS, MHSA, RN, along with co-authors Valerie Hart, Susan Henderson, and Ann Sossong, report the extraordinary efforts the government took to launch the US Cadet Nurse Corps. By the end of

the 1930s, America had become acutely aware of the war in Europe. Hitler's invasion of Poland increased the possibility that the United States might become involved. The nursing profession rallied to the call for an adequate supply of nurses. Major nursing organizations, the Red Cross, and the nursing units of the federal government met, and the Nursing Council on National Defense was born.

This group later became known as the Nursing Council for War Service (NCWS). The organization's mission was the recruitment of nurses for a war and of students for schools of nursing. NCWS depended on state nursing associations to accurately count graduate nurses in the country. In 1941, that number was almost 290,000. Of those, 173,000 were actively practicing and 100,000 would be eligible for military service.

The organization aimed to raise enrollments to schools of nursing by 50,000 to 65,000 recruits, which proved to be difficult. War work paid well, while nursing schools had a reputation of providing hard work and low pay. Nursing had an image problem.

The organization aimed to raise enrollments to schools of nursing by 50,000 to 65,000 recruits, which proved to be difficult. War work paid well, while nursing schools had a reputation of providing hard work and low pay. Nursing had an image problem.



Cadet Nurse Ruth Yandow Viens.  
*Photo courtesy of Viens family.*



Cadet Nurse Mattie (Violette) Gagnon.  
*Photo courtesy of Gagnon family.*



An ad in LIFE magazine, 1944.

The US Cadet Nurse Corps was created in July 1943. As *Maine Nursing: Interviews and History on Caring and Competence* details, there was “a massive effort involving cinema, radio, and magazines” to promote the corps. More than 300 national radio programs broadcasted information about the corps. The corporate world contributed by featuring cadet nurses in ads for Eastman Kodak, Pond’s Cold Cream, Kotex, Pepsi-Cola, Old Spice, Sanka Coffee, and the National Biscuit Company. The Office of War Information distributed several million leaflets and 2.8 million cards to towns and cities nationwide.

Thousands of department stores, post offices, pharmacies, hospitals, and schools prominently displayed Cadet Nurse Corps posters. Articles and ads appeared in popular magazines of the day, including *Collier’s*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, *Vogue*, and hundreds of other smaller-market publications.

In 1944, Vanguard Films produced a 10-minute film, *Reward Unlimited*, starring Dorothy McGuire as Cadet Peggy Adams. The film was distributed to 1,600 theaters where it was viewed by an estimated 90 million people. Actresses in cadet uniforms were featured in other films, as well, including *Lady on a Train*, *The Blonde from Brooklyn*, and Shirley Temple’s *Kiss and Tell*, all of which came out in 1945.

As an added incentive, the Cadet Nurse Corps had no tuition or uniform fees and paid a stipend to cadets. The usual three-year program was also accelerated to only 30 months, with student agreeing to either join the military or work as nurses upon graduation.

## MAINE GAINED NURSES THROUGH THE CADET NURSE CORPS

One such student was Eleanor Sargent, born in April 28, 1925, in Millinocket, who describes in the book how she became a cadet nurse. After graduating from high school in 1943, Eleanor worked as “a domestic for a lovely family in Bangor.” Next door lived a doctor, the hospital director of Eastern Maine General Hospital, who asked if Eleanor would like to become a nurse. “I told him I would love to but that we were very poor and couldn’t afford it. That is when he told me that the army had started the Cadet Nurse program, and he could get me in it.”

Eleanor went to work at Milliken Memorial Hospital, in Island Falls. Just before she turned 40, the school of anesthesia was launched at EMMC. Eleanor graduated with a certified registered nurse anesthetist degree, which she said, “changed my life completely. I have worked all over the USA. I am licensed in 18 states. I worked as a medical missionary with Feed the Children from 1985 to 2003.”

Laurie Lachance, who served as the first woman Maine State Economist with Governors John R. McKernan Jr., Angus King, and John Baldacci, and who is now the first woman president of Thomas College, as well as serving on



Maine’s Economic Recovery Committee, was raised by a member of the US Cadet Nurse Corps.

Her father, a WWII veteran, was managing a store in Patten, Laurie said, “which is where he met my mom,” Mattie (Violette) Gagnon. “She was a cadet nurse. As soon as her training was finished, they sent her to the Bronx to work in a VA hospital, which freed up another, more experienced nurse to go to war.”

Mattie put her RN training to good use after the war, as well. She took nursing jobs that allowed her to be home with the children when they were young, even if that meant working evening shifts.

“Her favorite job was the one she had from when I was in the 7th grade on,” Laurie recalled. “She became the school nurse for the district.” Mattie became active in the Maine Association of School Nurses, eventually serving as statewide president. She was also elected into Delta Kappa Gamma, an international society for key women educators. “She became a leader,” Laurie said. “I had never thought of her in that way until later when I started reflecting on what she accomplished.”

In Maine, there seem to be two degrees of separation, rather than six. As Laurie got to know her college board members, she discovered that one of them, Ken Viens, had a mother trained in the Cadet Nurse Corps, as well.

“Mom’s name was Ruth Yandow Viens, and she trained at Fanny Allen Hospital in Colchester, Vermont,” Ken said. “It was a Catholic hospital, and the ‘girls’ and the nuns were very close.”

Ruth, her husband, and their three children moved to Waterville in 1969. Denise McGuan, Ken’s sister, recalled, “She worked in obstetrics and nursery until she had my brother, Ken. [But] she did tell about her training days and how strict the schooling (and life sleeping in one big dorm room) was for all the girls in training.”

“Friday night was your night off, and if things went poorly during the week, you were not allowed to go out Friday night,” Denise said. “Every morning before Mass, they were reviewed in uniform, and everything had to be starched and in perfect order or you were sent back to your room.”

“These women that trained with my mom were her lifelong, closest of friends,” she said. “When my mom would meet other women who were cadet nurses, it was like they were all part of a special group. For over 60 years my mom returned to a class reunion. There were eight women left 10 years ago in her group. I know of only one now.”

“Mom died this past November 11 at age 94, just a couple of days after her birthday,” said Ken. “I am not sure, but she might have been about the last of her cohort.”

## HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

The Cadet Nurse Corps remain the only uniformed corps members from WWII not to be recognized as veterans. In 2019, US Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), Angus King (I-Maine), and Steve Daines (R-Montana) re-introduced the US Cadet Nurse Corps Service Recognition Act, a bill to honor women who served in the US Cadet Nurse Corps during WWII with honorary veteran status. The bill has been submitted to the Senate Committee on Veteran’s Affairs.

The act would provide Cadet Nurses with veteran status with an honorable



U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

“They were trained to give the best of themselves and believed their work was a vocation, not a profession.”

discharge from service where merited and with limited burial benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. It would permit the Secretary of Defense to provide honorably discharged Cadet Nurses with a service medal. The legislation would not provide Cadet Nurses with VA pensions, healthcare benefits, or other privileges afforded to former active-duty service members.

“From hospitals to military bases overseas, nurses work on the front lines of patient care and serve as critically important advocates for patients and their families,” said Senators Collins and King in a joint statement. “The US Cadet Nurse Corps played an important role in WWII, addressing a critical shortage of nurses during the war and providing women with an expedited nursing education in exchange for their healthcare services. US Cadet Nurses worked tirelessly to keep America’s healthcare system strong, and many went on to work in military

hospitals caring for our injured troops. We encourage our colleagues to join us in honoring US Cadet Nurses by supporting this meaningful bill.”

A resolution, introduced by Sen. King on Dec. 19, 2018, to recognize the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the US Cadet Nurse Corps and express the appreciation of the Senate for the contribution of the members of the corps during WWII was passed by unanimous consent.

“They certainly deserved recognition for their service to the country,” said Ken.

“What these women learned, they carried with them their whole life,” added Denise. “They were trained to give the best of themselves and believed their work was a vocation, not a profession.”

For more information about Maine Nursing: Interviews and History on Caring and Competence, visit [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or contact the co-author at [Juliana@Mainewriter.com](mailto:Juliana@Mainewriter.com).



Matt Scott, Vice President and Heat Pump Manager, Dave's World. Photos courtesy Dave's World

## Heat Pumps Are Leading Maine in Home Energy Efficiency

By Matt Scott, Dave's World

This year, Mainers are staying home more than ever. The need to heat homes more efficiently and affordably has not only become more apparent, but also a necessity for many. There is good news for those looking to make a change and reduce their carbon footprint.

Home heating oil consumption in Maine is higher than any other state in the nation per capita, and with many working and spending more time at home during the day energy consumption is on the rise. In an effort to combat the state's reliance on fossil fuels, Governor Mills signed the bill, "An Act To Transform Maine's Heat Pump Market To Advance Economic Security and Climate Objectives" last June. In turn, a goal was set to increase the use of high-efficiency heat pumps in the state to 100,000 by 2025.

The quasi-state agency Efficiency Maine reports that high-performance heat pumps save users an average of 40 percent and as high as 70 percent for baseboard electric users when using a heat pump.

"High-performance heat pumps are an affordable, efficient, and accessible heating and cooling appliance that is an important component of reducing carbon emissions," says Andy Meyer, Efficiency Maine's Senior Program Manager.

### Heating and Cooling Capabilities

There is still a large misconception that heat pumps only heat. They also cool air, with the device meeting both needs. The best way to understand how a heat pump works is to look at it like a "heat mover."

In winter, ductless heat pumps pull the heat from outside air and move it indoors. Moving already-existing heat instead of creating it allows heat pumps to be so energy efficient, saving homeowners money on energy costs.

In summer, the opposite is true. Heat pumps pull the heat from inside your house and push it outside.

For a long time, heat pumps were used for cooling in warm climates. Heat pumps are now able to provide efficient heating in cold climates even at outdoor temperatures as low as -15°F.

### Double Rebate Opportunities

As part of the effort to increase heat pump use across the state, Mainers can currently receive up to \$1,500 in new heat pump installations through Efficiency Maine for qualifying units when the installation meets certain criteria. This amount is double the rebate opportunities typically offered. Rebates are available until funds of the program have been depleted.

"This year especially, we were looking for ways to save money on our home heating and cooling expenses," explains Tena Sturgeon of Holden. "Our heat pump has been a great addition to our home."

Maine residents are encouraged to take advantage of the program by setting up a quote with an Efficiency Maine Qualified Partner such as Dave's World.

If you are interested in learning more about heat pump rebates visit [efficiency-maine.com](http://efficiency-maine.com).

## Things to consider when purchasing a Heat Pump

- **Cold temperature performance.** Because heat pumps extract heat from outside to provide warm air inside during the heating season, as it gets colder outside, the heat pumps work harder to keep up, making them less efficient. For example, a system that delivers four units of heat for every unit of electricity at 50°F, may deliver only two units of heat for every unit of electricity at temperatures below zero. There is evidence of the highest performance units operating and providing heat even below -15 °F. But if the temperature drops low enough, the system may turn off completely. *Be sure to check out the minimum operating temperature listed for your heat pump.*

- **Heat distribution.** Heat pumps rely on air movement to distribute heat. This can make it hard to get heat around corners and into dead-end spaces. Open space homes may provide better results, but there are heat pump installation tips and considerations that can help you get the most from a heat pump.

