

MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

MARCH 2021

Lady Lamb is Back

*Singer-Songwriter
Returns to her Roots*

PRETTY RUGGED:
*True Stories from
Women of the Sea*

\$5.95 • mainewomenmagazine.com



Hannah Lucas is
DOGSLEDDING
for her Community

FOLLOW THE ARTVAN
Serving Neighborhood Kids

Tea for You: At Home with Chai Wallahs

Think outside the box!



@Capshore

Recreational cannabis is now available!

Whether you are interested in cannabis for creativity or relief, our expert budtenders are here to make sure your experience is a positive one.

mainewellness.org | highnorthmaine.com
855.848.6740

South Portland (29 Western Ave) - Recreational Cannabis
Portland, Gardiner, Brewer - Medical Cannabis

You must be 21 years or older with a valid ID. No medical card needed to purchase recreational cannabis or pure CBD products. Keep product out of the reach of children. License # AMS338
*2019 awards received by WeedBudz Radio



Nature delivers.



**AGRICULTURE
IS DEEPLY WOVEN
INTO THE FABRIC
OF OUR CULTURE**

Learn how to buy Maine products
at GetREALMAINE.com.

Like us on Facebook @GetRealMaine



Can you still get there from here?



Let us be your *"Maine Guide"*

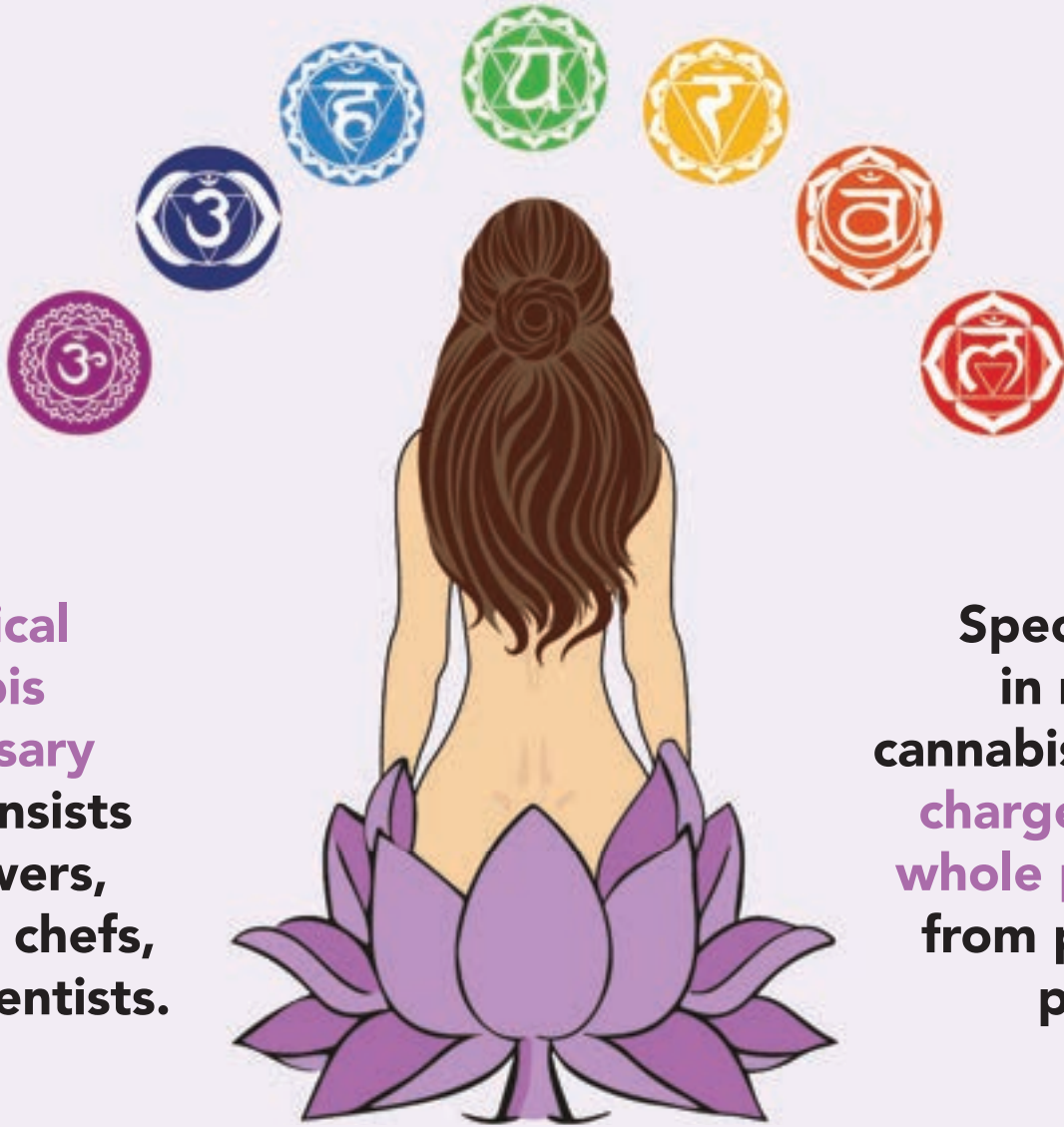
Handcrafting and Managing
Sustainable Investments
Portfolios that Reflect the
Values of Maine Families and
Non-Profits for over 25 years.



