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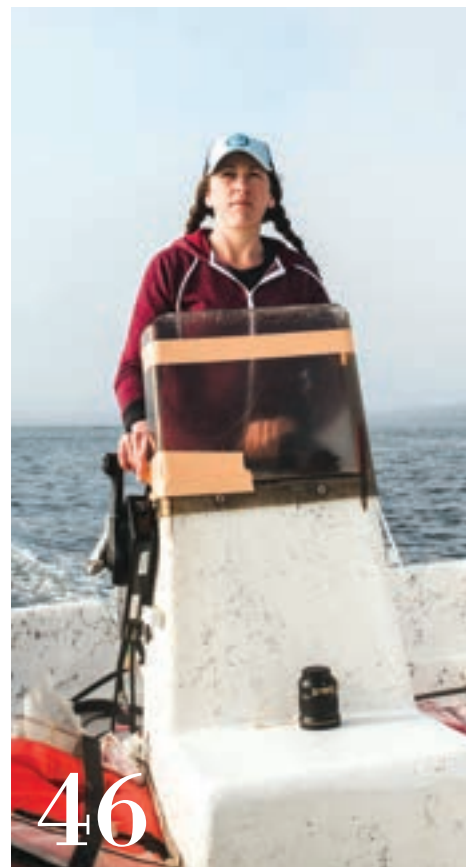
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Navigating cancer

There's a Mat Kearney song that my husband and I talk about a lot. It's called "Closer to Love," and the lyrics go like this:

*"She got the call today
One out of the grey
And when the smoke cleared
It took her breath away
She said she didn't believe
It could happen to me
I guess we're all one phone call from our knees"*

I imagine that a cancer diagnosis feels a little like the feeling described here. My good friend lost a 26-year-old son to cancer a few years ago. And though she had worked as a nurse for many years, she still had trouble navigating the system.

I am happy to read about Peggy Belanger. She started work as a patient navigator at Southern Maine Health Care in 2003. She was the first person to hold that title at SMHC, and over the last 15 years, she has been a support and guide for cancer patients and their families. Patient navigators like Belanger help patients understand their options and choices when trying to manage their cancer diagnosis and treatments. Belanger spoke to us about how one of her patients described her life after she got her diagnosis: "She used the analogy that one day she woke up, had been put on a plane without her permission and dropped off in a foreign country. She had no idea where she was, what she was supposed to do, who to talk to and how to speak the language. She said it felt like a nightmare." Read more about Belanger and the nurse oncology patient navigator program on page 31.

In just a few weeks, more than 1,200 women will gather in South Portland for the 11th annual Tri for a Cure. Each participant is required to raise a minimum of \$500, and 100 percent of

the money raised by participants goes into programming run by the Maine Cancer Foundation. In the first 10 years of the race, more than 10,000 participants raised just shy of \$12 million. Last year's race alone raised over \$2 million, far surpassing its fundraising target. You can find more details on the Tri on page 24.

Originally, Meret Bainbridge planned to participate in the Tri in honor of a friend. She always enjoyed swimming, though not necessarily in the cold Maine waters, so she got herself a wetsuit. Bainbridge put off training for the Tri, and soon found herself navigating a cancer diagnosis and treatment for herself. She says, "One of my first thoughts was, after I am through this, I will do Tri for a Cure, and I will swim in the survivors' wave." Last year she did just that. Read more on page 16.

Susan Maataoui, the volunteer coordinator for the Tri, has been involved for 10 years. She is a woman who has been "giving back" for a long time. We need to do these kinds of important things in our communities,' she says. "That's a value I grew up with. My parents were very active in their communities and valued volunteerism and modeled that. I got the message that if you are fortunate enough to have resources, you have an obligation to share those resources with people who don't." Maataoui's dedication to her community has had a big impact. "Susan is the person behind the scenes making all 500 volunteers come together. We could not do it without her," says Julie Marchese, founder of the Tri. Read more on page 34.

Thanks for reading Maine Women Magazine. Stay in touch with us on social media, and come on out to the Tri this year to cheer for all of the remarkable women who participate.



Lee Hews

ON THE COVER

Two Tri for a Cure participants celebrate after finishing the first leg—a 1/3-mile swim—of the annual sprint triathlon. This is the 11th year of the Tri, which benefits the Maine Cancer Foundation's effort to fight cancer in Maine. Read more on page 24.

Photo by Jim Newton



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Still Life Studio

Adria Moynahan Rusk is growing an accessible creative community

**Written by Mercedes Grandin
Photographed by Molly Haley**



Adria Moynahan Rusk's desire to create and teach art and make it more accessible to everyone stems from her own personal experience.

"There were a lot of holes in my education, and I learned a lot about painting on my own and from other artists after I graduated," she says. "One of the things I do is explain things that weren't explained to me and break things down into smaller chunks that are more manageable. In art school, it was a lot of 'here are the materials, go for it, good luck.'"

Originally a native of South Portland, Rusk moved back to Portland in 2009 after graduating with a BFA from Oregon's Portland State University. She rented a space at the Running with Scissors studio collaborative, where she made art and taught painting and drawing. As Rusk, 39, started teaching workshops to larger groups, she realized she needed a larger space. Last year, she explored the idea of opening her own art studio and community space for art workshops and classes.

She found a site in Portland's burgeoning West Bayside neighborhood on Elm Street and signed a lease in May of 2017, embarking on three months of knocking down walls, opening up rooms and renovating the space. As a full-time working artist, Rusk needed capital to get the business off the ground, so she sought out the community's support, launching a Crowdfunding campaign on IndieGogo and raising \$12,500, most of which went toward the space's renovation.

She opened the doors to Still Life Studio in August 2017. The space includes a large room for group workshops and classes, a kitchen and work station and three small private studio spaces, one of which Rusk currently occupies for private lessons and creating her own art.

“There’s so much of this space that isn’t actually about the art, it’s about coming together.”

She rents the other two studio spaces to local artists for \$500-600 per month, including utilities and parking, and uses the income to offset her lease and overhead costs.

“I wanted a fairly small and manageable space that had room to grow and evolve,” she says. “People are really excited about the community aspect of taking classes or workshops that help them gather and come together with other like-minded people. We need community right now,” Rusk says. “Sometimes people will come to something because they want to be creative, be with other people and do something different. There’s so much of this space that isn’t actually about the art, it’s about coming together.”

Still Life Studio’s clients are diverse—from beginners who haven’t picked up a paintbrush to experienced artists who want to keep learning and exploring different art forms. “I want this studio to have a combination of learning and time to be creative and explore,” says Rusk. “I try to bring in instructors who hang out in that space of experimentation and being timid and having that be OK.” Rusk offers open studio hours the second Sunday of every month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., where people can bring in their own art projects and share ideas informally. The studio is also available for private groups to rent the space, including a weekly drawing group. Rusk is planning a pop-up show in July with a local book artist and is planning more pop-ups for the future.

Other workshops and classes offered at the studio include a modern art class for teens called Modern Arts Explorations and taught by local painter Abbeth Russell, a mono printmaking class and an abstract painting workshop taught by Portland artist Haley Nannig. Rusk also offers private lessons to individuals, customizing lessons based on each student’s goals. She’s also exploring the idea of “salon style” semi-private or small group lessons, which would allow her to lower her price point while still offering quality instruction. Rusk’s goal is to pay artists a respectable wage. “Artists are constantly asked to teach or perform or display for next to nothing. For me, as a working artist, if it doesn’t work out so that teacher is compensated for their time and talent, then we don’t do it.”

Rusk describes the vibrant energy of a recent workshop hosted at the studio with local abstract painter Amanda Hawkins. “She was excited about the space and teaching, and she had this real enthusiasm for sharing what she does.” The workshop was so popular it filled to capacity and the studio added a second workshop. “The students were really excited to work with someone they admired, and she had the energy for doing it. It was a great synergy of everyone being into it, and the work they produced was really cool.” Rusk says she loves being able to support artists as teachers and observe the community she’s helped create. “Whenever I’ve taught, I’ve wanted that support, and it’s nice to be able to offer that for the instructors. I take care of all the administration and they just come in and teach the class.”

One thing she’s learned in her first year is that “if people don’t commit, they don’t





FOR MORE INFORMATION

about classes at workshops at
Still Life Studio, visit

studiostilllife.com and
[facebook.com/studiostilllife](https://www.facebook.com/studiostilllife)

Still Life Studio is located at
82 Elm St., Portland

show up.” As a result, she created an online registration system where people sign up and pay in advance. “Asking people to commit helps us pay instructors, because if we don’t fill a class, it doesn’t make financial sense to hold it.” She says she’ll consider adding drop-in classes and workshops as her mailing list and interest grows.

Marketing has been another challenge in growing the business. “We’re so connected, but there are so many channels to be connected through that I’m not always sure what the best way is to get the word out,” Rusk says, explaining the shift in traction she’s received from Facebook to Instagram. She posts events on MaineToday.com and in *The Phoenix*, and she sends out information in her bi-monthly e-newsletter, her most effective channel for registrations. “My biggest focus now is in growing my mailing list. It’s on my website and I ask people to sign up in exchange for a \$10 coupon.” She also does cross-promotion of events with *Running with Scissors* owner Kate Anker to help get the word out.

Making financial ends meet and maintaining a profit margin has been tough, but Rusk has the verve and determination to succeed. “You have to have a lot of passion if you want to do this work,” Rusk says. “What drives me right now is that there’s so much potential, financially

and personally. I work seven days a week right now and that’s not my end goal, but for now it feels necessary. I feel like once we get some traction and things are rolling, it won’t be quite such a challenge every month.” Rusk is currently wearing so many hats that she’s limited in what she’s able to do, so she’s hoping to hire someone part-time to help with social media, marketing and bookkeeping. She’d also like to be able to reinvest in the business to grow it for the future.