- **Interactions with the primary heating system.** If you are thinking about using a heat pump along with another heating system, make sure to locate the heat pump where it will not conflict with the other system's thermostat. This kind of conflict could result in one system preventing the other from running. This is not a risk if you are using a heat pump as your only heating system.

- **Work with an Efficiency Maine Residential Registered Vendor.** Doing so will help you find the best solutions for your home, and the best rebate opportunities available.

Source: [www.efficiencymaine.com](http://www.efficiencymaine.com)





From top, the Sugarplum Fairy Kit and assembled Sugarplum Fairy.  
*Photos by Laura Franz*

# B e Y O N d C r a f t s



## *New Kits Encourage Creativity and Connection*

BY SUSAN OLCOTT

**T**wo Brunswick moms are taking crafts beyond their usual purposes for kids and families. Laura Franz and Gina Franco are the co-founders of BeYONd Crafts, a company producing DIY craft kits that are fun and creative—and also community-minded and nature-oriented.

They chose the name BeYONd Crafts to express the three connections they hope every family makes beyond the craft itself. The Y stands for Yourself, the O is for Others and the N is for Nature. “We wanted a name that honors what we are trying to do, that’s just a little bit different,” says Gina.

Laura and Gina have been friends since their kids were in preschool together. They often shared their experiences about motherhood and their ideas for creative play. They also shared academic and professional backgrounds in the





Laura Franz, left, and Gina Franco.  
 Photo by Mike Franz



From top, three wooden figures in the Winter Gnome Kit and the assembled Winter Gnomes.  
 Photos by Laura Franz

fields of education and psychology—and a love of crafting.

Both women had put their careers on hold in the early years of motherhood, but then, last fall, when their kids were back at school, they were having tea, and an idea sprouted. “We saw a need in families that are busy and might want to do meaningful projects with their kids, but they don’t have the right materials or know where to start,” Laura said. The women’s mutual and complementary skills and passions kicked in, and BeYOND Crafts soon took shape as a reality.

From the start, they wanted their crafting kits to be not only fun for kids to do with their families but also to be helpful in building connections. “We wanted to come up with meaningful and simple ways to extend beyond the enclosed project to connect to yourself, to others, and to nature.” The kits would be simple enough for pre-school aged children to use but also include enough “connection” possibilities that they would appeal to grade school students. That was the seed of their idea, and they thought they’d let it germinate for a bit.

But then, when the pandemic struck, life as we all knew it changed. “We saw that these kits could play a vital purpose,” says Gina. “We saw that people and kids could use a way to connect, now more than ever. That motivated us to get something out right away.”

That “something” was their first prototype kit. They called it the “Connection Kit,” and it included materials like clothespins, mini bundles of yarn, and pipe cleaners to make a clothespin “doll,” along with small triangles of cloth, mini-clips, and a length of ribbon to make a mini banner. It also included a letter writing set with small sheets of colorful paper, stickers, envelopes, and a pocket-sized set of markers so that you could write to or even send your creations to connect to a friend who you might not be able to see in person. By the end of spring, the founders were ready to share these kits with families in the community and to ask for their feedback. “What we heard was how much joy having a fresh idea with all the supplies they needed brought to people,” says Laura.

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They also got some valuable feedback from their children, who were live-in product testers now that they were home from school. Charlie (10) and Henry (7) are Laura's sons, and Ashton (9) and Rhys (7) are Gina's sons. You might not think that four boys would be so excited about crafting. But their boys have been eager assistants from the start. "Oh my goodness, they help us with everything," says Laura. "We are very aware that crafts are often marketed for girls." "We wanted to make sure that no one feels excluded in our kits and that they are appealing to all genders," adds Gina.

After the positive responses they received on their "Connection Kits," they began to think of what kits they would create next. Summer was busy with lots of outdoor play, but they continued to meet and came up with a set of fall-themed kits that they planned to market through social media, as well as through a pop-up shop in Laura's front yard in a busy residential neighborhood. They worked in a few more educational components as well in response to peoples' desire for more at-home learning opportunities. "We added little elements like how to address an envelope or how to make a leaf rubbing. But, they aren't overwhelming. We always want it to be fun," says Gina.

The results were four kits: "The Gaggle of Ghosts" where you make mini hanging ghosts on a branch, the "Halloween Pen Pal" kit with a series of themed stickers, the "Fall Banner" kit with tiny leaf and acorn print flags, and the "Warm Spice Play dough" kit to make scented shapes with cookie cutters. Each came in a little decorative brown bag with an instruction sheet that included photos and a list of materials along with ideas for further connections. At their fall pop-up, these kits sold like hotcakes. "The boys were amazing marketers for us," says Laura. "Charlie was out there shouting out our wares and waving people over. And Henry was working the cash register and keeping track of what we'd sold." After just a few hours, they had sold out of much of their stock. They'd also collected ideas from their customers of what they'd like to see next—ideas and involvement they value greatly. "We really take input seriously and design our kits accordingly," says Laura.

That feedback helped them design winter kits like the "Winter Gnome Kit" which includes materials like felt for making pointy hats as well as a map template to create your own "Gnomeland" and a set of "Get to Gnome Me" personality cards to fill out, and the "Sugarplum" fairy kit that includes supplies like a fluffy white feather and fabric flowers along with an ornament hanger. As for spring, the ideas are already flowing.

Ideas for the future are flowing as well. "Our glow-up moment will be when we get to the point when we can include people in the community who have strengths in areas we don't in our kits. There are so many really talented women in Maine who have gifts to put into the world, and we would love to find ways for them to do that," adds Gina.

For now, these two moms and their boys are taking their talents beyond their own backyards to help others form meaningful connections.

*BeYONd craft kits are available by emailing Laura and Gina at [beyondcraftsmaine@gmail.com](mailto:beyondcraftsmaine@gmail.com).* •



Photo by Liz Gotthelf

# JENNIFER LEVIN of Chilton Furniture

*Keeping Alive American Traditions of Simple, Clean Lines*

BY LIZ GOTTHELF

When first talking to Jennifer Levin, president of Chilton furniture, you would think she had been in the furniture business her whole life.

She speaks enthusiastically and knowledgeably about the company's products—high-quality furniture made in America—and she can tell at a glance what type of wood is used in any particular piece and its style and level of craftsmanship.

However, prior to 2014, when she and husband Jared bought the long-established business, she didn't have any experience in the field.

Jennifer and her family were living in New York. Jared was working as an investment banker, and she had retired from a career as a corporate attorney to raise their three daughters. When their youngest child was in school, she decided she wanted to go back to work but that she needed a change. Jennifer had strong ties to Maine—she spent summer vacations in Ocean Park and had graduated from Bates College. So, naturally her thoughts turned that direction.

"I actually Googled 'businesses to buy in Maine,' and Chilton Furniture came up on the first page," she said.

Jennifer was impressed with the longevity of the business, which was established in 1885, and its dedication to Shaker-style wood furniture made in America with simple, clean lines.

Though the two didn't have any experience in the furniture-making business or design, Jared used his skills in finance and Jennifer used skills from her career in law and assessed the business. They decided it was a good investment and a good fit.

"Once we decided to buy the company, I looked closely at the furniture and said, 'If we're going to do this, I want it to feel like my voice. I think it needs to reflect who we are,'" she said.

She found a designer who took the time to get to know her and who listened.

"He really understood what I was going for and was able to translate it into pieces [of furniture]," she said.



Working with and being “vertically integrated” with the designer and local craftsmen, Jennifer said the company isn’t just curating items but is actively a part of the process of making quality items. She knows that people will have these strong, appealing, durable items in their homes for decades and in some cases, will pass them down as heirlooms to future generations.

Jennifer said one of the biggest pieces of advice she can give to other aspiring business owners was one of the biggest challenges she faced, and that was that she couldn’t do everything.

“That has been humbling because my background, being a lawyer, I felt that I needed to do it all myself,” she said. But she came to see the matter differently. “You need people who are invested in your vision and who can make a commitment and show to you that they care, and then let them have a little space to do it.”

“I felt like once we all got on the same page of what the vision is, I’ve been able to watch as each of my team members has contributed something really, really necessary. And it’s made this place much better. It’s been amazing how it’s all come together,” she said.

In the six years since Jennifer and Jared bought Chilton Furniture, they’ve made some updates to the furniture, while still honoring the Shaker traditions. The company is known for timeless pieces with clean lines—for simple designs that would be right at home in a farmhouse or a city apartment. In addition to the Shaker line, Chilton Furniture also offers Modern, Craftsmen, and Live Edge lines.

The pieces now tend to be treated with a clear stain to show off the wood’s natural beauty. The showroom in Portland has a wide palette of colors, including red cherry wood, chocolate-toned walnut, tan Maple wood, and light-colored Ash wood.

The Portland show room, located on Commercial Street, is spacious, with high ceilings, brick walls, and soft lighting. It’s open and uncluttered. Jennifer attributes some of her aesthetics to time spent in Japan. Each piece is deliberately placed to give it breathing room and allow it to be focused on. Items are decorated with soft sheepskin, pottery that contains sand from Maine beaches, and locally made candles.

“Everything that we put in here, we really believe helps people ground themselves.

And that is how I feel about wood furniture—that it’s very grounding,” she said.

Jennifer said that she knows many people who have started businesses and understands that process can be hard, but she’s learned that buying an established business and making it your own also poses some challenges. It’s important to be aware of the customers and your internal team and what their expectations are.

“It’s almost like shifting a boat, a large steamer. You have to make a little change in the turns, and the changes take years because you can’t just automatically change everything,” she said. If you make changes too quickly, you could alienate customers.

Chilton Furniture still carries on the tradition of American-made products. The company collaborates with the Sabbathday Lake Shakers of New Gloucester—the only remaining active Shaker community in the country—to make the Alfred Village chair.

When Jennifer and Jared bought Chilton Furniture, 27 percent of the furniture production was in Maine, and now it’s about 60 percent. Jennifer said that in 2018, in an effort to meet a goal

of selling more Maine-made products, the company overbooked Maine furniture builders, and there was a backup. They offered discounts, like free shipping, when orders were delayed. They are learning from that experience and thinking through plans more, in advance and from all angles. They work with furniture builders both in Maine and out of state, with the continued goal to increase production in Maine.

Whatever lies ahead to learn and do, one factor remains unchanging for the woman at the helm of the ship: an appreciation for the beauty and pleasing functionality of well-made wood furniture. As Jennifer puts it, "I love the texture that wood can impart to a room. I love the smell of it, I love the touch of it, and the color of the grain." That admiration for wood, shown to advantage with simple, clean lines, is a steadfast constant.

*Chilton Furniture has showrooms in Portland, Scarborough, and Freeport. For more information on Chilton Furniture, go to [www.chiltons.com](http://www.chiltons.com).*



Photo by Jeff Roberts

*"Everything that we put in here, we really believe helps people ground themselves. And that is how I feel about wood furniture—that it's very grounding."*

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# FOWSIA MUSSE

*Former refugee.*

*Single mother of five.*

*And Executive Director of  
Maine Community Integration  
in Lewiston.*

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY AMY PARADYSZ

**F**owsia Musse mentors hundreds of Lewiston-area girls involved with Isku-Filan—“Strong Girls” in Somali—the after-school and summer program that she founded three years ago. And now, finally, at the age of 42, she sees herself as a strong woman.