207•873•2200 | www.goldenpondwealth.com

Securities offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC

Nature's Miracle



A Medical Cannabis Dispensary that consists of growers, nurses, chefs, and scientists.

Specializing in medical cannabis and in charge of the whole process from plant to product.

Since 2013

Our ethanol lab for processing concentrates and edibles is 100% organic.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA



Get a **FREE** medical card with any purchase made in our store!

20% OFF

Nature's Miracle

161 Ogunquit Road
South Berwick, Maine



PRESENT THIS COUPON AT TIME OF PURCHASE.
(CODE: MSM/MWM 2021) No expiration.

161 Ogunquit Road
South Berwick, Maine 03908

(207) 752-6694

naturesmiraclemaine.com

naturesmiraclemaine@gmail.com

Hours: 10 a.m. to Midnight, Seven days a week.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

| FEATURES |



Photo by Jonah Loring

18

18

LADY LAMB IS DOING HER THING

After a decade in NYC, this acclaimed local musician returns home to Maine.

36

ST. PATRICK'S DAY MEMORIES

Bonnie Hellwege recalls "Top o' the 'Popolis" and more.

46

FROM COMMITTEE TO PROGRAM

A celebration of USM's Women and Gender Studies Program.



It's easy to get discouraged these days. We have children who want to be in school. We have worries about the future. We have women like me who wish for a day out, shopping and having lunch with friends.

These thoughts are normal, but concentrating on what we can't do will surely stifle what we can do.

This is a time to reflect on the amazing things this pandemic has created for our "Can Do" list.

Cook! I mean, really! In the past, many of us have wished to sit down at the table for home-cooked meals. We can do that now. We can bake bread, experiment with new dishes, or return to favorite traditional ones.

We have more time right now to appreciate the great outdoors, right? We can enjoy more walks, hikes, and trail runs. We can feed the birds. We can feel nature's rhythms. We perhaps have more quiet time to enter our thoughts, write letters, and read. We're reading books that we thought we would never get to.

Many of our charitable or volunteer activities are no longer available to us, but we can find new ways to help others, sharing with those in our neighborhoods or online communities. We create "giving opportunities" around us.

Remember! We all have sunshine within us. Sometimes in the past we were too busy to see our own light, the light that's bursting inside of us.

Yes, women are so resourceful and able to change on a dime for the good of others. That's wonderful, isn't it?

And yes, this has been a time of reflection for us all. We see things our busy lives were hiding from us. We have learned that there's even more we can do.

Let's celebrate that!
Mary Frances Barstow
 Publisher

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.

MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Mary Frances Barstow
 mary@mainewomenmagazine.com

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Martha Bustin
 mbustin@mainewomenmagazine.com

Will Stinson
 wstinson@mainewomenmagazine.com

EDITORIAL INTERNS

Althea Kastelic
 Paige Marcello

ART DIRECTOR

Christine Dunkle
 cdunkle@mainewomenmagazine.com

MARKETING/ADVERTISING

Cyndy Bell
 cbell@theforecaster.net

Bob Bird
 bbird@mainewomenmagazine.com

Robert Cook
 rcook@mainewomenmagazine.com

Ann Duddy
 aduddy@mainewomenmagazine.com

Laurie Walsh
 lwalsh@theforecaster.net

ADMINISTRATIVE

LeeAnn Gauthier
 Tricia Johnson
 Marion Burns
 Linda Hall-Stone

SOCIAL MEDIA

Tyler Southard
 tsouthard@mainewomenmagazine.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

P.O. Box 444
 Rockland, ME 04841
 (207) 706-7000

ONLINE

mainewomenmagazine.com
 facebook.com/mainewomen
 twitter.com/mainewomenmag
 instagram.com/mainewomenmagazine

Copyright 2021 by Courier Publications. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any written, electronic, recording, or photocopying without written permission of the publisher. The exception would be in the case of brief quotations embodied in the critical articles or reviews and pages where permission is specifically granted by the publisher. Although every precaution has been taken to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein, the author and publisher assume no responsibility for any errors or omissions. No liability is assumed for damages that may result from the use of information contained within.

CONTENT

MORE FEATURES



14

FAMILY OF FIVE

Kate Russell's full-circle story of adoption.



22

WEDDING PLANNER

Lisa Sturgeon helps couples with their Big Day—in Maine



26

BLUSH BRIDAL

Owner Courtney Wetzel and her staff pamper brides, in person and virtually.



30

CONVERSATION ON CATERING

Laura Cabot has been part of creating beautiful weddings and memorable events for over 35 years.



34

FLOWERS YEAR 'ROUND

Rachael Smith Brown's Fleur De Lis Floral Design helps spread beauty and positivity.



38

LEXIE STEVENSON

This Maine native is an actress, songwriter, and health advocate.



42

DANGER AND JOY

Ali Farrell's *Pretty Rugged: True Stories from Women of the Sea*.



51

ARTVAN

Jamie Sylvestri and her staff encourage youth wellness through art.



54

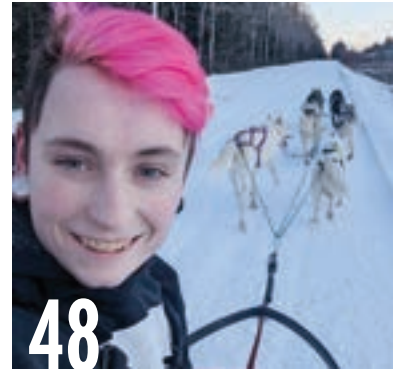
HIT THE TRAIL

Running clubs are thriving despite the pandemic.

IN EVERY ISSUE

10 SOLO VOYAGE

Holly Martin writes from French Polynesia.



48

48 SHE DOES WHAT?

A Dogsledding Delivery Service

57 HOME

Maine's Own Chai Wallahs



60

60 STYLE

Nabos: A Unique Boutique

62 GARDENING

Pantone chooses its "Colors of the Year."

64 LOVE ON A PLATE

Deliciously Cheesy Irish Boxty

65 MOMSENSE

March Winds

66 QUESTIONABLE ADVICE

By L.C. Van Savage

Cover photo by Erica Peplin.

| LETTERS TO THE EDITOR |

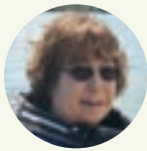
Hello Mary, I enjoy this magazine so much! So many inspirational women!

I have a small correction for Bonnie Hellwege's article "Romance?" [*Maine Women*, February 2021]. Tom Selleck was my middle school crush, and yes, I admit, my menopause crush, also. He does not have piercing brown eyes—they are hazel green! Please tell Bonnie that, other than that detail, I enjoyed her article. Please only publish this anonymously, if that is something your magazine does—too embarrassing!

Good morning, I wanted to thank you for writing such a wonderful article on Rachel and Karen Getz of Maine Crisp—the family and their company [*Maine Women*, February 2021]. You offered a nice balance of their personal story with company milestones.
—Warm regards, Elaine

To *Maine Women Magazine*, I can't tell you how refreshing it is to call a company and have someone actually answer the phone!
—Janice Cerabone

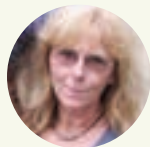
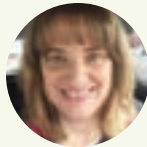
| CONTRIBUTORS |



Pam Ferris-Olson, PhD, worked as a freelance writer/photographer/editor/educator prior to relocating to Maine in

2016. The breadth of her experience with natural resources, storytelling and women, and a passion for the ocean inspired her to found *Women Mind the Water*. She is a visual artist who enjoys kayaking.