Rusk hopes that Still Life Studio will become “an urban artist hub for learning and a trusted source for creative learning and creative art experiences in Portland.” Her immediate goal is to fill all of her offerings to capacity, so she can continue to grow. She’s at a threshold common for many start-ups and new businesses, gaining enough momentum to get by, while also continuing to grow and expand. She’d like to continue to expand the space, offer more artist retreats, and continue to “create experiences and community for people to come be creative and learn and grow.”

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

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Summer theater, Greek Festival and dancing in the streets

Written by Amy Paradysz



Photo by Amy Paradysz



Photo courtesy of Twisted Sprocket Studio



Greek Festival

Friday–Sunday, July 13–15
St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church,
186 Bradley St., Saco

This is one big fat Greek festival, with Greek music and traditional dancing as well as tours of the sanctuary, decorated in icons created in Greece and shipped to Maine. But it's pretty clear that what draws more than 6,000 people to this church fair annually is pure deliciousness. Bring cash and a hearty appetite, and don't leave without a to-go box from the pastry ladies. (stdemetriosofmaine.com)

'An American in Paris'

July 11–Aug. 4
Ogunquit Playhouse, 10 Main St., Ogunquit

This lavish musical packed with Gershwin tunes starts with World War II vet Jerry Mulligan settling in Paris to make a name for himself as a painter. Jerry's life becomes complicated when he meets Lise, a young Parisian shop girl with her own secret—and realizes he is not her only suitor. (ogunquitplayhouse.org)



Band Camp Music & Arts Festival

July 27–29
Thomas Point Beach Campground,
29 Meadow Road, Brunswick

For those who love live music and art as well as camping seaside with other creative types, band camp is three days and two nights of laid-back bliss. A tent camping site is included with the purchase of a three-day pass (\$60 in advance, \$70 at the gate); day passes range from \$15–45. Music groups include Gruvenwood, Hambone, Singepole Mountain Band, Puddn'head, A Mighty Lion, Bandwich, Harsh Armadillo, The Van Burens, Fules Gold and The Strange Machine. (bandcampfest.com)

Summer Session: Maine Brewers' Guild 2018 Beer Festival

Saturday, July 28, 1–5 p.m.
Thompson's Point, Portland

Summer Session is the ultimate 21+ summer outdoor party, with more than 60 Maine breweries present, plenty of food trucks, live music and lawn games. (\$49/\$55 at the gate, \$20 for designated drivers; eventbrite.com)

The Dance Mile

Saturday, July 14, 4–7:30 p.m.
Lincoln Park, 356 Congress St., Portland

If you're looking for happiness, this all-ages dance parade through the streets of Portland just may be the ticket. Dancers get Dance Mile tank tops and bib numbers, bedazzle them, warm up with Zumba and follow a custom sound truck in a 1-mile stroll of sass through the Old Port. The Dance Mile is a bit a fitness and a whole lot of fun. (*Buy tickets in advance online; thedancemile.com*)



Photo by Amy Paradysz



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Sarah Emerson of Westbrook, breast cancer patient (center), with her NECS care team (from L): Sarah Forrest RN, Chiara Battelli MD, Amanda Magnoli ANP, and Alexis Bowman PCC (Patient Care Coordinator).

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*Sarah finished the 2018 Boston Marathon,
and is now preparing for the Tri for a Cure.*



There I Was

Meret Bainbridge wanted to swim the Tri for a Cure in honor of a friend—she ended up swimming for herself, too

Written by Emma Bouthillette | Photographed by Lauryn Hottinger

“In September 2013, I went to a sports store and bought a wetsuit at an end-of-season sale,” says Meret Bainbridge. She had just attended a memorial service for a member of her Unitarian-Universalist Church, who succumbed to her fourth cancer diagnosis. “I swore I’d swim the [Tri for a Cure] in Andrea Juers’ honor. But then life got in the way.”

A self-employed acupuncturist and single mom of a teenage daughter, Bainbridge couldn’t find time for training in her busy life. She felt too out of shape and admittedly hated Maine’s cold waters, even though she loved swimming. Then life threw a curveball.

At a routine mammogram on May 18, 2016, a small tumor was picked up by the scan. So small, in fact, that neither she nor her doctor had felt the lump. A subsequent breast ultrasound raised

suspicion, which led to a biopsy. On June 23, 2016, Bainbridge, who at the time was 57, got the news no one ever wants to hear: she had cancer—specifically, stage one breast cancer, invasive ductal carcinoma.

“I was given the choice of either mastectomy or lumpectomy with radiation,” says Bainbridge. She opted for the lumpectomy. “I wanted to keep my breasts,” she says.

The lumpectomy occurred July 21, 2016, and the lymph node removed was negative. She did not need chemotherapy but undertook radiation that fall. During the time between the lumpectomy and radiation, Bainbridge’s mother—who was just shy of 80 at the time—came from Germany to visit her in Maine for the first time. Together they visited Acadia National park, hiked Little Hunters Beach and, as soon as Bainbridge was cleared by her sur-

geon, she swam in Echo Lake.

"Swimming never felt so good," says Bainbridge.

When she received her diagnosis, Bainbridge recalls Southern Maine Health Care's nurse navigator, Helene Langley, reviewing her treatment options. She says, "One of my first thoughts was, after I am through this, I will do Tri for a Cure, and I will swim in the survivors' wave."

The thought of swimming in that survivors' wave carried her through her treatment. "It was the goal I always envisioned when things got tough," she says.

Four days prior to her lumpectomy, Bainbridge joined the hundreds of spectators at the Tri for a Cure for the first time. It poured during the whole event and she cried watching the participants swim, bike and run.

"Watching these women athletes of all shapes and sizes, some with bald heads, compete and be strong, laugh and cry together made me feel I wanted to be part of this community of [athletes]," she says, and in that moment realized, "I was not alone in this cancer journey."

Once Bainbridge completed radiation, she shifted her focus from treatment to training. She enrolled in the triathlon swimming program through SheJAMs, an athletic organization founded by three women helping women train for all aspects of a triathlon. Bainbridge was not an avid swimmer, though she did love the water.

"I loved to swim and was never afraid of the water. I just hated the cold," she says. "I swam in Maine's ponds and lakes during the summer, but never took to the ocean because it was too cold. Having a wetsuit made all the difference," as did prescription goggles.

What experience Bainbridge did have swimming was limited to the breaststroke. During the SheJAMs training, she learned to swim freestyle and the rhythm of breath necessary for the stroke. Bainbridge says, "I was the slowest in the class, but speed did not matter to me. I had perseverance and stamina."

As she set about training, Bainbridge knew she could only manage the swim leg of the triathlon due to a chronic hip problem that kept her from cycling or running. When she floated the idea of a relay team, a friend from church, Niki Norman, 65, volunteered for the cycling leg. Norman says, "I wanted to support Meret in her recovery and challenge myself with the bike ride."

Then, Bainbridge asked her daughter



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“Watching these women athletes of all shapes and sizes, some with bald heads, compete and be strong, laugh and cry together made me feel I wanted to be part of this community.”



Meret Bainbridge and her daughter, Megan, spend time together at Laurel Hill Cemetery in Saco.

Megan if she would run. Megan, now 17, ran cross country in school, so she could easily accomplish the 5K at the end of Tri for a Cure. Remembering when she learned of her mom's diagnosis, Megan says, "I was in disbelief. The possibility of losing the person that I care about the most was difficult to digest."

She agreed to be the third member of Team Trilogy. "It was a bonding experience for us, having a common goal, but the Tri was more empowering for my mom. She had survived cancer and the triathlon was a symbolic comeback for her."

And a comeback it was. One year and two days after her lumpectomy, Bainbridge stood on the beach by Spring Point Ledge Light among the cancer survivors who would kick off the race with a 1/3-mile swim. Bainbridge says, "There I was, one of this community of strong women survivors who had turned their cancer into being athletes for the common good. It was awesome."

Having swum the course twice before for practice prepared her for the swim, but not for the chaos of splashing and thrashing as dozens of women in the second survivors' wave took to the waters of Casco Bay. "The most fun part was to hear the cheering crowd of spectators each time my head came up to breathe and then became a distant white noise when my head was back under water."

Bainbridge will sit out for the 2018 Tri for a Cure so she and her daughter can focus on college campus visits, since Megan will graduate high school in 2019. However, she continues to swim as if she were participating. It has helped increase Bainbridge's exercise as she made lifestyle changes as a cancer survivor. As an acupuncturist, Bainbridge has used Chinese herbal remedies and supplements since her diagnosis and changed other eating habits, such as reducing processed foods, sugar, gluten and caffeine, and giving up alcohol.

"Cancer has been a great teacher," she says. "I will not let cancer define who I am. I will not let my life and my decisions be ruled by fear. I will do whatever it takes to get healthy and stay healthy. I will not blame myself...or others... Blame is a wasted time and energy that is better spent healing. I will take responsibility for changing my life to give myself the best possible outcome."

Emma Bouthillette authored *"A Brief History of Biddeford,"* about her hometown. She is a yoga instructor and a corgi mom. (emma-bouthillette.com)



Photo by Jim Newton

You got this!

All of us here at Maine Women Magazine are rooting for each and every participant in this year's Tri for a Cure. We'd also like to give a special shoutout to five Maine women who will be doing the Tri this year (three for the first time). The magazine's sponsorship of the Tri (we've been a sponsor since the Tri's inception) included five Tri entries, which we passed on to these participants, but they're still putting in all the hard work to train and to fundraise for the Maine Cancer Foundation.

Lynn Harrison, from Bridgton, a cancer survivor who did the Tri in 2016 and 2017, so this will make three in a row!

Sally Enoch, from Windham, a cancer survivor who will be doing the Tri for the first time!

Heather Cuzzi, from Scarborough, a cancer survivor who will be doing the Tri for the first time!

Monica Litsas, from Portland, a cancer survivor who will be doing the Tri for the first time!