“In some aspects of my life, I showed myself to be courageous and talked about girls’ empowerment,” Fowsia says. “But in my personal life, I wasn’t actually that person.”

Growing up in war-torn Somalia and being subjected to female circumcision as a child, Fowsia arrived in the United States as a refugee in 1995. She dealt with her trauma in the most American of ways: speaking out against injustice, discovering a love of fashion, and going through a punk rock phase. But, by the time she graduated from high school in Georgia, Fowsia was in an arranged marriage and had given birth to a daughter. Within a year, she had a second daughter.

“That’s how I was raised,” she says. “You have children young and that life is hard.”

The climate in Georgia—too similar to Somalia—made life even harder, triggering Fowsia’s memories of abuse as a child. She took the advice of her sister-in-law and made the trip to Lewiston, Maine, to see if it would be more to her liking. It was a radical, risk-taking move. And her husband followed.

That first winter in Maine, Fowsia took a Yellow Cab to Hannaford in the first snowfall she’d ever seen. “The windows of small single-family houses had Christmas lights, and I felt very peaceful,” she says. “Because winter has no association with my childhood trauma, it has the opposite effect.”

By the time the young couple had their third daughter—the first born in Maine—her husband had moved on, settling in Maryland. Fowsia stayed, raising their children in Lewiston. Whenever he came back, Fowsia says, she would step back as head of household and let him co-parent. He'd drink, belittle her community service, and leave . . . and eventually come back again. Until this fall, when she divorced him.

"I feel empowered and liberated that I, as a Muslim woman, asked for a divorce," Fowsia says, adding that the faith leader from her local mosque advocated on her behalf. "I wanted to show my girls that this isn't what a healthy relationship looks like. I wanted to break the cycle."

As an American woman with a career, she says, she had a choice that her own mother in Somalia had not.

Soon after Fowsia arrived in Maine in 2003, she started volunteering as a neighborhood advocate, helping other immigrants enroll their children in public school. That work led to her being hired as a cultural broker with Central Maine Medical Center, then as an advocate for victims of sexual violence. In 2008, Fowsia founded the Auburn Neighborhood Network, a precursor to Maine Community Integration, the nonprofit that she runs today. She was on the Lewiston City Council's Refugee Integration and Policy Working Group. All those years, her focus was on immigrants, especially Somali immigrants.

Then, in 2016, the organization Healthy Androscoggin hired her as a lead abatement educator working with the City of Lewiston. "When I was first asked, I thought, 'Wait, you want me to educate white people?'" Fowsia laughs, wide-eyed. Out of 198 tenants she worked with, only nine were new Mainers. This experience jolted her out of the misconception that the American dream comes easily to those born here.

"For the first time, I saw intergenerational poverty," she says. "I bonded with a lot of the residents, and it was a privilege to remind them of the American dream so that we could uplift each other."

Meanwhile, Healthy Androscoggin supported Fowsia's volunteer efforts. "They raised, grew me, and gave me all the support that I needed," Fowsia says. "To those who helped me, my race and my religion weren't a barrier. They saw a person who did the work."

Fowsia stepped up as executive director of Maine Community Integration (MCI) in 2018, even though she had to build it up for two years before she could draw a salary. MCI leads community initiatives to promote awareness of child abuse and sex trafficking and to promote gender equity and women's reproductive rights. And they work to lift up Lewiston-area girls—both white and black—with empowering experiences, from cooking, sewing, and braiding hair to exploring careers in science and technology. Over the past couple of years, the "Strong Girls" Isku-Filan programs for girls have expanded from elementary school programs to include middle and high school girls.

Fowsia's work is about integrating the two worlds in which she has lived. It's about inviting girls—from all backgrounds and cultures—to lift each other up. To have pride. To belong.

Those are the intangibles that Fowsia has been able to give her own children. Shadia, 20, is a pre-law student in Boston, and Ismahan, 19, is studying accounting in New York. Fowsia's daughter Vilsan is a junior at Edward Little High School. Her son Mubarak (Moby) is in seventh grade. And the youngest daughter, Hawa, is the fifth sibling to attend East Auburn Elementary School as a first grader. •

"I feel empowered and liberated that I, as a Muslim woman, asked for a divorce. I wanted to show my girls that this isn't what a healthy relationship looks like."



# INTUITIVE EATING

BY AMY TAYLOR-GRIMM  
RDN, LD, Registered Dietitian

**“Y**ou need to help me lose weight,” she said, gesturing angrily at her body, “I’ve tried every diet out there, and I keep failing. What am I doing wrong?”

I have heard variations of this refrain thousands of times over the course of my career. The people who I see in my practice are refugees of what we call “Diet Culture.” They are usually women who, at some point in their lives, were told that their bodies weren’t okay the way they were, despite the fact that they were perfectly healthy. They started their first diet sometime in their younger years and now they are 16, 22, 35, 47, 63. They have been on the front lines, fought, lost, fought, lost again, and have finally realized that they were only at war with themselves. They have come to the conclusion that the only way to win is to not play, and this is what we do—learn how not to play. We learn how to eat normally.

Almost all weight loss attempts fail, when measured over five years.

Despite the fact that most of us can’t think of any of our friends, family members, or coworkers who have successfully lost weight and kept it off, most people find the high weight-loss failure rate hard to accept. Although most people can lose weight in the short term, 95 percent of people gain it back within five years. Worse, two-thirds of those who regain lost weight end up at a higher weight than where they began.

Over the course of years, most people are consistently gaining weight due to trying to lose weight. Why? Restricting calories causes metabolic changes that make losing weight difficult, and once fat cells are created, they are impossible to lose unless surgically removed.

Our bodies are designed to survive in the face of starvation, not starve when food is abundant. Being hungry when there is plenty of food around usually causes eventual overeating. It’s pretty easy to hold off on overeating at the beginning of a diet, but as time goes on it is nearly impossible to resist breaking the diet.

To add insult to injury, since foods that are high in sugar and fat are calorically dense, these are the foods that we tend to want, and lots of them, when we are undernourished. When the diet eventually ends, we feel that we have failed. In a few months, after the body has binged back up to at least the original weight, the cycle usually begins again with a new diet. This kind of weight-cycling,

or “yo-yo dieting” as it is commonly called, is extremely stressful to the body. It can lead to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, eating disorders, depression, and anxiety. Staying at a higher weight is actually better for you than weight-cycling.

Health at Every Size™ (HAES™) is a philosophy that acknowledges that well-being and healthy habits (going to the doctor, having social supports, being physically active, good nutrition) are more important than weight. The eating part of the HAES philosophy is called Intuitive Eating. It is the practice of listening to the body’s cues about what to eat, when to eat, and how much to eat. In short, it is just eating normally. It is how you ate before you thought your body was nothing other than a vehicle to move you around. It is not the “eat whatever you want whenever you want to” diet. It is not a diet at all. It is accepting your body just as it is and making it as healthy as you want it to be.

The foundation of intuitive eating is “legalizing” all food. Nothing is off-limits. We learn to listen to hunger cues and learn the difference between eating for physical hunger and eating for emotional hunger. Usually there is a lot less “emotional eating” than people think, once they stop dieting and their eating regulates. We also learn to listen to what our bodies are asking for. Does it want something hot or cold, crunchy or smooth, savory or sweet, spicy or bland, and how much? How is that food going to feel in your body?

In my 20-year career, I have never once come across someone who only wanted to eat candy or chips all day for weeks, which of course is what most people fear. Built into our DNA is a desire for variety of different foods, so that we get all of the nutrients that our bodies need. If one has been withholding certain foods and calories repeatedly however, it usually takes some time for their body to get back to a normal eating pattern.

The most challenging element of intuitive eating is learning to not beat oneself up for “mistakes” in eating, not in a touchy-feely kind of way, but simply because it doesn’t help. It is a gathering of eating experiences, looking at them, moving on, and getting closer to acceptance, and therefore peace, with food. None of us will ever be perfect at eating, and no one will ever have a perfect body. Those realizations are liberation. •







**Amy Taylor-Crimm**  
RDN, LD, Registered Dietitian  
*Photo by Marissa Elise*

A full-page photograph of a woman, Kate Hruby, standing on the deck of a sailboat. She is wearing a bright red jacket, a black life vest, a tan cap, and white sunglasses. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows the blue sea, a clear sky, and distant landmasses. The text of the article is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# KATE HRUBY, Science Educator and Podcaster

*Go Forth and Science*

BY PAM FERRIS-OLSON

**K**ate Hruby is an avid sailor, a science educator, artist, and creator of “Go Forth and Science,” a website and podcast dedicated to “communicating science in a way that is fun, interesting, and easy to understand.” She takes the sometimes dry and complex issues of science and climate change—and make these subjects clear and memorable, particularly for students.

Kate came to Maine the long way, travelling across the country from her home in Olympia, Washington, to attend the University of New England (UNE). As a starting undergrad, she anticipated fall foliage, maybe some moose sightings, and certainly some glorious fall hikes. She wasn’t prepared for ticks on her legs after a day in the woods or the need to wear a dry suit when sailing in a tiny boat because the water was so frigid.

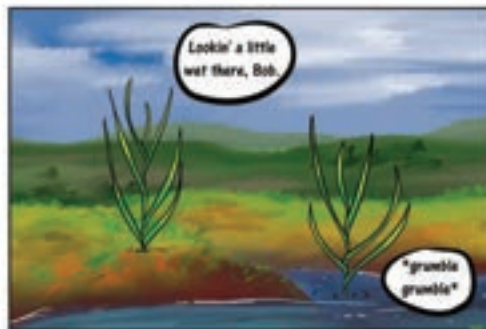
None of the surprises dampened Kate’s enthusiasm for Maine and particularly not for sailing. On the contrary, Kate helped start a sailing club at UNE and began teaching others how to sail. The club was started by purchasing a couple of small, two-person sailboats from Craigslist. Then the group hosted learn-to-sail lessons on weekends. The club and their clinics remain part of UNE’s outdoor recreation clubs.

Kate majored in environmental science with minors in oceanography and biophysics at UNE and went on to pursue an advanced degree at the University of Maine in Orono, studying Earth and Climate Science. Her interest was not to become a working scientist but to be a science educator. Putting scientific ideas and facts across in plain language, she feels, has always been her calling.

“I figured having a master’s degree in a hard science field would set me up to then say, ‘Look, I’m a scientist, I’ve talked like a scientist, and we need to make ourselves more accessible to people without a science background.’”

The way has not always been smooth, but there have been comedic moments. In 2018, for example, she and three other graduate students went to Alaska to study a glacier. It took three helicopter trips to land the team and their gear at their field study site.

“Our gear ended up getting dropped



off a couple miles down-glacier of our field site, so we spent the next several days hiking all our gear—our tents, food, science equipment—back up to where we needed to camp. On the last day on the glacier, I had the privilege of carrying the wine from the drop site to our camp. That is hopefully the first and last time I carry three liters of wine for that many miles, while wearing crampons.” The crampons attached to the bottom of her hiking boots and gave her the necessary traction to walk on the ice and snow.

Another time, Kate was stranded with a group of school-aged kids at an airport in Tampa, late at night. Their seemingly impossible goal was to get everyone to Key West in time to rendezvous with a boat scheduled to sail the next day. “It was spring break season, and every bus company was booked. We ended up finding a party bus that would take us, so all 20 kids and five adults packed into this small box of flashing lights and pop music and made our way to the southern tip of Florida. I can definitely tell you that I did not get a wink of sleep that night.”