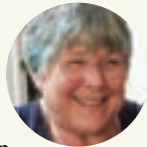
Liz Gotthelf lives in Old Orchard Beach with her husband. She enjoys hula hooping, volunteering at a local horse barn, and finding Fiestaware at thrift stores.



Sheila D. Grant is a freelance editor/writer/photographer, and the author of two books. Her work has appeared in

the *Boston Globe*, and been recognized by the Maine Press Association and the New England Outdoor Writers Association.

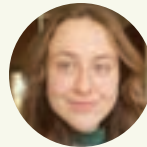
Bonnie Hellwege is a native New Yorker with a 20-year career with CBS Records. She has served as an ombudsman in both Waterville and Belfast for the last 15 years and is a hospice volunteer. She enjoys improv, living with her dog Tug and cat Pretzel, and spending time out in nature.



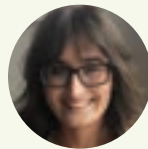
Jodi Hersey is a freelance writer from Hermon. She has worked in television, radio and print for more than 15 years. She is a military wife, mother

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.

Althea Kastelic is from Portland and is currently interning with *Maine Women Magazine*. She is studying Journalism, Psychology, and



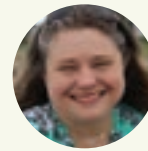
Environmental Studies at Mount Holyoke College and is enjoying the winter months exploring Maine's beaches and trying out new soup recipes!



Paige Marcello is a senior at the University of Southern Maine studying English Literature and Women and Gender Studies, eventually

pursuing a career in publishing. She's a coffee enthusiast, painter, and lover of the outdoors.

Susan Olcott is a freelance writer living in Brunswick with her husband and nine-year old twin girls. She loves to write about all things coastal, edible, and any story full of life. Every person has a story to tell and she thrives on writing and sharing them.



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

Sarah E. Reynolds has been a reporter for more than 25 years. She is editor of the *Republican Journal*. She loves to read, ride her ATV, and play word games.



Sue Smith has been teaching Kindergarten for 46 years in Saco, Maine. Ten years ago, she opened Nabos, a retail boutique for women and men in Kennebunkport, Maine, and then expanded to a new location: 266 Main Street, Saco, Maine.

Shelagh Gordon

Talbot hails from Vermont. She worked in the film and television industry, including on the award-winning kid's show *Jabberwocky*. Looking for a less hectic life, she moved to the Moosehead Lake region and became a journalist. She is a freelancer who also writes music, plays guitar, and sings.



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.



ALL ABOUT KITCHENS

OF KENNEBUNK

KITCHEN + BATHROOM DESIGN
CABINERY
COUNTERTOPS
HARDWARE
SINKS + FAUCETS

99 YORK STREET, SUITE 4
KENNEBUNK • 207-985-4557
www.allaboutkitchens.com



THE INNOVATION REBATE

This is smarter cooking.

GET UP TO **\$2,000***
BACK ON SELECT SMARTER
COOKING APPLIANCE PACKAGES.