Katie Armington, from Lovell, who did the Tri in 2016 and 2017, so this will be three in a row for her, too!

Cheers to you all!



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A place to heal

At On Eagles Wings in Bridgton, Ann Ruel offers massage, reflexology, art therapy and exercise to cancer patients—for free

Written by Patricia McCarthy | Photographed by Lauryn Hottinger

When friends recommended that Mark Mudgett check out a wellness center in Bridgton that offers free massage, reflexology and other services to cancer patients, he figured it was worth checking out.

A snowstorm stopped his first attempt at visiting. And weirdly, that happened three more times.

“It took a while to get there, but I’m so glad I kept trying,” says Mudgett, a Casco resident who was diagnosed with stage four esophageal cancer in August 2016. Remarkably, he’s showing “phenomenal” improvement that he attributes to “deep faith and powerful medicines,” as well as regular trips to On Eagles Wings, the center on Portland Road.

“I love going there. The women there are of great faith, and they

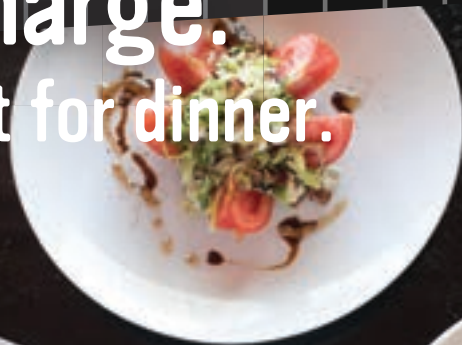
are such an immense blessing to me. It’s really hard to put into words what they have done for me,” Mudgett says, noting that reflexology treatments have done wonders for neuropathy that developed in his feet and fingertips.

On Eagles Wings founder Ann Ruel of Harrison suffered from the same condition during her own debilitating treatment for cancer—stage four breast cancer seven years ago—and found great relief with massage and reflexology during her very difficult stretch.

“There were times when I couldn’t walk, I couldn’t hold a pencil because of the damage, and could only get reflexology, and it just helped me so much in getting through my treatments,” says Ruel, who just turned 60 and has returned to good health.

She takes little credit for starting the center, saying she felt

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compelled to do it—repeatedly pushed by God to offer to others what had helped her. “It seemed insane at the time, but I knew that I had to do it. I’m just an instrument to provide love, joy and peace through this place.”

Ruel, a longtime Realtor, says she took the leap, got training to do reflexology, acquired a grant and opened On Eagles Wings in 2013. The center’s decorating was donated by My Sister’s Garage in Windham and crucial support was provided by her husband, Jim, a mechanical sales engineer who she met at a party while visiting her hometown of Peoria, Illinois, 35 years ago.

He saw her through “a lot of struggle, physically, emotionally and financially” to make the center a reality, she says.

Today, center costs are covered by grants and via healthy customers who pay for services. Ruel also donates 10 percent of her real estate proceeds to help with operating costs.

In addition to massage and reflexology—which relax and calm the nervous system as well as improving circulation—the center offers other services that make people feel better, including art classes, facials, exercise and yoga programs—again, free to cancer patients, with healthy customers paying reasonable fees.

“I think you heal yourself by healing others,” Ruel says. “This is my healing place, and it’s that to other people, too.”

She says she tries to bring the kind of things that comforted her into the business. And sometimes, those are just simple things that bring a little joy. For example, she hosts twice-a-year popular tea parties for patients, survivors and volunteers at Clipper Merchant Tea House. And she’s offering a line of sterling silver jewelry from Creaser Jewelers in South Paris that features angels—angels of joy, love, hope and prayer—as a comfort to patients and a small source of revenue for the center.

“I had a special bracelet with angels on it that I’d gotten years before my cancer in Bar Harbor, and I always wore it when I was going through treatments. It just really gave me comfort. I thought it would be nice to have something like that here, and people have loved it.”

Those people include Carole Hicks of Bridgton, who says she deeply appreciates Ann Ruel and On Eagles Wings.

“I have all the angels,” says Hicks, 80, who has cancer of the blood and bone marrow and takes advantage of the center’s free reflexology and massage sessions. “They’re special to me, because a nurse told me a couple of years



ago that I must have had an angel watching over me when I had multiple blood clots and pulled through it. I just like collecting them.”

Hicks calls On Eagles Wings a tremendous, comforting resource.

“I think it’s been a wonderful thing,” she says, noting that she’s also taken yoga classes and is considering getting involved in art classes at the center. “And Ann has been very helpful to me. She’s very kind.”

Ruel is a nurturing person. When not working selling properties or at On Eagles Wings, she volunteers time by bringing her Tibetan terrier, a therapy dog, to the oncology department at Bridgton Hospital.

“It just brings joy to patients going through tough times—I know what they’re going through.”

Ruel, who has one almost-20-year-old daughter, Rachel, calls herself a blessed person who is grateful to be alive and happy to be providing a “little piece of heaven.”

“I love my life,” she says, “and I don’t let death scare me. You never know, and when God is ready to take me home, he’ll take me home, but it won’t be to cancer! My faith is definitely what has taken me through it all. I do none of this on my own. I just allow myself to be the instrument and follow this: ‘I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.’”

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

On Eagles Wings offers free massage, reflexology, art therapy and exercise to cancer patients. Costs are covered by grants and by healthy customers who pay for services. Ruel also donates 10 percent of her real estate proceeds to help with operating costs.



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The Survivor Swim Wave hits the water at Tri for a Cure 2017.



TRI FOR A CURE

The celebratory and empowering sprint triathlon raises money for the Maine Cancer Foundation

Written by Lucinda Hannington | Photographed by Jim Newton



Athletes getting ready to transition from swimming to biking.

“Cancer is pushing everyone on that course in one way or another, and every one of those women is pushing back—taking something back that cancer tries to take away.”

Maine Cancer Foundation’s annual Tri for a Cure is the largest single-day fundraiser in the state of Maine. The 2018 sprint triathlon returns on Sunday, July 22, with more than 1,200 women carrying on a tradition now in its 11th year. The women-only triathlon, which requires athletes to raise at least \$500 to participate, has a huge financial impact on the work of the Maine Cancer Foundation, but many participants have an emotional connection to the race as well.

“The Tri includes women from age 16 to age 86—women of every shape and size, every level of fitness,” says Kristen Smith, director of community engagement for Maine Cancer Foundation. “It can be someone’s first race or their fifth. Everyone out there is pushing themselves past nerves or exhaustion or grief or a diagnosis. Cancer is pushing everyone on that course in one way or another, and every one of those women is pushing back—taking something back that cancer tries to take away.”

Because all of the participants are women, the event has a different dynamic than many co-ed races. On one hand, it’s

still a serious test of endurance—on the other, it’s designed to be an empowering and celebratory experience marked by silly costumes and camaraderie.

Founded in 2008 by Maine Cancer Foundation board member Julie Marchese and her friend Abby Bliss, the race is modeled on an event sponsored by Title IX in Boston with a goal to encourage women to push themselves to their personal bests and to inspire others to see what they are capable of themselves. This is a race that’s about the community, not about the first person over the finish line.

“The women aren’t racing against each other—they are competing with each other. Each year, we see someone stop and wait for someone to catch up, someone to help across the finish line. The sense of support and camaraderie is overwhelming, and it makes the event accessible for anyone who wants to join,” says Smith.

In addition, 100 percent of the money raised by participants goes into programming run by the Maine Cancer Foundation. According to Smith, “one of the great things about the event is that we have a number of very generous



Tri for a Cure Race Director Julie Marchese, and the 2017's oldest participant, Cookie Kalloch of South Portland, who was 81 years old on race day.



Three swimmers get ready for the start of the 2017 Tri for a Cure.

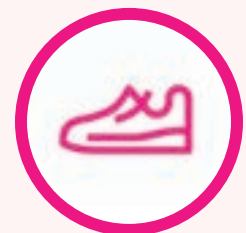
The first 10 years of the Tri for a Cure:



11,790 participants swam a total of 3,462 miles



biked 158,520 miles



and ran 32,668 miles after raising \$11,987,274 from 143,575 donations. This was made possible by 4,532 volunteers and 115 corporate sponsors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
about the race, visit:
triforcure.org

For more information about the
Maine Cancer Foundation and
their Challenge Cancer 2020,
visit: mainecancer.org



Athletes and spectators during the 2017 Opening Ceremony.

sponsors who cover all the logistics, so all of the money raised by athletes goes right into programming; it's reinvested back into the state of Maine to fight cancer." Corporate sponsorships cover everything from permitting to tents, transporting bike racks and providing bibs.

In the first 10 years of the race, more than 10,000 participants raised just shy of \$12 million. Last year's race alone raised over \$2 million, far surpassing its fundraising target. Based on that success, this year's goal has been set at \$2 million as well, and the athletes are on pace to make that happen.

While events like the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life may have more name recognition, they don't have the same kind of direct impact on Maine communities as the Tri for a Cure. Maine Cancer Foundation's grants stay in Maine to provide preventative

care, screenings and to ensure that those living with cancer get the care they need. In 2015, Maine Cancer Foundation launched Challenge Cancer 2020, a program with the goal of reducing cancer incidence and mortality in Maine by 20 percent by the year 2020. Affordable access to screenings is an integral part of this program and something the Tri for a Cure helps fund. Since the beginning of the Challenge, over \$7 million in grant money has been distributed, reaching every county in the state.

"This is a remarkable accomplishment that the women of Maine can be very proud of," says Smith.

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



TREATMENTS DONE!