Though uncomfortable at the time, these kinds of adventures—in the cause of nature study—fill Kate with joy, as do the constant surprises she gets from being out in nature. And that joy inspired her to create “Go Forth and Science,” her web-



*Top:* Graphic art by Kate on the topic of providing salt marshes with sufficient space to migrate inland as sea levels rise. *Bottom:* Kate, as a graduate student at University of Maine, doing field work in Alaska on the Jarvis Crevasse. *Photos courtesy Kate Hruby*



Author Pam Ferris-Olson at Winslow Park, a place where she goes for inspiration when she can't get out on the water in her kayak. *Photo by James Olson*

## *A Note from the Author, about the Women Mind the Water Project*

**A**s a writer and photographer, scientist and storyteller, I am aware of the growing perils that the ocean faces. Considering such threats as climate change, warming oceans, plastic pollution, and species depletion, I kept thinking, “What can I do?” My answer has been the Women Mind the Water (WMW) project; my talk with Kate Hruby is one example of the project.

I started WMW with collaboration as its fundamental tenet—a way of joining and thus amplifying the impact of our stories, talents, and energies. I invite you to connect to any and all ongoing WMW collaborations. Here are some examples:

- **Stories about women's experiences with water.** I've collected over 70 short digital stories of women talking about their connections with water. All are archived on the Women Mind the Water website and many by the Smithsonian's Stories from Main Street initiative.

- **Environmental art website and podcast.** Working with the two talented ladies who make up StoryPunch, I created the WMW website and podcast. In addition to the digital stories, the website features my art, images of marine animals that speak to the impacts of human activity. There's a section with news related to the ocean and a link to a video of the CommUnity Champion recognition that Channel 8 in Portland awarded

me. My WMW podcasts feature women artists whose works are inspired by the ocean. Each artist suggests someone for a later episode. Mary Jameson of Saltwater Studio Newport was the first artist I interviewed. Mary, who uses seaweed and other marine botanicals to create unique works of art, introduced me to Michelle Provencal (featured in WMW podcast episode 4 and in my article in *Maine Women Magazine*, December 2020). And we've rolled on from there!

- **A discussion group based on Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us* (1951).** In conjunction with the Maine Humanities Council, I will be coordinating a virtual discussion group. Carson's book was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 31 consecutive weeks and won the 1952 National Book Award. It provides a valuable lens to reflect how the ocean has changed in the past 70 years.

I hope to inspire *Maine Women Magazine* readers to share their stories, join the book discussion group, engage in the stories on my site, and suggest ways we might work together to create new connections and make a difference. More about my process can be heard in episode one of the WMW podcast series.

*The Women Mind the Water web address is [womenmindthewater.com](http://womenmindthewater.com). I can be reached at [womenmindthewater@comcast.net](mailto:womenmindthewater@comcast.net).*



site and podcast, creations that communicate science in fun, engaging ways.

Her audio podcasts, some with accompanying notes, are kept around 20 minutes in length to fit into busy schedules or alongside lesson plans. Go Forth and Science also has educational comic art along with a few videos that cover topics ranging from bears and comets to storms and climate change. All are free to access and delivered in a conversational and light-hearted way, a nice change of pace from some of the drier forms of online learning.

“I'm the first to admit my working with kids has also just brought out a love of teen novels and comics and TV shows.” The popular culture she is immersed in is “probably more along the level of the high schoolers I teach than the adult scientists who are my colleagues. I think that probably, to some extent, that material gets put into my art, as well as explaining why I love doing comic art so much.”

Kate isn't joking around, however, when she talks about climate change. “It's clear to see what sea-level rise is doing to the state when places like Portland are now flooding so often. But climate change in Maine isn't just about the ocean. It's also about the increasing number of ticks as winters shorten. And changes in agriculture and land ecosystems. As air temperatures warm, it opens up forests to southern pests and invasive species.”

Kate says that Maine has the capacity and ingenuity to find solutions and adapt to the changes that occur in association with the warming climate. Solutions such as investing in alternative sources of energy and thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing salt marshes with sufficient space to migrate inland as sea levels rise.

“My job as a science communicator is to incorporate those details into the whole story, so it's still accurate and meaningful, but also easier to digest.”

Kate, at present, is back in Washington State. She works as an educator on a sailboat that seasonally takes junior and senior high students on trips to study the ocean and its creatures. While Kate's sea legs may have returned her to the Pacific, her eyes are focused through lenses acquired in Maine.

“That specific way to look at the world, that training, ultimately led me directly to my current work, both as an outdoor educator on sailboats and as a science communicator.”

*For more on Kate's podcasts and art, go to [GoForthandScience.com](http://GoForthandScience.com). Kate talks about her process in Episode 5 of the Women Mind the Water podcast series which can be found at [womenmindthewater.com](http://womenmindthewater.com).*

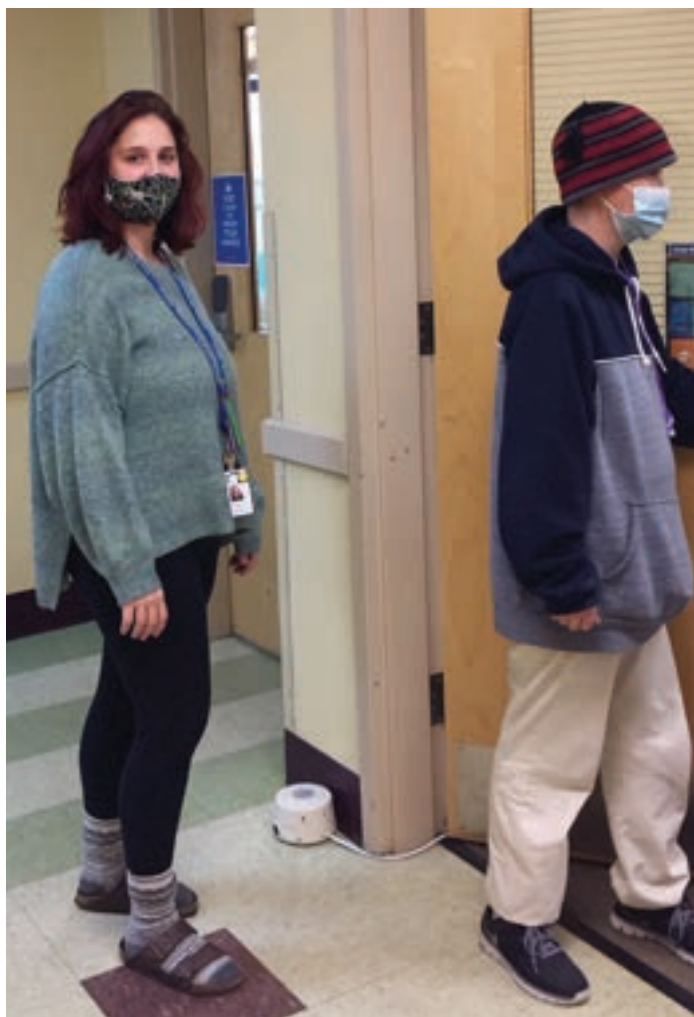
# PART I OF II

# Taking Shelter, Finding Home

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LISA JOY

**T**hirty years ago, Kathleen Hirsch's book *Songs from the Alley* gave a street-level look into the lives of two homeless women representing a population it is easy to feel far removed from. Among the book's favorable reviews, one noted the author's "most impressive accomplishment in reducing the measure of distance we feel when passing the homeless in the street."

On a late summer afternoon in 2020, an unusually high number of homeless people in Portland's Deering Oaks Park spurred this author's desire to reduce that measure of distance again. In this two-part series, four Maine women share their stories of struggle, determination, resilience—and the invaluable help they received along the way.



Misty heads to interview at Florence House followed by caseworker Julia Haberstick.

## ***In the United States in 2019 . . .***

- Women comprised 29 percent of homeless individuals
- Women and families comprised the two fastest growing groups of homeless
- Families with children comprised 34 percent of the homeless population
- Women headed 67 percent of homeless families

## ***In Maine in 2019 . . .***

- 2,106 were homeless on a given night
- Women comprised the highest percentage (38%) of any state's homeless women population

*Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness*

## ***In Maine as of November 23, 2020 . . .***

- 87,000 households didn't have enough to eat the previous week
- 33,000 households were behind on rent

*Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*

**MISTY**, 45, worked almost 30 years in York County food establishments before the cumulative effects of poorly treated health issues forced her to relocate to Portland, to find a bed in its shelter system.

"I had never not worked until I couldn't anymore because of my health. I tried to go back, but my health would not allow it," she said.

From dish washer to kitchen operations and prep cook, Misty enjoyed years of "working hard to play hard," always assuming that a normal retirement lay ahead. Instead she was overtaken by factors common to homeless women: sustained low wages, a lack of benefits, and a significant change in her home life. When her 15-year partnership ended, Misty lost her apartment and could no longer meet the costs of her basic health and human needs.

"The working poor is the working poor, and that's exactly what we are," she said. "I couldn't afford insulin and other medications, even though I was doing what the right thing was to do."

She said that diabetes, severe neuropathy in her hands and feet, and other ailments have taken a lasting toll.

"I'm a liability to myself and any place I work for," she said.

Born in Jacksonville, Florida, Misty moved to Kennebunk at the age of 12. She didn't always live with family. Like other family members, however, she became a functional alcoholic.

“That’s not the reason I’m homeless, but it didn’t help,” she said.

Misty arrived at Florence House in 2016. The “low barrier” women’s shelter prohibits alcohol and drugs on premises but doesn’t require clients to be sober or “clean” to get one of its 42 beds.

“Just because we’re addicts doesn’t mean we don’t deserve a home,” said Misty, who has tried and eschews Alcoholics Anonymous.

She stayed at the shelter for over a year, returning in 2018 after a move into public housing with a roommate didn’t work out.

“There are people here that are so institutionalized, whether it was as children or adults, that they don’t know how to become un-institutionalized. The saddest are those who are dumped here without medication or guidance. They need a bed like I do, but without the help they need, they suffer,” she said.

So, she has read about their illnesses to help her understand more. And she’s been helped herself.

“If it weren’t for my former caseworker, who I love very dearly, I don’t know what I would have done,” she said.

Misty became a non-denominational ordained minister over a decade ago through an online resource.

“I did it to get over my fear of public speaking,” she said, “and to help friends that wanted to get married or needed advice.”

When Maine shut down last March due to the pandemic, the shelter walls closed in. Contact with caseworkers was limited to faxes for five months, and interactions with critical government agencies stalled.

“We survived the best we could,” said Misty. A lot of us couldn’t go out. . . We just had each other. We made it work. We had to.”

During this time, Misty’s people skills came in handy.

“We learned a lot about each other’s strengths and flaws and worked with them,” she said, although not everyone was receptive.

“That was fine. Stay your distance and I’ll stay mine. We were social distancing before it became a thing because you have to learn to do that here,” she said.

Misty ascribed Maine’s high rate of female homelessness to women like herself.

“It’s not that we don’t want to work,” she said, adding that the pandemic made it harder for women with children to work even part-time and maintain an apartment when day cares closed. She offered to watch a friend’s child, assist with moving, or just walk together with friends to the soup kitchen.

“We’re here to help each other. We come from different backgrounds, yet we’re all in the same boat because we’re here. So, let’s help each other row, and maybe things get a little bit brighter,” she said.

At press time, Misty had a voucher for a one-bedroom apartment. She was anxious about living alone given her health issues and planning to enroll in online “Street Academy” classes.

“I want to use some of my other skills now to make a difference,” she said, “to better myself and help others.”

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For as long as she can remember, **BROOKE**, 24, has lived by the adage, “Tough times don’t last; tough people do.” During the pandemic, successive losses of job, apartment, and her two-year-old daughter’s daycare took their toll, but her resilience and hard-won perspective saw her through. “You have to go through a long, bumpy road in life, jump over hurdles, and struggle. You have to push yourself further and further until you get where you want to be,” she said. “It’s not impossible. Nothing is impossible.”

From a young age, Brooke responded so emotionally to the physical and verbal abuse she experienced at home that she was placed in “group home after group home and hospitals.” She learned that acting out was a reliable way for her to be separated from the abuse.

“I would have a safe place, even if it was for ten days, so I was constantly trying to find a home that I wouldn’t be going back home from,” she said.

“Everything is an opportunity to learn something. There are facilities to help you, and people who are not only able to help you, but that want to help you.”

During middle school, Brooke was transferred to the Collaborative School in New Gloucester. It took time for her to build trust there. Initially, her capacity was “very thin.” Eventually she opened up about the trauma she’d experienced. She also learned how her anger looked to others and had opportunities to change that response.

As a high school senior, she advocated successfully to transfer to Lisbon High School in her hometown. “I wanted to show them how the [Collaborative] school had helped me, how my personality had changed, and how much I’d matured in those few years away from an abusive environment,” she said.

Brooke’s parents had divorced when she was in middle school. Several years later, her mother remarried.

“I call my stepfather my dad. He treats us kids like his own and has done so much for us. I’m so thankful for him,” she said.

During her senior year, Brooke had lived on her mother’s couch, but two years later, it had become too much, and they were fighting constantly.

“She’s a caring mom and wanted to do everything for me, but she had four kids and didn’t have an extra room. When she told me I had to go back with my real father, my friend and I packed our stuff and left,” Brooke said. Brooke graduated from high school in 2014.



Brooke and Ariannah at Lisbon Walking Trail, where a memorial stone for a friend gives the spot special meaning.

While couch surfing and working full time, Brooke heard about New Beginnings, a shelter with programs for youth in Lewiston. In her initial interview, she was shown all types of Maine housing information and began applying immediately. She became a client the following week but slept in her car or at friends for roughly six months until she secured a subsidized apartment.

She used the shelter's Outreach program for food and personal care products. She also met Sarah, a mentor and tutor, who would help her, in time, get several certifications. In addition to teaching her the benefits of yoga and meditation, Sarah told Brooke about the Dot Larrabee Fund, which provides vocational and educational financial aid for shelter clients.

"If I hadn't had access to it, I wouldn't be in nursing school right now. The fund helped me get certifications for Nursing Assistant (2017), Residential Medication Aid (2018), and Phlebotomy Technician (2019). Sarah and the fund will be in my head for the rest of my life," Brooke said. She still has her mentor's voicemail congratulating her on becoming a recipient.

Her mother bought her stethoscope, and the Larrabee fund took care of the rest of her CNA program needs, including scrubs and shoes.

In May of last year, Brooke was accepted into a two-year nursing program. She said she would never forget the day—August 17—that her online schoolwork began.

"I don't usually believe that things happen for a reason," Brooke said, "but last year, I lost my job, and my best friend reminded me that I had wanted to leave it anyway. Then I got a better-paying job at a better hospital. Within three months, I lost my apartment, then found one that's a huge step up. I lost daycare for my daughter but found someone to help out in the way I want her to be raised. In 2020, things definitely happened for a reason," she said.

And one more good thing happened. Brooke received a letter a week after she lost her apartment, letting her know that a voucher she qualified for five years earlier was still on file. "I'd forgotten about it," she said, "but I was able to use it to get the bigger apartment and afford nursing school."

Though Brooke's mistrust of men remains, she attributes the hope she has for the future to all the supports she has received and to positive male role models. She still visits teachers at her middle and high schools.

"I know that one day I will find someone who treats me right," she said. Meanwhile, she maintains that there is never a mistake in life.

"Everything is an opportunity to learn something. There are facilities to help you, and people who are not only able to help you, but that want to help you," she said. •



# SABATTUS REGIONAL CREDIT UNION: *The Women-Led Credit Union*

BY MARIA D'AURIA AND REA ESTES

**S**abattus Regional Credit Union in Sabattus is managed and operated by an all-women group. In a “man’s world” of finance and banking, they excel at it. For the past decade, this unique all-women team has been working together to improve the communities they serve.

With experienced people in member services, marketing, accounting, and loans, the team goes above and beyond expectations for a financial institution. For example, they are one of only five credit unions in the area that are open on Saturdays. They are there six days a week for members’ convenience.

Asked what makes credit unions advantageous for consumers, Marketing Manager Maria D’Auria says, “It’s the relationships we have with our members. *To us, you aren’t just a number.* Each membership matters to us. We want to see all of our members grow with us.”

“Consider that credit unions are owned by the members,” Maria continues, “compared to banks, which are privately or publicly owned. Being member-owned proves that we value all of our members and their financial well-being.”

Since 1957, Sabattus Regional Credit Union (SRCU) has served members from Lewiston to Farmingdale. (For reference, SRCU serves Auburn, Bowdoinham, Bowdoin, Durham, Farmingdale, Greene, Hallowell, Leeds, Lewiston, Lisbon, Lisbon Falls, Litchfield, Manchester, Monmouth, Richmond, Sabattus, Topsham, Wales, and West Gardiner.) Asked about what happens if a member moves away from the region, Maria says, “Even if a member moves out of the field of membership, they are a member for life.”

The team work diligently to provide top-notch customer service and financial education for all their members. Says

Shannon Surette (a teller for five years), “This is the greatest group of women to work with, and everyone here will say the same!” In fact, in the small employer category, SRCU has in several years been named one of the “Best Places to Work in Maine,” by an organization of the same name which runs a survey and awards program with Maine State Council, MaineBiz, and other state groups.

And this positive team perspective spreads throughout the whole SRCU organization. Tiffany Stewart, CEO and President says, “Each day brings new challenges and rewards. By working with my team, we are able to figure out how to fix any issues and solve them efficiently.” She speaks highly of all her staff members.

Asked what makes Sabattus Regional Credit Union unique, Tiffany says,



“Having gone to high school here and living in the area makes it very special. I have neighbors, schoolmates, and friends who are members here. This connection makes it so important to do a good job, since people are counting on me to make their financial lives better.”

Male leadership versus women-led workforce?

Tiffany observes, “I haven’t always worked in a women-led work force. When I started out, it was predominantly males in leadership. The older I get, the more I see women leading. The transition happened organically, so over time it has just happened to become that way. Lucille Terrio was a huge role model for me. She taught me work ethics and how to be a good team player. She has passed now but will never be forgotten.”

Florence Poulin, a teller at the SBCU, echoes similar thoughts, saying, “Community means family to me. I enjoy greeting the members by name with a smile as they come in. We are all in this together, and we are here to help our community thrive, whether it is a loan they need or assistance from us through our Ending Hunger fundraiser.”

She serves on their marketing team for the Ending Hunger campaign.

“The campaign is very important to me,” Florence explains. “I’m involved because I believe in the need for assistance with food insecurity. I help with the distribution of letters during our fundraisers. I usually approach businesses in person, but due to COVID-19, this year has been a bulk mailout. A lot of our usual fundraisers have been cancelled, making it extremely difficult to raise much needed funds, and this part of my job is truly near and dear to my heart.”

Lisa Hinkley is Lending Manager at Sabattus Regional Credit Union. “I have spent all my years at Sabattus Regional CU in the loan department,” she recalls. “I started as a Loan Officer and was promoted to Lending Manager in 2010. The most important aspect of my job is working with members to meet their goals, whether it be to establish credit, to buy their first car, or to refinance their home. There’s something about seeing the smile on the face of someone who was just ap-

proved for a loan to buy their first car. It never gets old!”

And, she continues, “Our rates are competitive, although not necessarily better than our competitors, but we have a rate match program in place where we will match a competitor’s rate, subject to certain conditions. We like to think we offer the best service in the area!”

Maria D’Auria says that—along with everyone else—the credit union has had to adjust to the pandemic. “Although things have not been ‘normal’ since March 2020, we have still been able to connect with our members. By social distancing in the office, allowing four members in our lobby at a given time, and even closing our lobby for months during the spring and during November and December, we’ve encouraged members to use their mobile app to help keep everybody safe.”

“What is great about technology,” she points out, “is that it can help maintain relationships with our members. Although

social media can have its drawbacks, we’ve put an emphasis on our presence. That way, our members know we are here for them. Most importantly, this is a great way to keep members in the loop for new ways they can save money.”

As to the status of membership, Maria says, “Although we are on-boarding new members on a weekly basis, our growth has been slowed because we (like everybody else) are unsure about where life will take us. As to community events, which is something we always look forward to, COVID-19 has put a damper on a multitude of our planned events.”

Looking ahead, however, she keeps an optimistic view. “Times are uncertain, but here at Sabattus Regional Credit Union, we are remaining positive, and we’re planning new events for 2021. We continue to encourage folks to join us here at Sabattus Regional Credit Union. Our amazing team is ready and very able to be there for families and their financial needs.” •



Photos by Ashley Clifford



| THEY DO WHAT? |

# THE WOMEN WITH EAGLE EYES

BY W. STINSON

I doubt there's anyone in Maine who doesn't know this, but hunting is a huge activity here. In 2017, the US Fish and Wildlife service reported that there were over 160,000 paid hunting licenses in the state. With that many hunters, if you don't hunt, I'd bet you know someone who does.

And is it any wonder? Maine has some of the most beautiful, expansive natural areas in the country. There are thousands of miles of forests, lakes, and mountains to explore and appreciate.

I like to think of it as a tradeoff for not being able to order pizza delivery to my house.

But hunting has a peculiar set of stereotypes. When you read the word "hunter," what do you think of? Someone who looks like Leonardo DiCaprio in *The Revenant*? Maybe a British man with a tweed jacket and tie, gun tucked under his arm? Or a guy in full camouflage clothing, sitting eagle-eyed up in a tree?

You might have noticed that all those descriptions are of men. That's no accident, and it's undeniable that the practice has long been associated with men. Even a quick search for "hunter" on Google shows a man in every image on the first page, with the one exception coming from an article about how unique the lone woman on the page is for being a hunter.

I recently had the good fortune to interview Christi Holmes, a woman who's working to buck that stereotype. After graduating college, she decided to hike the Appalachian Trail back in 2011. With that accomplishment under her belt, she felt that she "needed a new way to enjoy the outdoors."

This was, she says, "about the time when it was important to people to know where their food comes from." Combining her interests in the outdoors and safe food sourcing, Christi set about hunting, hoping to shoot a deer each year in order to have local, ethically harvested food.

Nowadays, she's an experienced hunter and registered Maine Guide for hunting and fishing. She's hunted deer, pheasants, and rabbits, and gone fly and ice fishing.