An update on Sarah Emerson from last year's Tri issue

Tri for a Cure participants might recall seeing Sarah Emerson of Westbrook on the course last year holding a sign that read, "I had chemo on Friday. You can do this!" (She was also featured in our Tri for a Cure issue.) We're happy to report that she completed her treatment for breast cancer on May 31 of this year. Following 20 weeks of chemotherapy, Emerson underwent a double mastectomy and reconstruction surgery. This past spring, she completed the 2018 Boston Marathon and raised over \$11,500 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. She also completed the Silo District Half Marathon, a race that raised over 100,000 for the Brave Like Gabe Foundation, which supports rare cancer research and physical exercise through treatments. You won't see Emerson on the sidelines of this year's Tri for a Cure because she will be participating (and no doubt cheering everyone else on, too)!



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Here for you

*Patient navigators help cancer patients
move through the health care system*

Written by Melanie Brooks | Photographed by Lauryn Hottinger

When Peggy Belanger graduated from nursing school in 1972, the job of “patient navigator” didn’t exist. Thanks in part to her extensive background in hospice and home care, and her love of community outreach and education, Belanger became the very first patient navigator for Southern Maine Health Care in 2003. Today there are four.

“Professionally, I felt like I came home when I was hired to start the cancer care program,” Belanger says. Because of her experience, she was asked to help write the job description for the position for which she’d eventually apply and be hired. “When I think back on my nursing career, I was working as a patient



As a patient navigator for Southern Maine Health Care for 15 years, Peggy Belanger helped cancer patients and their families figure out the who, what, where, when and how of the health care system.

navigator before it was called that. I was really given carte blanche at at SMHC; this was the beginning of the cancer care program that exists today.”

If you're not familiar with the nurse oncology patient navigator program, you aren't alone. It is specifically designed to help cancer patients and their families navigate their journey from the very first cancer screening to, at times, end-of-life care.

According to the American Medical Association, a patient navigator is someone

who provides personal guidance to patients as they move through the health care system. Some may be nurses, others are social workers, administrators or medical assistants. Many navigators are trained nurses who see a way to channel their love for patient care in a different way. “The patient navigator model is used for many disease sites,” says Donna Akerson Green, director of clinical oncology for MaineHealth, of which SMHC is a member hospital. “But the model lends itself so nicely to the oncology program.”

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Belanger offers a sobering example. “A patient said to me once, when she was diagnosed with cancer, that within seconds her life changed,” Belanger says. “She used the analogy that one day she woke up, had been put on a plane without her permission and dropped off in a foreign country. She had no idea where she was, what she was supposed to do, who to talk to and how to speak the language. She said it felt like a nightmare. The navigator takes care of that; takes care of the person that now

to show the benefit,” she says. Physicians, who might have been reluctant to have Belanger meet with their patients in 2003, have become her biggest advocates. “Because I was starting something new I had to prove the value of this non-reimbursable service. SMHC was so willing to put in the money, time and effort in supporting me.”

“The benefits far outweigh the costs of hiring patient navigators,” Akerson Green says. “Patient navigators increase patient satisfaction and expedite their care. In the past few years, MaineHealth has been pushing to get patient navigators into all of their member hospitals.”

Belanger, who grew up in Biddeford and now lives in Kennebunk, retired as a nurse in 2017. A huge proponent of community education and outreach programs, many of which she started in Southern Maine, she continues with that work on a part-time basis. Her early work with the Maine Cancer Consortium got her involved with the Maine Cancer Foundation. She sits on two of their boards, the Maine Cancer Impact Network Leadership Roundtable and the Rehab and Survivorship Task Force. She's also an avid volunteer with Tri for a Cure, the Maine Cancer Foundation's signature event.

The impact the MCF has on the state is huge, Belanger says. “The MCF has brought the state together to address the morbidity of cancer. When they expanded their grant funding beyond research and into funding patient services, it had a huge impact on Maine. That's what touches people.”

The funds raised by the Maine Cancer Foundation (including those from the Tri for a Cure) help support patient navigation and advocacy, with \$1.9 million going to those programs across the state since 2015. Maine Cancer Foundation grants are currently funding 19 patient navigators in Maine.

Following Belanger's first year of volunteering for Tri for a Cure, she was hooked. “There are no words to describe the love, caring, compassion, understanding, support, and positivity one feels when attending or participating in the event,” Belanger says. “I feel like I get way more out of it than I put into it!” She sees it as her way to give back to an organization that has helped so many.

Melanie Brooks loves to write about Maine. Her work has been published in magazines and blogs throughout New England.

“We can't change the fact that they have a terminal illness. But we can provide them with hope, comfort and caring.”

who provides personal guidance to patients as they move through the health care system. Some may be nurses, others are social workers, administrators or medical assistants. Many navigators are trained nurses who see a way to channel their love for patient care in a different way. “The patient navigator model is used for many disease sites,” says Donna Akerson Green, director of clinical oncology for MaineHealth, of which SMHC is a member hospital. “But the model lends itself so nicely to the oncology program.”

Oncology nurse navigators work at the heart of what is essential to the person with cancer. “To me, it's a professional nursing advocate, providing resources to patients and families,” Belanger says. Many times these navigators are there right from the beginning of a diagnosis. Cancer patients are often given a dizzying array of treatment suggestions, including surgery, radiation or a wait-and-see option. A navigator offers unbiased recommendations so that a patient can make the best decision for their unique circumstances. Navigators can come through a hospital program or through the American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program. “The first consult can become so overwhelming very quickly,” Belanger says. “Often patients won't hear everything the doctor is saying or won't

has a diagnosis that they didn't ask for, didn't want and was not prepared for. The navigator helps the patient and their family figure out the who, what, where, when and how.”

Akerson Green stresses the importance for new cancer patients to ask about support opportunities, especially at their initial visit. “Don't be afraid to ask about what sort of help the system can provide,” she says. “We want to make sure that anyone with a diagnosis has access to the resources they need to make informed decisions.”

Of course, navigators can't fix everything. “We have to remember that we're working with an individual who has been given a cancer diagnosis, but nothing else in their life stops,” Belanger says. “They're trying to pay their rent. Trying to find a job. They're uninsured. Caregivers themselves. As much as navigation fills my heart and soul, the fact is, sometimes it's heartbreaking. We can't take care of everything. We can't change the fact that they have a terminal illness. But we can provide them with hope, comfort and caring.”

It's important to note that the services provided by a patient navigator are free of charge. For Belanger, proving the return on investment for this complimentary service was a challenge at first. “The biggest problem is trying to document your services and impact



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Crazy. Fun. And an honor

Volunteer coordinator Susan Maataoui works behind the scenes, managing hundreds of volunteers for the annual Tri for a Cure

Written by Patricia McCarthy | Photographed by Lauryn Hottinger

The job of coordinating several hundred volunteers to make sure they're all in their proper spots for an annual event that hosts more than 1,300 participants, covers land and water and spans miles can't go to just anyone.

First and foremost, the person must be exceptionally cool under pressure.

Susan Maataoui, a psychologist who lives in Portland, fits that bill, possessing that all-important trait—and all the rest needed—and she's been asked back as the Tri for a Cure's volunteer coordinator year after year.

This is Maataoui's 10th year of involvement with the Maine Cancer Foundation's popular fundraising triathlon, set for July 22 and starting and ending at Southern Maine Community College in South Portland.

She started as a general volunteer in 2009 and was "so inspired by the phenomenal event" that she and two friends agreed they'd sign up to participate as a team in the 2010 race.

"I am not an athlete by any stretch of the imagination, but I decided I'd get myself so I could run a 5K, and we got really excited," she says.

Unfortunately, though, online registration for the event filled up in eight minutes, and her team was without a number.

"I was just bereft!" she says. "So I contacted the race people and said if you have something for me to do, I'd be interested."

When event co-founder Julie Marchese learned about Maataoui's extensive volunteer background, she asked her to fill the volunteer coordinator position Marchese's husband Dave was handling, so he could be freed up for other race-related responsibilities.

Maataoui, 59, took it on and hasn't looked back. And Marchese is delighted about that: "Susan is the person behind the scenes making all 500 volunteers come together. We could not do it without her!"

Each third week of July, as the event is upon her and she's immersed in a flurry of details while working a full-time job, Maataoui confesses with a

laugh that she does wonder what in the world she was thinking in signing up again. But then race day arrives, and she remembers.

"It's an amazing thing to be a part of," she says. "Crazy. Fun. And an honor."

Renee Bunker of Portland, who has been the event's run course coordinator for eight years, laughs in agreement with all those feelings and, like Maataoui, is moved each year by what the event represents.

"It's a lot of work, but the energy of this race is unlike anything else I've ever been involved in," says the assistant U.S. attorney. "This is all about being out there and supporting a cause, rain or shine, and not about winning. That's what I love about it."

Bunker praises Maataoui for her ability to keep things in order while ensuring everyone also has fun each year.

"Susan gets us all fired up and organized and somehow keeps incredibly calm, no matter what. She somehow figures it all out."

Maataoui says that's something that she's gotten better at, year to year. Being a high-energy multitasker and having a "pretty calm temperament" helps. As do the thousands of supporters who surround the annual event, she says.

"There are always problems and issues that come up, but we do what we can and it comes together. The community always comes in and gives us what we need, and I've grown to trust that over 10 years."

Maataoui has 15 volunteer area coordinators, including Bunker, who manage people all along the course through South Portland and Cape Elizabeth—on the bike and run courses, on the water, at water stops and more. Starting in May, she gets a list of everyone who has signed up to help and starts feeding their names to her coordinators.

On nights and weekends, around her job with the VA Maine Healthcare System at Togus, she is responsible for handling larger volunteer groups, as-



As the Tri for a Cure's volunteer coordinator, Susan Maataoui manages hundreds of volunteers on race day, as well as the Friday setup and Saturday Expo. It's a role she'll be serving in for the 10th year at this year's Tri.



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signing tasks and staffing for everything, including Friday-night setup and the Saturday Expo and packet-pickup the day before the Sunday event. She also must consider all the safety issues, manage crowds, make sure traffic is directed, athletes aren't impeded and much more.

"It was a lot easier to coordinate when I was in private practice, and now I'm not quite as responsive to emails and that sort of thing. But we get it done. It's a team effort."

Many members of that team are repeat volunteers and, as a result, deep friendships have been formed over the past decade, Maataoui says.

"It is like a big family, and it's hard to imagine not being involved. I get as much back as I put in, definitely."

Giving back has been part of Maataoui's life since childhood.

"We need to do these kinds of important things in our communities. That's a value I grew up with. My parents were very active in their communities and valued volunteerism and modeled that. I got the message that if you are fortunate enough to have resources, you have an obligation to share those resources with people who don't."

Maataoui was the volunteer coordinator on the Mental Health Steering Committee and facilitator of a support group for the AIDS Service Center in Pasadena, California, for many years before moving to Maine in 1992.

Fundraising for cancer research and supporting cancer services is near to her heart, she says. Her 89-year-old mother, who lives with her, is a long-time breast cancer survivor and her father died of colon cancer "far too young" at age 67.

"I believe in what the Maine Cancer Foundation is about and support it completely," says Maataoui, who also volunteers on a Maine Cancer Impact Network hospice and palliative care taskforce affiliated with the MCF. "And all of the money raised stays in Maine."

Now in its 11th year, the Tri has raised about \$12 million (not including the money raised for this year's event), all of which has been reinvested in Maine communities for cancer prevention, early detection and access to care.

"I love that all the people involved are so committed to the mission," says Maataoui.

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



What to say when you're not sure what to say

Advice for finding the words when talking to a loved one about cancer

Written by Kailie Sullivan, LCSW, OSW-C

It can be hard to find the right words to reach out to a friend or loved one who has been diagnosed with cancer. Sometimes the fear of saying the “wrong” thing or upsetting the person can lead us to say nothing at all. But it’s important to fight the urge to keep quiet; most people with cancer say that support from their loved ones is a hugely important part of their healing process. Though there is no one-size-fits-all approach, below are some suggestions to help you start the conversation.

BREAK THE ICE

This can be as simple as asking how the person is doing. Open-ended questions work best, as they let the person with cancer direct the conversation. Other simple suggestions: “I’m really sorry you’re going through this” or “I don’t really know what to say, but I want you to know I care about you.”

LET THEM TAKE THE LEAD

Most people with cancer will offer up the details they are comfortable sharing. Some people are more private than others. They may redirect the conversation or become quiet. These are cues that the person may not be ready or willing to open up about their experience.

JUST LISTEN

Try not to make assumptions about how the person is feeling or what they want to hear. Being present and listening are often the most important things you can do to support someone with cancer.

DON'T COMPARE APPLES AND ORANGES

Try to avoid giving advice or sharing the experiences of others you know who have had cancer unless the person specifically asks. No two people—or cancer experiences—are exactly alike.

TREAT THEM WITH KINDNESS, NOT PITY

Most people with cancer don’t want to be treated differently or be defined by their illness. Don’t be afraid to share events and updates in your own life just as you normally would. Continue to include them in social events, work projects and plans, but try to be understanding and flexible if they aren’t able to keep the commitment.

OFFER TO HELP IN SPECIFIC, CONCRETE WAYS

People with cancer usually need help, and they usually hate asking for it. Offering up assistance with specific tasks can remove the burden of having to make requests. For example, “Can I drive you to your chemo appointment next week?” usually works better than “Let me know if there is anything I can do to help.”

KEEP IN TOUCH

Continue to check in and stay connected, both during and after cancer treatment. Sometimes people assume that everything goes “back to normal” for the person with cancer once treatment ends. However, this can actually be a very vulnerable and emotionally challenging time for the person, who may be struggling with issues like long-term side effects or fear of recurrence. Continuing to express care and concern during this period can be tremendously helpful.

Kailie Sullivan, LCSW, OSW-C has been an oncology social worker since 2009. She is a member of both the Association of Oncology Social Workers and the Association of Pediatric Oncology Social Work. Sullivan currently works as the Youth and Family Services Manager at the Dempsey Center in Lewiston.

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5 things

5 WAYS TO ENJOY A SUMMER NIGHT IN MAINE

We adore the long days of summer. But summer nights in Maine are extra special. Sure, we might still need to pull on a sweatshirt, but a warm evening and the setting sun make a perfect backdrop for a leisurely paddle, an outdoor movie or lawn games with friends.

Summer Sunsets at Thompson's Point

1

Pair your summer sunset with food trucks, beer and lawn games during Summer Sunsets at The Point. Every Thursday from 4–7 p.m., head to Thompson's Point in Portland and enjoy beer, wine and cocktails, plus food trucks and lawn games. It's like hanging out in the coolest backyard. ([facebook.com/tpointmaine](https://www.facebook.com/tpointmaine))

2 Outdoor movies

Drive-ins are a classic way to spend a summer night. But there are also movies in parks, on rooftops and in the heart of Portland. In Brunswick, catch "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" on July 19 and "Coco" on Aug. 16 in Nathaniel Davis Park. (brunswickme.org) Bug Light Park in South Portland will be hosting Summer Movies in the Park on Thursdays nights in July as well. ([facebook.com/SPCECC](https://www.facebook.com/SPCECC)) You can also catch a movie on the rooftop at Bayside Bowl in Portland every Wednesday night all summer (except July 4). Movies include "Girls Trip" and "Endless Summer." (baysidebowl.com/the-rooftop) Or watch a movie in Portland's Congress Square Park every Sunday, including "Back to the Future" and "Little Shop of Horrors." (portlandsummerfilms.com)





3 Full moon & sunset paddles

When a sunset is reflected on the winding waters of a Maine river, it's beautiful times two. Plus you get to see all the nighttime critters come out. Hirundo Wildlife Refuge offers guided full moon paddles on Pushaw Stream in Old Town on July 26 and Aug. 25. \$10 includes canoe, paddle, PFD and a knowledgeable guide. (hirundomaine.org)

On the Scarborough Marsh, enjoy a guided sunset or full moon canoe tour with Maine Audubon. \$14 for sunset tours, \$16 for full moon tours, and canoe, paddle, PFD and guide are included. Full moon canoe tours are July 27, 28 & 29 and Aug. 24, 25 & 26. Sunset tours are July 12, Aug. 7 and Aug. 17. (maineaudubon.org)



4 | Roller coasters & fireworks

No need to wait for the fair to roll through, Palace Playland in Old Orchard Beach offers rides and arcade games all summer long. Ride the Ferris wheel and roller coasters as the sun goes down. Between the neon lights against the night sky and the scent of fried foods in the air, it's a summer treat you can enjoy any night. Bonus: There are fireworks every Thursday night at 9:45 p.m., as well as July 4 and July 6. (palaceplayland.com)

5 | Theater in the park

Deering Oaks is the backdrop to summer theater in Portland with the Fenix Theatre Co. Roll a blanket out on the grass and catch an evening performance of "Eurydice" by Sarah Ruhl. It'll be a contemporary perspective on a timeless theme: the sacrifices we make for love. Performances at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from July 13–29. (The July 29 performance will be at Congress Square Park.) Performances are free, but donations are appreciated. (fenixtheatre.com)



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IT HAPPENS HERE



After years of alcohol abuse, Colleen Francke sought the help of recovery groups, where she found the support of women who helped her get and stay sober.

Start Again

*Colleen Francke is creating a safe,
sober workplace for women in recovery*

**Written by Chelsea Terris Scott
Photographed by Lauryn Hottinger**





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“What if I fail?” Colleen Francke wonders. “What if I don’t fail?”

The 32-year-old, who lives in Falmouth, is the founder of Summit Point Seafood, a kelp and mussel farm that will plant its first crop in Casco Bay this winter. Launching the business seems like a logical next step—a Cape Cod native, Francke grew up in an aquaculture community and has worked in mussel farming and lobstering in Maine. But it’s a reality she could not have imagined a decade ago, when she was struggling with alcohol abuse and hit her personal rock bottom.

Francke arrived in Portland in her early 20s to attend Maine College of Art. But it wasn’t long before her drinking got out of control.

“Substance abuse—once it starts, it’s this forcefield that sucks up everything,” she says. “Your drive goes, your friendships go, you have the downward spiral.” She was drinking heavily and making reckless choices that led to feelings of alienation, shame and self-loathing. “I dropped out of school, started working full-time on a mussel farm, had a falling out with that company because of my drinking,” she says. “When you’re dealing with substance abuse, it’s typically one thing after the next.”

Francke grew up in a family that she describes as “rampant with alcoholism.” As a child as young as 7, she knew she wouldn’t escape alcoholism, she says, and she didn’t. As her drinking intensified as an adult, Francke, who continued to take mussel farming and lobstering jobs around Casco Bay, found herself in a “dangerous, unacceptable” relationship and living situation. She recognized that the only way to remove herself from physical and emotional peril was to get sober.

Ten years ago, she sought out recovery—including recovery groups that she’d once vowed she’d never attend, believing she didn’t need them. It was in those groups that she discovered the support that empowered her to get and stay sober. She also found her future calling.

Her new business, Summit Point Seafood, will be dedicated to employing women who have chosen sobriety.

“I’m creating a safe work space for women in substance abuse recovery,” she says.

“Once I decided to get sober, I got linked into a group of strong women. We’re taught, in order to keep your recovery, you have to give it away,” Summit Point Seafood, currently fundraising under the name Salt Sisters, is Francke’s gift to the community that supported her.

THE WOLF IS KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

According to the 2015 Substance Abuse



Sober for a decade, Francke sees Summit Point Seafood as a way to give back to the community and support women whose stories aren't very different from hers.

“Water is healing... We plant ‘seeds,’ whether they’re kelp or oysters, and heal alongside what we’re nurturing.”