In her pursuit to enjoy the outdoors, she's found it helpful to join communities. The problem, as she's discovered, is that in many Facebook hunting groups, women aren't treated as equals. Tired of unnecessary criticism (and even outright sexism), Christi founded the women-only Maine Women Hunters, a Facebook group 2,500 strong.

"It's *all* women answering questions. You gain confidence because you know that," Christi explains. "You can ask questions like, 'What's your breast pumping regimen for hunting?' or, 'Can you hunt on your period?'" And beyond that, Christi also notes that the group helps women overcome "tangible barriers" to hunting, like "finding the right clothes" for the outdoors.

Maine Women Hunters has had extraordinary success. It's a diverse group of women. Some are experienced, like Christi, Libby Nilsen, and Denise Murchison, who have all guided hunts in the past. Some women are newer to the sport. Christi recounts a recent pheasant hunt in which "one of the ladies had never been hunting before, one had never been bird hunt-



Maine Women Hunters' Introduction to Goose Hunting trip. From left to right: Lorri Nelson, Kandi Karkos, Jeanie Cote, Sarah Mitchell, Emilie Cram, and Christi Holmes. *Photo courtesy Christi Holmes*

ing before, and one had hunted, but had never killed anything.”

Christi graciously allowed me to post in the group, asking what people’s experiences were. Within two days, the post had over eighty comments, mostly anecdotes and testimonies from members—far more than we can publish here! Practically every single one of these messages was a variation on how supportive the group is, especially toward newcomers.

Katie Barvenik says that the group has “truly given me a sense of confidence and community. I never feel like anything I ask is “stupid” or judged. I feel like I have found a sisterhood.”

This sentiment is a common one for members. Christy Castagno echoes that “[In] any other group, I would’ve been too embarrassed to ask anything! So happy to be in this group.”

These women come from diverse backgrounds, too. Christi is an engineer, while other members are paralegals, finance managers, taxidermists, and more. Despite this wide range of fields and careers, almost every one of them expressed a desire to get back out and hunting. Take Lisa Foster Pacheco, who tells me she’s a “Realtor by day, hunter/fly fishing enthusiast every chance I get.”

The variety within the group isn’t limited to careers, either. I heard anecdotes from women in their sixties, right alongside



Johnna Ferland holding a pike, caught on the annual Sabattus Pond ice fishing trip. *Photo courtesy Christi Holmes*



Virginia P. Parker and her son Noah on his first time deer hunting.

the tale of how 14-year-old Olivia got her first moose last year.

With the varied careers come varied experiences starting and learning to hunt. Jessica Crouse, an experienced hunter, speaks of how, “For some women, caring for family can be a barrier [to learning to hunt]. Traditionally being caregivers of the young or elderly can make it difficult to have time.”

As Jessica notes, that’s not true for everyone. Stacey McCoy Wheeler got her start *because* of her family. “It was born from a desire to connect with my son, who was going through some rough teenage years . . . Somehow it came to me that I needed to find some common ground in which we could connect.” And it worked for her. “It was hunting that brought us close together, and hunting that keeps our relationship strong.”

Whatever their reasons, the women of this group have found a place for themselves in hunting and fishing. As I read through the dozens of anecdotes and testimonies of its members, I came away with one overriding impression: The group Christi has founded is profoundly positive and supportive. It is clearly meeting a need among its members.

*For more information, or to request admission into the group, visit [facebook.com/groups/mainewomenhunters](https://www.facebook.com/groups/mainewomenhunters).* •



Virginia and family in “Jonah’s Seven Crew.” On the loose, lookin’ for moose!



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# ELIZABETH MOSS

## *A Compassionate Part of the Art Community*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE SIMMONDS

**O**n March 12, 2020, the state of Maine had its first confirmed case of the coronavirus. The first death in Maine from the virus was March 27. Within a week, my grandmother had caught it and was in the hospital on a respirator. She died on April 6.

We finally held her service almost exactly six months later, on October 4. It was her wedding anniversary with my grandfather. I do not remember ever seeing my grandfather cry before.

After her service, which was beautiful and heartfelt, my family gathered outside at my father's house. We still were not able to touch, but we could at least be together.

I went with my father to pick up pizza for everyone. He parked the car and pointed to the shop next door. The sign read, "Elizabeth Moss Fine Art Gallery and Framing."

"That shop has our family's business for the rest of our lives," my father stated.

My grandfather had taken my grandmother's photo to Elizabeth to have it framed. When he picked it up, and she learned it was for his wife's memorial, she immediately reimbursed his charge.

That is the kind of person that Elizabeth Moss is. She is kind, and sweet, and caring, and that comes through in our interview.

Her shop is located in a Falmouth shopping center between Foreside House of Pizza and Southern Maine Hearing.

Elizabeth is fashionable, with blonde hair and large feather earrings. She wears a beautiful beige mask decorated with delicate butterflies.

She has a passion for the art she surrounds herself with, as well as the people that she works with. Twice during the interview people come into the shop. One is Robert Wierich, an artist she represents, and Elizabeth helps him carry his artwork to his vehicle outside. I catch a glimpse of his work, and it is breathtaking.

The second people to enter are Dorothy Milliken and her daughter. Dorothy has been making cross-stitch pictures for years, and Elizabeth frames them all. Elizabeth works with Dorothy through the framing process and helps her pick out just the right details to accentuate her cross-stitch cat picture.

When I tell Elizabeth about what her actions meant to my family, she insists it was just a little gesture. But when you are in mourning, and you want to honor your loved one, little gestures mean everything.

“We’re happy just to do it as a gift of sympathy,” she says.

Elizabeth understands what it is like to lose close family. Her mother passed away March 1, and she was able to have a celebration of her life on March 5. “And then a week later the whole country closed down,” she says.

She tells me she felt so fortunate to be able to go through that process. She feels for the families who are unable to be with their loved ones and are unable to have a service. “There’s a lot of people suffering right now in a lot of different ways.” Elizabeth wants to do even the smallest thing to alleviate some of that suffering.

“I love the community that I am a part of here,” she says, and adds that she has developed a relationship with her artists and clients. “The artists that I represent—I value them personally, not just for their art. I create long-term relationships with artists and with customers.”

Elizabeth’s blue eyes light up as she talks about art. “Great art holds a piece of the soul of its maker,” she says. “I’m an advocate of original artwork.”

“You actually have a similar physiological response when you look at a painting of the ocean or the lake . . . it’s a similar response, chemically, to seeing it in person,” she tells me. “And if you connect with it, it’s similar to falling in love. There’s a dopamine reaction.”

When I suggest that the business is her passion project, Elizabeth insists it is more than that. “It’s my lifestyle,” she says. “And I’m so fortunate to have an incredible lifestyle doing what I love. Living where I love. Working with the most creative, talented people.”

Elizabeth’s desire to work with art goes back to when she was in high school. “When I was in high school, I loved fashion. And then I fell in love with art as well.” She grew up in Maryland and spent a lot of time in national galleries and museums. “So, I wanted to either have an art gallery or work in a museum.”



Elizabeth Moss frames a cross-stitch cat for Dorothy Milliken (right, in blue) and her daughter.

After managing art galleries and receiving her master’s degree in museum studies, Elizabeth wanted to open her own gallery. She got that opportunity in 2004 when she started a framing business and art gallery with her parents. Elizabeth says she was so lucky to have that opportunity, and she enjoyed working with her parents for many years. Her father ultimately decided he did not want to continue the business and returned to the world of computer programming.

Elizabeth’s work is beautiful and high quality. She offers custom picture framing and fine art sales as well. “If people have something of value, whether it’s inherently valuable or just value in that it’s sentimental, then I’m a good person to bring it to,” she says. Elizabeth and her staff are careful with the art and knowledgeable in conservation and museum standards for art. One particular framer who works for her has more than 30 years of experience.

She has more than five hundred frames to choose from, as well as a variety of matte options. She tells me framing is a specific, deliberate process.

In addition to her framing work, Elizabeth hosts events such as artist nights, and she has an exhibition schedule. “I’m actively representing forty artists all over the United States,” she tells me.

The workspace is split into two spaces. The front is the gallery, but there is also art everywhere throughout the framing shop and her office.

The current show in her gallery is a Rockland artist named Laura Waller. Laura’s canvas paintings are portraits of her friends and family. Their bright, close-up faces decorate the walls of the gallery space.

Elizabeth also hosts artist nights, even during COVID-19. Her next art show, which starts in November and will go until February, is international artist Hunt Slonem. His highly appealing art features bright colors, shapes, and patterns. Elizabeth will be pairing with the Portland Museum of Art for this show, and it will feature video interviews on her website as well.

*For more information on Elizabeth and her art gallery, visit [www.elizabethmoss galleries.com](http://www.elizabethmoss galleries.com).*



The framed photo of the author’s grandmother.



## A Talk with AnnMarie Fredericks and Merideth Albert About the Power of **VETTED CANNABIS**

Story by R. Cook | Photos by Michael D. Wilson

**A**nnMarie Fredericks and her daughter Merideth Albert believe in the healing power of plant-based medicines—so much so that they opened Vetted Cannabis in Sanford last year.

They grow and harvest their medical marijuana and CBD products and make recommendations based on what individuals need. They cultivate cannabis on site, and they educate clients on the medicinal effects. Their goal is to empower patients with knowledge, so patients “become the drivers of their own care.”

This approach is different from what mother and daughter saw and experienced as Registered Nurses with the US Department of Veterans Affairs. AnnMarie, 57, worked with that department for 37 years. Merideth, 32, worked there for 10 years.

They observed veterans who received multiple medications for chronic pain, PTSD, depression, anxiety, insomnia, and migraines, which often came with unwanted side effects, such as dry mouth, consti-

pation, weight gain, and sleep problems. AnnMarie describes this as “poly pharmacy”—which means too many medications.

“We had the privilege of working with veterans and hearing their stories,” she says. “We learned quickly how conventional medication fell short, and we learned that some veterans were using cannabis as an alternative—with good results.”

“Veterans would tell us that they did not take certain meds because of side effects. They taught us, and that is how it all came to be,” Ann Marie says.

As she and Meredith dove deeper, they learned that different plants have differing medicinal benefits. For example, “If you are an anxiety sufferer, anything with lemon is anti-anxiety,” AnnMarie says. Lemons themselves have limonene, which is an anti-anxiety chemical.

So, in 2016, AnnMarie’s husband, Jack, located the six-acre site in Sanford, and over the next two years, they built a state-of-the-art cultivation facility. It has bol-

stered security, climate-controlled rooms, timed lighting, and auto watering.

At first, Merideth, a licensed medical marijuana grower, focused on cultivating plants sold to dispensaries. Later, they decided to provide onsite clinical care. “The patient office was our dream,” Merideth says. They opened it in December 2019.

Merideth worked as a cannabis grower for six years before her mother decided to join her in Sanford. They were both very interested in exploring how the cannabis plants can treat patients. Their belief in the power of these plants was confirmed or expanded upon at a conference in Boston four years ago. They saw first-hand how medical marijuana can make a difference.

One example came from a neurologist who showed the difference between a patient with a brain tumor who received conventional treatment, compared with cannabis CBD-THC related treatment. MRIs showed the tumors had decreased in size after cannabis was used.