Trends in Maine State Epidemiological Profile, produced for the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, “alcohol continues to be the most frequent substance for which Mainers seek treatment,” with 3,589 admissions reported in 2014. In early 2018, Maine Attorney General Janet Mills broke the news on the opioid crisis in Maine, announcing that “Fentanyl has invaded our state, killing 247 people last year alone... Even as dangerous as heroin is, fentanyl is hundreds times more likely to kill you.”

Substance abuse recovery centers, sober houses and support groups cluster throughout the state, but entering a program is just the first step. For many women facing the long road to sustained recovery, finding a safe, enriching work community outside of rehab and support groups is essential—and not always easy to find.

“What do you do when you need to get back to a regular life?” Francke asks. In entry-level

jobs like waitressing and landscaping, “people are partying. You go from a safe place and strong network in recovery to the lion’s den. You’re washing dishes and someone’s drinking a cocktail and doing a line. It’s not an uncommon predicament,” she says.

Sarah Coupe, founder and director of Grace House, a Portland-based sober house for women in recovery, says triggers for relapse are common in the workplace. “Triggering situations happen. It’s a big struggle. We’re not in a bubble for the rest of our lives.”

This lack of support is a huge motivator for Francke. “We’re out on the water, away from triggers,” says Francke. “I want to give women a place to re-establish themselves, to start again.”

WHY WOMEN?

Francke explains that recovery groups usually separate along gender lines, so women can feel

free to discuss personal issues that they might not bring up in the company of men. Creating a space that can support intimate, healing conversations is a huge part of her mission. Coupe’s experience supports this reasoning: “Around the opposite sex, we can get distracted.”

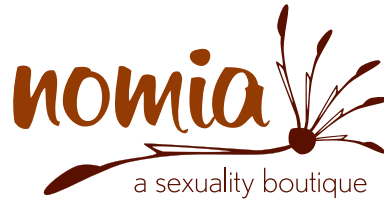
It’s no surprise that women face pressures that make recovery difficult, including those unique to bearing and raising children. The struggle to stay sober added to the daily grind of work and child care for many women creates a very real—and uniquely female—challenge.

Drawing on a deep well of experience from her own recovery, Francke is working to alchemize her rock-bottom and peak moments into something sustainable for women with similar challenges. After she quit drinking, she says, she wasn’t sure what to do next. A friend advised, “There are parts of your life that alcoholism took away. You had one goal: to use. Take a



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look at what those old goals were. They can be anything—things you need to bring back into your life.” For Francke, who had always dreamt about owning her own aquafarm, Summit Point Seafood is a chance to manifest her dream and support others traversing the same difficult road that she has.

Francke is opening her doors to any woman in recovery from any substance, with or without prior experience. “Whether you’ve been sober 10 months or 24 hours, that’s a big deal,” she says. And she welcomes any woman, however far into her sobriety she is.

“Addiction is addiction,” she says, even though it may present itself differently. Some women, for example, don’t drink every day, but when they do drink their alcoholic behavior can be more destructive than an alcoholic woman who is a daily drinker. In her recovery groups, Francke has seen women from all walks of life,

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IT HAPPENS HERE

and she welcomes one and all to work with her. The only limiting factor? “They can’t be messed up. Then, there’s a liability issue.”

A typical day will include tending to kelp and mussel crops, with breaks in the morning and at lunch to “circle up” for meditation and to discuss “issues in recovery and in life. Women with problems share a lot of similarities.” As she builds this airtight community, one element remains constant. “Water is healing. If you put something in the ground, you’re healing with what you’re cultivating. We plant ‘seeds,’ whether they’re kelp or oysters, and heal alongside what we’re nurturing.”

SEEDS OF AMBITION

While Francke has a clear vision for the day-in and day-out running of her business, getting started has not been easy. “At first, everything felt really hard. It didn’t feel right.” However, during the planning phase, Francke experienced a profound realization. “Why not make this for women? Without them, I wouldn’t have this,” she says.

From seeking corporate gear donations to raising startup capital via Salt Sisters, Francke has her nose to the grindstone. “I’ve never written so many emails in my life,” she says, noting sponsors like Grundéns, who have donated “gear for the girls” and other items essential to aquafarming.

Getting Summit Point Seafood off the ground will occur in phases. Rather than taking on an experimental lease of five years, Francke went all in, signing a 20-year standard lease on 100 acres just off Falmouth, between Sturdivant and Basket islands. Phase one involves growing a winter kelp crop, which requires seed—and it’s not cheap. Francke was at a loss for how to raise enough funds until she presented her business plan at a public hearing, required for anyone looking to lease acreage offshore. Todd Jagoutz of Sea Greens Farms, which processes kelp that is supplied to restaurants and wholesale outlets throughout the United States and also provides farm services and supports research and development programs, took notice. “Colleen’s mission, having a female-run farm out there, is pretty special.”

Understanding what it takes to get a kelp-growing operation up and running, Jagoutz was eager to help. “One of the big stumbling points is seed,” Jagoutz says. He signed a purchase agreement with Francke, loaning her \$7,000 worth of seed on credit, with the expectation that she will sell the crop to him

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Colleen Francke founded Summit Point Seafood as a safe work space for women in substance abuse recovery.

at harvest. Proceeds from this first kelp crop will be reinvested into the mussel farming leg of the business, promoting year-round employment for Francke's team. "The more employment, the more women we can help," she says.

While community is a foundational value for Francke's business, aquafarming culture also lends itself to neighborly comradery. "We're out there all winter long," says Jagoutz. "There's nobody else out there. There's no competition. You want to know who your neighbor is in case your boat doesn't start. It'll be great having Colleen out there."

Despite, or perhaps because of, her deep drive and enthusiasm, Francke catches herself wondering if her plan will work out. Still, she trusts that this project has great promise. "My sense is that this has the potential to get bigger than just a farm. I want to make Salt Sisters it's own non-profit and help women in recovery get other businesses started." From hair stylists to other aquafarmers, Francke plans to nurture and empower the women she employs. "This project helps women get sober, stay sober and does good for the environment. This is a way I can really give back."

Chelsea Terris Scott writes plays, short stories and freelance journalism. She lives with her husband and two daughters in Portland.

FOR MORE INFO

about Summit Point Seafood and Salt Sisters, visit summitpointseafood.com

TO DONATE TO SALT SISTERS,

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Camping is my favorite summertime activity, provided there are showers, alcohol and a constant fire to keep the bugs away. It is also the perfect time to get creative with what you consume. I once made up the perfect food to put on a stick and cook over the fire: sausage and cheese with Pillsbury croissant dough rolled around it. (Someone must have invented this campfire meal-on-a-stick before me—it is simply too good to not have existed.) Camping in the woods is a feast for my senses. I love the smell of the pine trees and the smoke of the campfire, and I love hearing the forest creatures making what I am sure are pornographic

mating calls and dances. I figure the best way to capture that feeling in a drink is to burn something.

In this simple old fashioned, I add a little campfire by with Pine Dram Syrup from Vena's Fizz House and Sea Smoke Craft Cocktail Bitters from Owl & Whale (both out of Portland). Gunpowder Rye Whiskey from New England Distilling (also Portland) serves as the base for this cocktail, which is garnished with a burned sprig of rosemary.

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

The Campfire Old Fashioned

Written & photographed by Jessie Lacey



THE RECIPE

- 1/4 ounce Pine Dram Syrup from Vena's Fizz House
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 dashes Sea Smoke Craft Cocktail Bitters from Owl & Whale
- 2 ounces Gunpowder Rye Whiskey from Maine Craft Distilling
- Orange peel

Muddle pine simple syrup, 1 sprig of rosemary and bitters in a rocks glass. Twist the orange peel a little to let some oils out, rub it on the rim of the glass and throw it in the glass along with ice and whiskey, then stir. Light second sprig rosemary on fire and allow the flame to extinguish until smoking, garnish the glass with the smoky rosemary.



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Kimberlee Bennett paddles the winding waters of Panther Run in Raymond.

Kimberlee Bennett & her kayak

Written by Kimberlee Bennett
Photographed by Lauryn Hottinger

Kayaking began as another way for my mother and I to spend quality time together. We talked when there was something to say and enjoyed the solitude when there wasn't. We cherished our adventures—and many wildlife sightings. These memories have become some of my favorites. Since my mother's death, I find myself appreciating the sport in the same way she did, one stroke at a time, pausing to enjoy (and photograph) the beauty that surrounds me.

Kayaking has become part of who I am. It is something that I need with my whole being, in a way many people do not understand. I would go as far as saying it sustains me. When I load my kayak, jump in my truck, navigate to various destinations and choose my direction as I paddle through waterways, I feel a sense of freedom. I feel confident and strong, physically and mentally. Kayaking allows me to truly be in the moment, in a way I have yet to duplicate doing anything else.

Observing the world from the seat of my kayak puts things in per-

spective, too. When a bald eagle swoops overhead, a moose watches me as he chomps on grass or a seal surfaces and exhales beside me, my problems somehow become surmountable and my worries become temporary.

Kimberlee Bennett lives in Westbrook and shares her love of kayaking through her blog kayakinginmaine.blogspot.com and her guidebook, "Paddling Southern Maine," co-authored by Sandy Moore. When not on the water or writing about paddling, Bennett works as a school administrator. Follow her adventures on social media @MaineKayakGirl.

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Coastal Creations

Summer wardrobe staples from Studio 412 out of Rockland

Written by Amy Power

Photographed by Amanda Whitegiver

Part of the magic of the Maine coastline is the creativity tucked into each nook, bay and beach. Our coast has a long inspired artists of all kinds, and you'll find hidden gems absolutely everywhere if you look for them. Who knew there was a thriving atelier up the coast?

Designer Beth Bowley is the creative force behind Studio 412, a clothing line designed and made in Maine, located at 412 Main St. in Rockland. A Maine native, her designs have been featured by such labels as Anthropologie and Nordstrom, but Maine has always remained Bowley's home. She describes the Studio 412 collection as being inspired by "a desire for effortless style and a love of the creative process. Each design must be timeless, uncomplicated and demand to be worn every day." She accomplishes this goal flawlessly.

Featured here are three Studio 412 looks, all of which are available at Gingham, a boutique at 90 Main St. in Yarmouth. All three are beautiful in their simplicity, thoughtfully designed, artfully constructed, tailored to perfection and instant wardrobe staples.

Recognizing these are investment pieces, they ought to stand the test of time—the kind of items you will find yourself reaching for time and time again. As a demonstration of versatility, outfits can be paired with the Candice Crisscross Wedge by Eastland Shoe of Freeport, a tote by Erin Flett of Westbrook, earrings by Keith Field of Brunswick and Warby Parker sunglasses.

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



GET THE LOOK

Stripe Tunic Dress by Studio 412 (\$290)

Wrap Jumpsuit by Studio 412 (\$290)

Embroidered Flounce Top by Studio 412 (\$275)

Candice Crisscross Wedge by Eastland Shoe of
Freeport (\$49.99)

Tote by Erin Flett of Westbrook (\$95)

Earrings by Keith Field of Brunswick (\$88)

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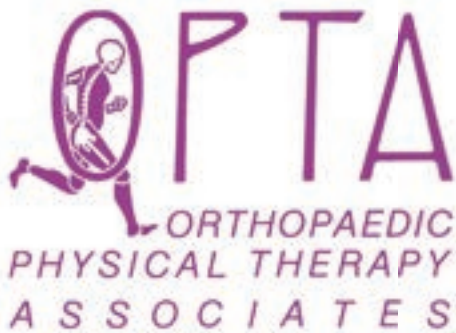
STRIPE TUNIC DRESS

This boat-neck tunic dress is 100 percent linen with a nautical stripe and finished with a raw edge and side seam pockets. Also available without the stripe, we found this dress to be effortless. I love the heavier density of this beautiful linen. With the sleeve length, it's perfect for chilly spring days, windy days on the water or summer evenings spent by the fire.

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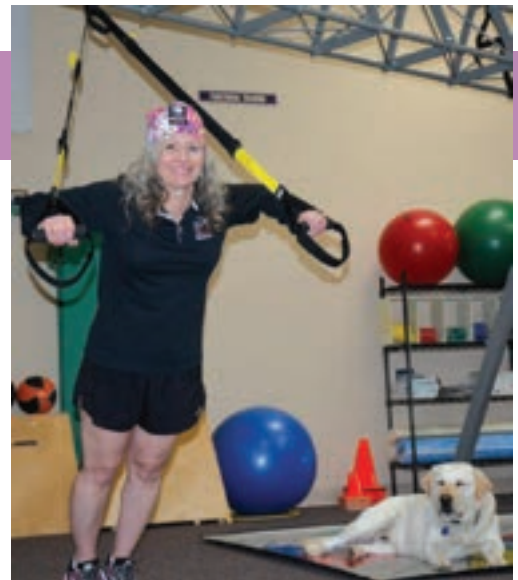


Left to Right: Tish Whipple, Sandy Johnson, Lynn Hallett, Dianne Maskewitz, Whitney Harvey, Sue Lessard, Kelly Fleming, Joi Kressbach, Gail Landry & Brenda Cerino-Galli. Not Shown: Lucy Flight & Susan Lamb



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EMBROIDERED FLOUNCE TOP

Made of a refined embroidered cotton from Italy, this top is cut in a body-flattering shape with a boat neck. I've typically shied away from the bell sleeve trend from a practicality standpoint. Honestly, they just get in the way. However, the three-quarter length, coupled with the bell shape, turns out to be feminine, fun and still allows you to cook over a gas range without fear of conflagration. The top is garment-washed for a casual finish, and the dark navy can be brightened with these AG Prima Crop Jeans in "high white tangelo," available at Bliss Boutiques, 58 Exchange St. in Portland. The top would also pair nicely with a white jean for a more classic look or your favorite brightly colored or denim shorts.

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WRAP JUMPSUIT

Always a fan of jumpsuits and never bold enough to don one, I was dubious that this would work as we added it to the pile in the dressing room. I've seen women in jumpsuits and enviously thought they looked fabulous, but never felt as though I could pull it off. The moment I put it on, I was an instant convert. This jumpsuit felt magical, as though it was made just for me. A bonafide petite apple shape, I struggle with waist definition and proper proportion, especially in one-piece garments like dresses, swimsuits and jumpsuits. This jumpsuit provided both of those things through the beautiful, simple design. A common problem with jumpsuits we've tried on in the past is a "pooching" of fabric around your lower abdomen—not something anyone wants to have happen. This jumpsuit lies flat and does not have that issue. The linen is airy and light, the length of the pant enables you to dress it up or down, depending on shoe selection, and the wrap allows for a custom fit. This is easily our favorite piece of any spring/summer 2018 line.





Photo by Shannon Bryan

New experiences, new friends

with the Ladies Adventure Club

Written by Amy Paradysz

“Women are hungry for this,” says Gillian Schair, a 45-year-old outdoorsy stay-at-home mom.

She craved a community of women who wanted to push themselves and try new things. So, in October 2015, she invited 20 friends to her home in Portland and laid out her concept for the Ladies Adventure Club: She’d do the planning and guiding, and for a \$50 annual membership fee, women could opt in to a menu of adventures. Most of the women she invited joined that night. Nearly three years later, the club has close to 200 members and hosts three overnight trips a year plus at least four day-adventures a month, with a balance between free and paid activities.

“I do all the planning, so members just show up and enjoy the adventure,” Schair says, explaining that the club is ideal for someone who wants to try new things without worrying about details like where the trailhead is or how to get the paddleboard to the lake. And they’re supportive of each other. There’s a real sense of safety and non-judgment.

Schair was taking an outdoor leadership course sponsored by the Appalachian Mountain Club when she met Alicia Heyburn, a licensed Maine Guide from Brunswick, and asked her to co-lead a popular hike to

a waterfall near Andover.

“What we ended up doing was having a lead and a sweep—to manage from the front and the rear,” Heyburn says, explaining the club has a “no lady left behind” policy. From that point on, she’s been co-leading the club, which, Schair says, means they can offer more adventures.

The club’s outdoor excursions have included skiing and snowshoeing, hiking, biking, camping, birding, kayaking and canoeing, archery and outdoor cleanups. Members learned to play squash, rock climb indoors and repair their own bikes.

With adventure being in the eye of the beholder, the club has offered cooking, watercolor painting, yoga, meditation and barre classes as well. During this year’s Kentucky Derby, ladies road bikes—with 6-mile to 14-mile options—and then wore hats and drank mint juleps.

“There are a lot of interesting activities that I wouldn’t necessarily do if they weren’t presented right in front of me, already planned,” said Dina Potter of Yarmouth, who has tried archery, rock climbing and a cooking class. “It’s about trying new things or things you might like without putting in a lot of effort in advance, besides showing up.”



Courtesy photo



Photo by Shannon Bryan

Founded in 2015 by Gillian Schair of Portland, the Ladies Adventure Club is all about trying new things—from hiking and snowshoeing to archery, birding, painting and meditation.



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MIX & MINGLE

Members tend to be in their 30s through 70s, with a couple of mother-daughter pairs in the mix.

"It's really integrated, which I appreciate," Schair says, adding that her 72-year-old mother, Carla Marcus of Scarborough, is an active member. "She goes on all the hikes and sea kayaking outings. She's



"For some people, it has become not just a social group but a group that supports the idea of pushing yourself and trying new things."

the person who introduced me to the outdoors and to the idea of risk-taking."

Another mother-daughter pair is Lauren Dietlin of Portland and her mother Sara Ostrov of Falmouth, whose first adventure was cross-country skiing at Pineland Farms in New Gloucester.

"I did feel hesitant about my age," says 73-year-old Ostrov, who moved to Maine two years ago. "But there were a lot of inexperienced people and I've been cross-country skiing for many years, so it wasn't a problem. Besides, they'll just stick with you if you're behind."

On a winter getaway to West Branch Pond Camps, about ten miles east of Kokadjo, Ostrov took photos as inspiration for her oil painting. "The cross-country skiing was phenomenal, and the scenery was perfect," she says. "I had great conversations and good times and made some acquaintances and friends. The place was beautiful, the company was superb and the food was outrageous."

Several club members are new to Maine and looking to find a community with like-minded women.

"I moved back to Maine about four-and-a-half years ago and have found that, at this

stage, it's a little harder to meet people," says Leslie Tremberth of South Portland. "It's a really broad range of ages and backgrounds, so these women are people I wouldn't otherwise meet in my day-to-day life."

She appreciates the opportunities not only to try new things—like playing squash—but to explore parts of Maine that are farther away than she might venture alone, like an upcoming three-day trip to Acadia.

"For some people, it has become not just a social group but a group that supports the idea of pushing yourself and trying new things," Schair says. "I care about women learning to trust and believe in themselves, and that they can grow through challenging themselves."


One of Schair's biggest challenges isn't one that she sought: Last May she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Having blogged a bit since she founded the Ladies Adventure Club, Schair's musings became more personal, more open and more vulnerable after her diagnosis—pushing her outside her comfort zone. Members responded positively.

"I found this community to be amazingly supportive," Schair says, adding that women she'd never met before brought meals to her house.


Having learned to open herself up personally, Schair, who is now cancer-free, is staying that way. "I think there is strength in vulnerability," she says, "and life feels richer."

Amy Paradysz is a freelance writer from Scarborough who loves to try new things, most of them decidedly not outdoorsy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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Garden veggies for an early summer evening

Ravioli primavera and asparagus & arugula salad

Written & photographed by Candace Karu

Early summer is a uniquely beautiful time in Maine. The light is bright, days are long and gardens are offering up their bounty.