AnnMarie emphasized this point about the benefits of cannabis with a recent Instagram video that shows a client who suffered from Tourette syndrome. After his course of treatment, he was much improved.

Their office presents an atmosphere of complete transparency where clients can learn and help determine their best course of treatment. This approach might mean thinking about the chemicals present in certain strains and their specific medicinal effects, or coordinating medical issues with which chemical profiles in a specific plant they should consider. Once educated in the actions of the medications, the client elects their course of treatment.

“We chose ‘Vetted’ as our name because we want the client to vet us. We want their vote of confidence in the long term. We perch a camera system in our grow area so clients can see in real time the cloning, pruning, harvesting, and more importantly that it’s clean, no vermin, no insects, no spraying going on. And we post our credentials in the patient office, the cannabis chemicals with the name of the scientist researcher, and the year discovered, along with the harvest test results.”

In addition to carefully cultivating cannabis and working with clients on beneficial medicinal outcomes, they provide free marijuana medical cards to Maine veterans and give them a lifetime 20 percent discount. Medical Marijuana Cards are issued or renewed to Maine residents.

“The State of Maine does not require testing of plants for medical use,” AnnMarie says. But her team sends monthly harvests for testing to Nelson Analytic Lab in nearby Kennebunk for chemical analysis, and then post all results in the office.

For example, a recent monthly test of Vetted Cannabis’ Church plant showed a high concentration of beta-Caryophyllene. It has potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects which can help relieve pain and anxiety, treat seizures, and reduce cholesterol.

The Church plant also has a high amount of beta-Myrcene, which is known for producing relaxation and sedation. Another component found in the Church plant is alpha-Pinene, which improves memory and recall, plus it has anti-inflammatory benefits that can treat diseases like ADD, arthritis, Crohn’s, and multiple sclerosis.

AnnMarie and Merideth are passionate about providing these medicines to anyone who is ready to pursue an alternative to traditional drugs.

“Our blood, sweat, and tears have gone into this,” says AnnMarie, referring to their work, knowledge base, company, approach, and products. “We really care.” •



| STYLE |

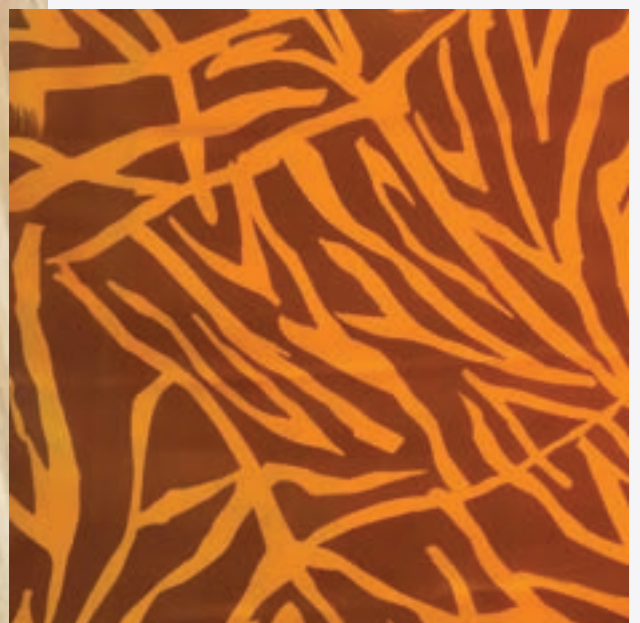
# SCARFS, COLOURS, AND PRINTS

BY MICHAEL ANDREW SHYKA

**W**alking down Free Street in Portland, Maine, on a crisp Sunday afternoon, Foxy, my toy Pomeranian drapes her paw from the edge of my Ron King, Maine-made, hand-woven green ombre satchel. A party of four elegantly dressed young women appear before me, as they exit a specialty restaurant or event.

At first, my eye goes directly to the blue surgical masks that two of the women protect their faces with. I advert my eyes immediately, perplexed as to why they made no effort to treat their face coverings as part of an overall look of adornment. It's too incomprehensible for me even to accept, let alone understand.





The "Desperado Look." Photos courtesy Michael Andrew Shyka



In contrast, the dark animal print of the face mask worn by one lady is in perfect harmony with her ensemble. As I glance at her image, it's a pleasure to see such an overall style.

Finally, my curious eyes settle upon the face of their fourth companion. I see reflective John Lennon sunglasses above a doubled over ink blue silk scarf, offering a subtle, jacquard style print. Her lower face is covered from below her sunglasses to straight down her neck, with one flowing line of sensuous fabric. My imagination turns to a time of adventure and freedom—courage combined with mystique! The wild, wild west! So uniquely American, so refreshing! I call this one the “Desperado Look.”

I encourage everyone, especially women of a certain style, to experiment with this bold “Frontier/Outlaw” look, in as many combinations of colour, print, and design as they can muster. Be sure to include Jackie O sunglasses. A big hat enhances the mystique twofold. The Silk bandanna is an essential adornment to go for this winter, to add extra warmth to your face mask or alternative layers of style. Below, I offer a palette of emerging colours and print trends, sourced from Sandra Nunes, my fashion- and style-immersed NYC print market representative, textile and embroidery designer, and founder of Collecting Colour.\*

\*Please understand that my associates and I prefer the international spelling of the word *colour* to emphasize its added beauty and brand consistency.

Colour for us is the foundation of personal style. I'm sure most of you know your pre-

ferred colours already. I relate here the specific trends going forward for you to consider. Choose among them and gather your favorites from this inventory, to feel style-enhanced.

Please feel free to follow along for a visual reference using Sandra's Fall/Winter 2020/21, previously secret, and recently made public Pinterest Boards: [www.pinterest.com/collectcolour/fall2020/](http://www.pinterest.com/collectcolour/fall2020/) and my Pinterest version of the same Forecast boards, but they have mostly print inspiration: [www.pinterest.com/mshyka/fallwinter-2021-shykastudio/](http://www.pinterest.com/mshyka/fallwinter-2021-shykastudio/)

(A Note about Fashion Seasons: Fall means both fall and winter for many fashion forecasters. As you can see, Sandra uses the term Fall for both the Fall and Winter seasons—it's the industry lingo for both. “Holiday and resort” is a separate season, but it is being phased out or merged by many designers, as well. And designers' “Spring collections” now represent both spring and summer items.)

**Golds.** Combined with ambers, gold is a fascinating new colour grouping to experience, as it embodies positive thinking for the years and decades ahead. Empower yourself with the deepest and clearest samples you can find of this colouration to manifest your “Golden Years.”

**Jewel Tones.** By far the most sought after colours for the cold season, these jewel tones are not the same as the 1980's indulgence. No longer do the basics rule (like ruby, amethyst, emerald, sapphire, and aquamarine). Alternative shades of gemstones and crystals like garnet, rose quartz, alexandrite

(violet), padparadscha (salmon), topaz, peridot, apatite (teal), and tanzanite (violet/blue) run the gamut from frosty to intense. I recommend acquiring the more exotic shades of your preferred colours. In terms of dressing—and as you can see in Sandra's Pinterest boards—mixing of opposites makes a stellar look, especially combining monochromatic shades with a neighboring shade.

**Greys and Purples.** These colours go in a refreshing direction, with profound feeling. All major European luxury brands showcase this ethereal look. The best news is that I have noticed this particular combination to be plentiful in thrift shops (more on this later).

**Emerald and Mint.** Emerald's entrance for winter 2020 makes the splash as mint seems to be already well established as a classic/new colour within the last three decades for winter. The DVF [Diane von Furstenberg] brand offers many peak styles. I have personally witnessed Diane's appreciation for forest's green vitality, paired with shades of lavender and violets. Several designs resting in her archives are from my hand circa 1993.

**Pink and Blush.** For me, pink and blush represent the ultimate in new offerings from the jewel tone category, previously explained. Notice on Collecting Colour's Pinterest boards how cool they look set off by cobalt and Saffron, while elegant mixed with any shade of reds, copper, and rich browns. Here's a prime area open for experimentation!

**Brights.** Very important, yet to mention brights as a new look feels redundant. Brights



Who wouldn't revel in all that color? *Photos courtesy Michael Andrew Shyka*

have been jostling back and forth with its opposite, neutrals, for some time now. If your wardrobe does not address this look, you tend to prefer neutrals and muted tones to high volume colour. Let's hop into the newest arrivals on the print scene. Great news for thrifters here: most likely, all these looks are readily available at your local thrift stores.

**Paisley and Sarasa.** These two are the standouts for me. Sarasa, an alternate term for calico, a small floral look printed on cotton, originated from Japan's trade-routes with Marco Polo. These looks are refreshing because they all speak of connections to heritage with an added flair of romantic fantasy: Paisley and Sarasa address Old World charm and ethnic diversity.

**Ditzy.** Florals are comforting and cozy. My fellow crafter friend and founder of SeaMe products, Mariah Curtis, refers to this look as "Cottage Core," which precisely encapsulates Americana nostalgia. Imagine Willa Cather's Pioneer heroine from *My Ántonia* wearing these prints while wandering her frontier borders. Renee of Waterlily describes this essential style as "former daughters look." She has many variations of this look in some very intricately cut dresses at unbelievably low prices at Waterlily Shop <https://waterlilyhandmade.com> on 26 Milk Street, Portland, Maine,

**Plaids.** My take from studying Sandra's plaid boards is that although the colours and pairings are rich and intense, there is a definitive sense of softness at play, which adds more relevance.

**Textures.** Textures look great in the updated colourations of jewel-tones palettes. If thrifting for this look, you will need to dig deep into '20s through '50s offerings. Do not even consider reintroducing the '80s versions—dense neutrals. Drab and stale, dusty, too!

**Jungle Look.** When shopping for the highly enticing look, a jungle night scene is even more evocative. Success with this look while thrifting may be problematic, as it's essential the print is crisp and defined. No loose brushstrokes of yesteryear for this look.

**Art Deco.** This style offers a highly sophisticated and engaging look that I imagine will resonate well with many creative types and city dwellers. I love seeing it freshened up in all the new colour groups. On the 500 blocks of Congress Street in Portland, the Vintage Vault stocks a plenitude of these prints in lovely retro colour combinations, along with samples previously aligned with our new millennial colours.

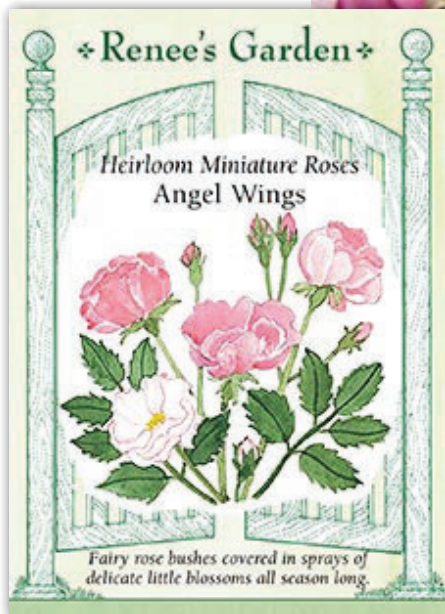
**Roses.** Oh so elegant and ideal for bringing forth your inner seductress or enchantress. Sandra's boards reference pristinely designed looks that could potentially break the bank. Many thrift shops are abundant with more retro cuts from almost every decade. If styled from your heart, a crisp rose print, especially on a ground of indigo or black, will make a sly job of enchanting a bit more obvious.