When I first bought my house, I discovered a long-forgotten asparagus patch that was choked with weeds, but still producing a few brave stalks. A little TLC was all that plucky patch needed to turn it into an annual asparagus extravaganza.

It's difficult to describe how tender and fragrant freshly picked aspara-

gus can be—so tender it can render cooking unnecessary, especially when it's shaved into paper-thin slices. Combined with the bolder tastes of spicy baby arugula and tart lemon, this salad is a welcome addition to almost any meal.

My favorite pairing, however, is with this tasty and easy ravioli primavera bake—think veggie lasagna Alfredo. It too has the fresh, earthy tastes of spring and early summer vegetables. For this iteration I used spinach,

artichokes and mushrooms, but the truth is, it lends itself to many garden favorites like zucchini, summer squash, kale, leeks, chard, spring onions and more.

I love this creamy, vegetable-forward casserole because it works for so many occasions. It's great for feeding a crowd or for cooking once and portioning out meals for later in the week. Once cooked, it will store in the refrigerator for up to three days, or cut it into squares after it has cooled and freeze individual portions for those "I just don't feel like cooking" evenings.

And here's a bonus that you'll thank me for later: the shaved asparagus salad makes a perfect bed for a poached egg and bacon bits. It's an elegant and unexpected way to make brunch special. I like to serve it with grilled garlic toast. Just rub slices of Italian bread with a half a clove of garlic and brush with olive oil. Toast it on a hot grill or on the stovetop in a hot grill pan.


Ravioli Primavera Bake

INGREDIENTS


- 1 30-ounce bag frozen ravioli (*I used Hannaford Spinach & Cheese*)
- 8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 1/2 cups mozzarella cheese, grated
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 16 ounces (2 8-ounce cans) artichoke hearts in water, drained and chopped
- 1 pound baby spinach, cooked and chopped
- 8 ounces sliced mushrooms, sautéed
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 cup milk
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced

INSTRUCTION

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- In a large bowl, mix cream cheese, mozzarella, spinach, mushrooms, artichoke hearts, Parmesan cheese, sour cream, milk and garlic.
- Pour a third of the spinach, mushroom and artichoke mixture into a 9x13 casserole dish and spread it evenly over the bottom.
- Add a layer of frozen ravioli, then add another third of the mixture spread evenly over the ravioli layer. Add the second layer of ravioli and top with the remaining third of the cheese and veggie mixture.
- Bake for 30-40 minutes until the top is golden brown and bubbling around the edges. Let stand for 10 minutes, then serve with shaved asparagus salad and crusty bread.



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Shaved Asparagus Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 pound fresh asparagus, large variety
- Juice of one large lemon (about 2-3 tablespoons)
- 3-4 tablespoons best quality extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon whole grain Dijon mustard, (I like Maille)
- 6 ounces baby arugula, washed and dried
- Shaved Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Add lemon juice, olive oil, mustard, and salt and pepper in a small jar, cover tightly and

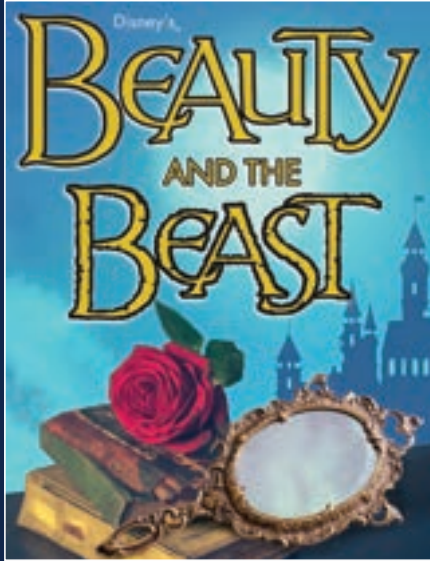
shake to make a simple dressing.

Clean asparagus and snap off tough ends. Using a vegetable peeler, slice lengthwise to make thin ribbons.

Combine asparagus and arugula in a bowl and dress lightly with the lemon dressing. Salt and pepper to taste.

Shave thin curls of Parmesan with a vegetable peeler over the salad.

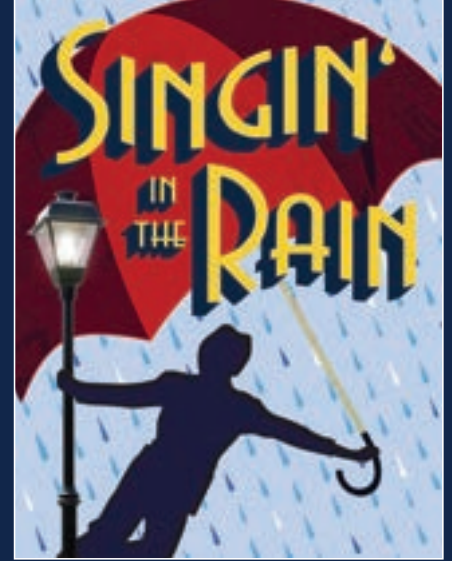
Candace Karu makes her living writing about food, fitness and travel. She lives near the ocean in an old farmhouse with two ill-behaved dogs and two hard-working barn cats. Follow her on Instagram: @candacekaru or at www.candacekaru.com.



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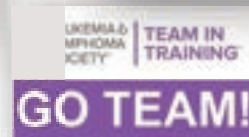
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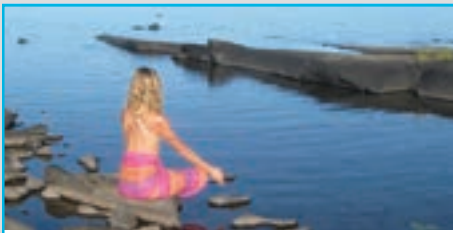
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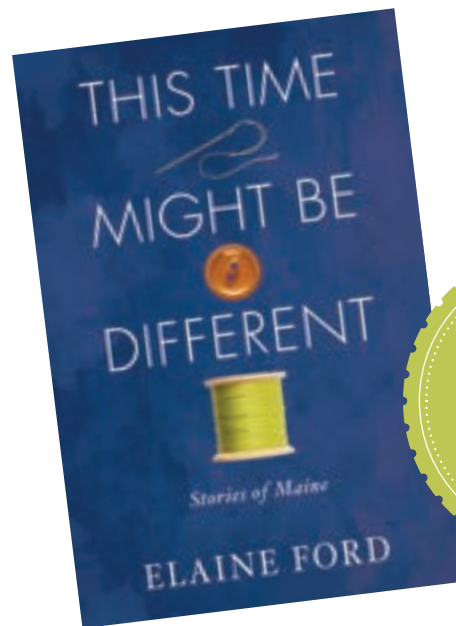
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Review:

“This Time Might Be Different” by Elaine Ford

Written by Anna E. Jordan



“This Time Might
Be Different”
by Elaine Ford

Driving in Maine, the scenery is dotted with factory smokestacks, small towns, fairgrounds, colleges, laundromats, tidal mudflats, river banks, oddly remodeled homes and trailers. Passing drivers may know or wonder about those who people our stark and rugged state. Elaine Ford’s 15 short stories contained in the volume “This Time Might Be Different” (Islandport Press, \$16.95) will, with a specificity of detail and character, intimately transport the reader to these places.

She starts us out with “The Depths of Winter,” a story that follows Kori, who has worked welding wreath rings since she graduated from high school six months ago. We see the “honeycomb of cubbies,” and the shag on the river with their “wings outstretched to dry like they were pinned to a line by their elbows.” We hear the “pounding roar” of the factory, its lunch buzzer and the “gumboots thumping on riserless steps.” When the monotony of the factory, a Maine winter and living with her mother close in on Kori, she makes decisions that even she questions.

Through Ford’s stories, we befriend women who give in to male desires by simply not saying no; women who chase change and find only fallible men; women and men who deceive themselves or who talk past each other—letting needs and dreams go unrealized.

Amy is one such dreamer in the story “In the Marrow.” Still in high

school, she falls for Jack, an older man who may love his dream of breeding award-winning Labrador retrievers more than anyone—especially Amy, who leaves her grandmother’s home to be with him. When faced once more with the room she inhabited as a teen she is “sickened by the odors of unaired bedding, cold rusty water in the radiator, nail polish remover, pink acne cream, underarm odor, dime store cologne, foot powder spilled on the rug.” Ford’s attention to the sensory is unrelenting and render the setting and her characters as real as our neighbors.

Elaine Ford—author of five published novels and countless short stories—was a Topsham resident and UMaine writing professor. She died last year at the age of 78 from a brain tumor.

In every story, Ford’s characters insist we pay attention to the dark and grey corners of their lives. She presents her characters in decisive moments: stay, go, act, retreat, lie, tell the truth. None of the stories preach a correct path. Instead the reader watches decisions unfold while warning, cringing, cheering and never turning away. Ford won’t allow it. Her prose hooks and reels in the reader.

Anna E. Jordan (annaejordan.com) is a writer and editor. Follow her at [@annawritedraw](https://twitter.com/annawritedraw) for news about #kidlit, rowing and politics.

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Photo by Tom Tierney

Common Ground

Written by Madeleine Tunison, Kennebunk

I believe we all want the same thing.
This fragile outpouring called Love.

A whispered "I Love You"
jumpstarts the human heart and languished soul.

Rumi spoke of Love as "the Cure."

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote "Love would rather die
than maim a limb, a wing."

An open heart looks upon the cross and sees
even the Master
with His outstretched hands
thirsts for Love in return.

I believe we were all born to light the darkness
with our mystical wand called

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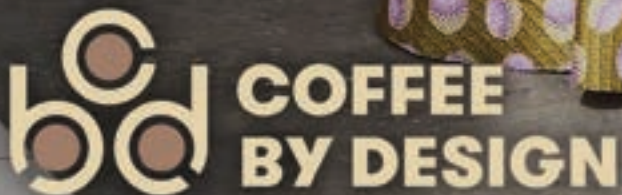
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