**Florals.** I consider florals essential for my line. Any woman with any intentions of displaying an aspect of sensuality

will thrive in these. To help guide your purchase of new or vintage florals, here is the number one rule: Both the flowers and colours should look as if they smell divine. Waterlily Shop offers the most splendid selections of hand-made silk dresses, robes, tunics, and kimonos abundant in many of these style-forward looks. Waterlily has amazingly affordable price points as well, considering the amount of craftsmanship going into Renee Garland's passion-based brand.

As a postscript, I would like to say that it is an honor to share my style opinions inside *Maine Women Magazine*. I am quite comfortable with the task, being a gay man, artist, textile designer, and hand-painted silk luxury fashion designer focused on the sensual aspects of colour, print, and cut in women's clothing for over 30 years.

*Michael invites you to view his galleries offering One Of A Kind Silk Bandannas designed with attention to the above style directives at [www.michaelshyka.com](http://www.michaelshyka.com) If shopping in Portland's Old Port, many are available at Old Port Garden & Gifts, 305 Commercial Street. The owner, Mary Sawyer, can tell you in person about the gift market for local artisans she has created. •*



*Above left:* In growing your own mini-rose bushes, this little packet of seeds is the beginning of the process. You'll be surprised at how easy it is. *Above right:* Petite roses that you grow from seed, Angel Wings bloom profusely with sweet little pink flowers. *Photos courtesy Renee's Garden Seeds*

# Ring in the New Year with *Roses*

*Growing Roses from  
Seed for Good Luck*

BY LYNETTE WALTHER

What a better way to start off the New Year than with roses? When it comes to roses in January, we've got a couple options. One would be to order up a dozen long-stems from the florist. The second—the one I prefer—is to grow your own from seed.

Wait, what? Roses from seed? Am I kidding? Nope. Not only can you grow roses from seed, but this winter project is quick and easy. And if you start soon, by planting up a bunch of Angel Wings miniature roses, you'll have some of the sweetest gifts to share come Valentine's Day, or for any other special occasion for that matter.

Start with a packet of Angel Wings miniature rose seeds. (You can find them online from Renee's Garden Seeds.) Follow the package directions. Plant the seeds in a commercial seed-starting mix. Place the flat or pots in a sunny window, anywhere where there is strong light source.

The packet advises that the seeds start slowly. Your patience will be rewarded when the little seedlings start to grow. When they are large enough to handle, transplant the seedlings into individual pots with good drainage. Feed the seedlings every couple of weeks with a half-strength fertilizer. Fish emulsion or other soluble fertilizer is a good choice.

Your mini roses will grow into dense petite bushes that will eventually top out at one and half to two and a half feet tall. And the roses! These mini-rose bushes will be smothered with the sweetest deep-pink buds and blooms in classic shades of shell pink, white and soft rose. Hardy Angel Wings roses will bloom all season. These perfect little roses can grace the front of the border, fill a big garden bed, or make sweet container plants. When gradually acclimated to the outdoors this spring, the little roses can be planted in a location with full sun.

Angel Wings miniature roses just might be one of the sweetest ways to ring in a New Year. •



Above: Sweet deep-pink roses cover the mini bushes of Angel Wings miniature roses, grown from seed. Below: Hips from Angel Wings roses are enjoyed by wildlife and can be used in floral arrangements too. Photos courtesy Renee's Garden Seeds





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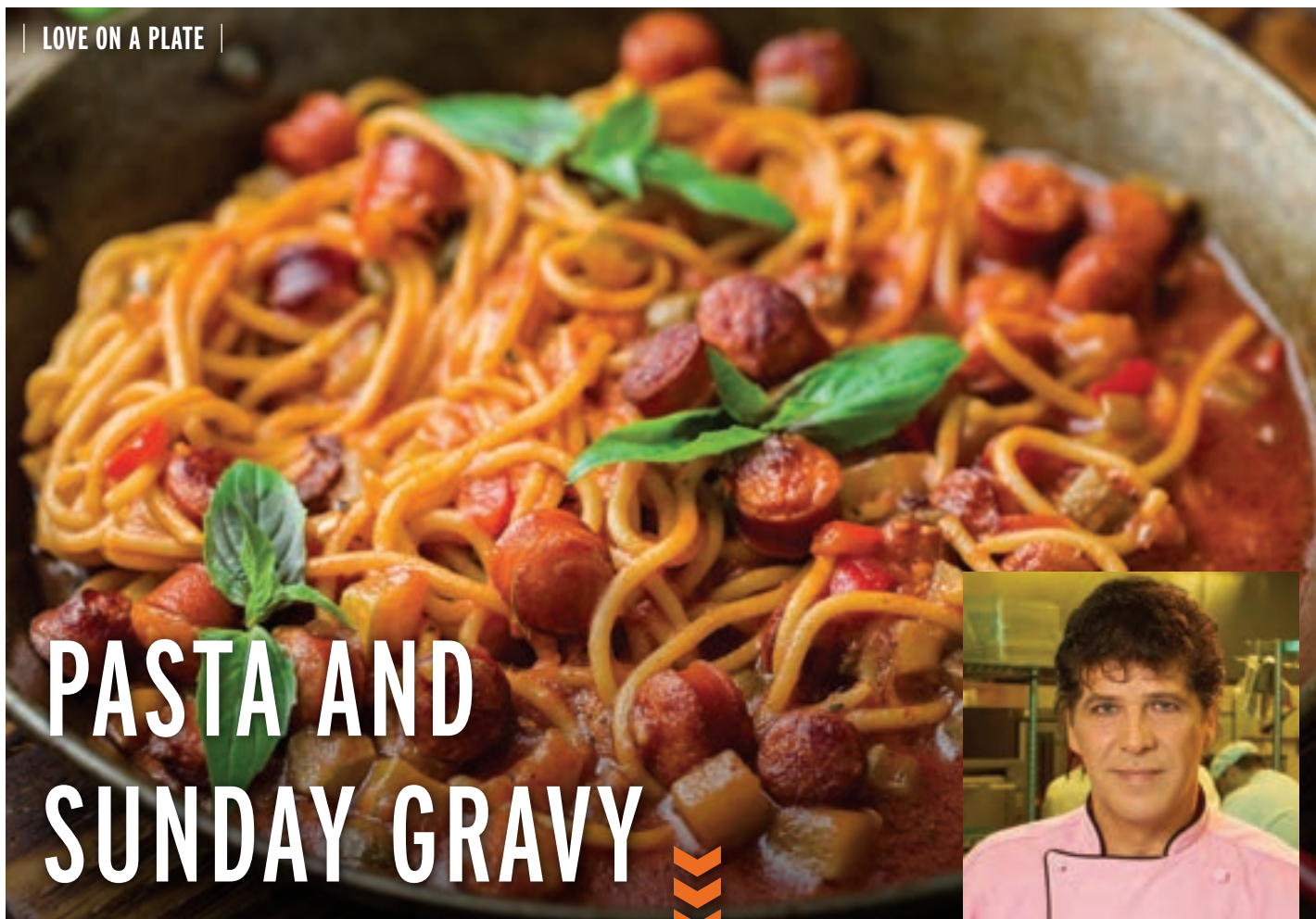
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# PASTA AND SUNDAY GRAVY



BY JIM BAILEY, THE YANKEE CHEF

Unless you are a true Italian, Sunday Gravy may sound as foreign as Tomato Gravy or Sunday Sauce. Each have been interchangeable for decades, but to full-blooded Italians, that is like saying Manhattan and New England chowders are each chowders, and we know that isn't the case. (If that analogy does not stir the pot, I don't know what will.) Sunday Gravy is the correct, time-honored name for any tomato sauce that has onions and a beef or pork product cooked within.

The best Sunday Gravy I ever had was when my father was semi-retired, and he slow cooked pork ribs in his tomato sauce all afternoon. It was absolutely delicious. So, if you happen to be retired and have your Sunday open, why not surprise your family with an authentic Italian meal?

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 links hot or sweet Italian sausage
- 1 pound pasta shells, or your favorite pasta
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic in oil
- 1 (14 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon each dried basil and oregano
- 1 cup cream (heavy, light, or half-and-half)
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

## DIRECTIONS

- Slice sausage 1/4-inch thick; set aside.
- While making the Gravy, cook pasta according to directions. Transfer to a colander to drain while making Gravy but do not rinse it. By cooling the pasta without rinsing, you leave the starch on the pasta, allowing any sauce to stick much easier.
- In a large saucepan over medium high heat, add oil. When hot, add sausage and cook until completely done, stirring frequently.
- Add onion and garlic, blending

to combine. Continue cooking until onions are tender.

- Add tomatoes (juice included) and cook an additional 5 minutes, or until the tomatoes are softened.

Add broth, paste, and all seasonings. Stir well, reduce heat to medium low (barely producing bubbles) and simmer uncovered for 5 minutes.

Add cream and Parmesan cheese, stirring well. Cook 5 minutes more, and carefully add pasta.

Combine everything well and remove from heat once the pasta is heated through. •



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## QUESTIONABLE ADVICE

BY L.C. VAN SAVAGE

***My wife tends to get pretty blue after Christmas, like many of us. Do you have any ideas for ways to cheer her up?***

—David

Sure. Five things guaranteed to chase away her post-Christmas blues: a late Christmas just between the two of you, some soft music, a little champagne, assurances that she is the best thing that could ever possibly have happened to you, and a small velvet box.

***The video games my 15-year-old son plays aren't usually a problem, but I've noticed that he becomes irritable and withdrawn (more than usual) after playing them for a while. He's not rude, but I just want to make sure he comes back to the "real world" when it's time to stop. Any advice?***

—Susan

Yep. When you're all out at the movies some night, your house is robbed, but weirdly all that was taken were the video games. Perplexed, the police can offer no explanations, and the case is never solved.

***My wonderful friend gave me a wacky-looking knit cap for Christmas. I love her to death, and appreciate the thought, but the ridiculous cap is just not right for me. I feel terrible about it, but I can't wear it in public. We're going for a (socially distant) walk soon, and I know she'll expect to see me wearing it. What can I do?***

—Marielle

Wear it. Think: 1. No one cares. 2. It will take an hour out of your life. 3. It will give your "wonderful friend" such joy. 4. She'd do it for you. 5. Wear it.

***I was recently given an antique rug by a family member. It's important to her, and I want to keep it safe. The problem is that I have a kitten, and I'm worried he'll tear it up. How can I protect the rug without covering it up?***

—Katrina

So many ways to save the rug. The first is to trade in Felix for a nice tortoise. Another method, surround the rug with orange peels, but you have to enjoy drying, curling orange peels scattered about your floor.

Another is for you to keep vigilant with a gentle water pistol, and every time Tabby approaches the rug, a quick squirt at his sweet paws, but of course this approach does mean you have to never leave the area of the rug and you must stay armed 24/7. Lastly, and this plan is tried and true and everyone does it, alert the family that whenever sis arrives in the driveway, you will scream, "GET THE RUG. SHE'S COMING IN!" You put Kittypoo into a nice bedroom, put the rug down, and all sit calm and smiling.

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We talk for a living, and now we're asking all Mainers to wear a facemask in public to combat COVID-19.

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**Randi Kirshbaum**  
*Longtime Maine Radio Personality*



**Blake Hayes**  
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