OFFER VALID JANUARY 1, 2021 THRU JUNE 30, 2021

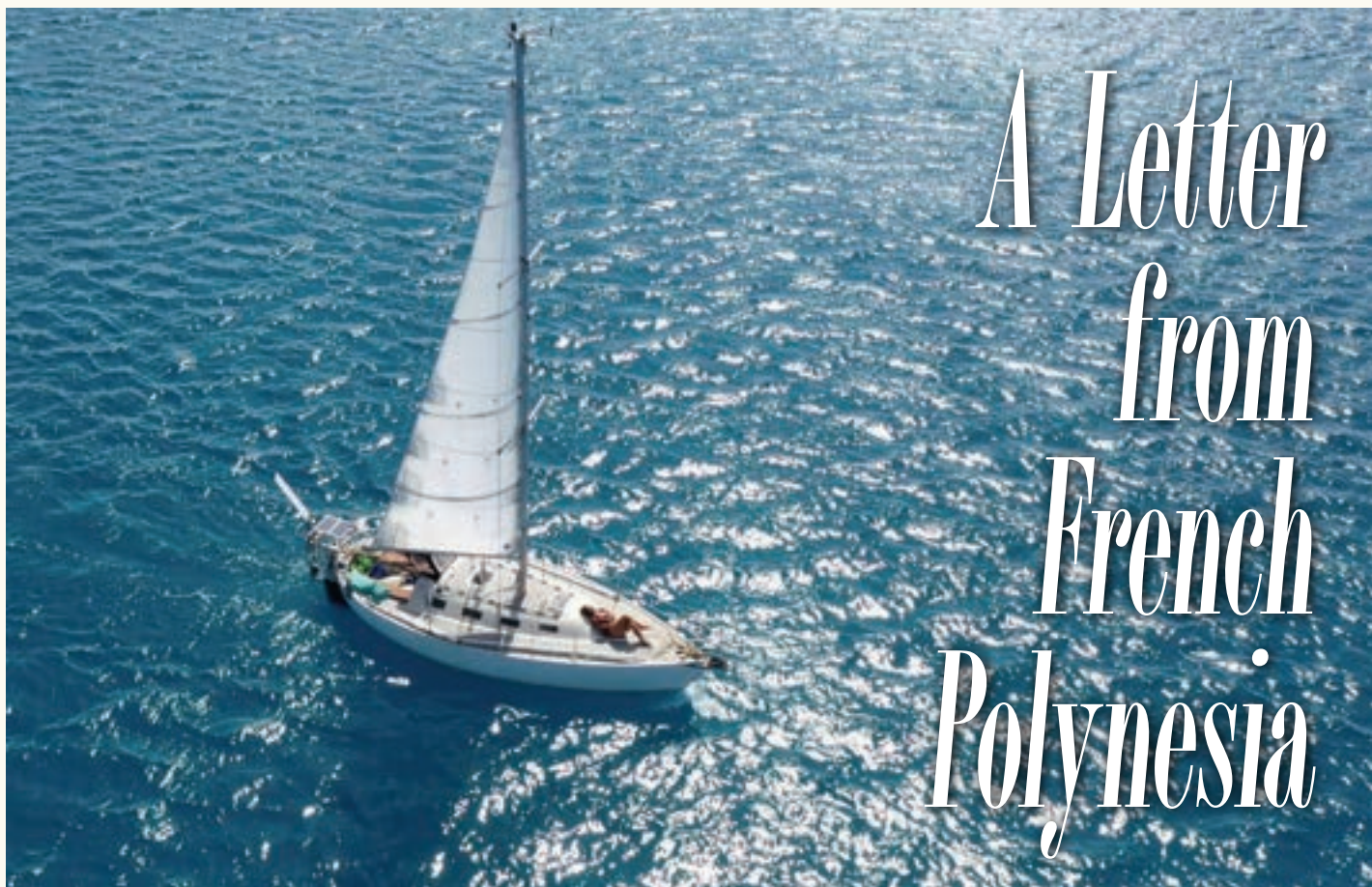
*See rebate form for details.



L.P. Appliance and Service

54 Bridgton Road
Westbrook, Maine
207-797-3621

Mon-Fri 9-5
Sat 9-2
www.lpappliances.com



A Letter from French Polynesia

Solo sailing in the Tuamotus.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY HOLLY MARTIN

Holly Martin, 29, is sailing around the world in her 27-foot-long Grinde sailboat, which she christened the SV Gecko. She left Maine in the fall of 2019, from Round Pond Harbor on the Pemaquid Peninsula. Holly sent this letter by satellite from the South Pacific, to the readers of *Maine Women Magazine*.

When I tell people I'm circumnavigating, they often think this means perpetual forward motion. The beauty of cruising is there's no "right way" to go about it. Some people set out for a circumnavigation with a time constraint. They take five years off from work and detail their trip to be combination of bluewater sailing and exploring. Some people choose to circumnavigate nonstop for ten months. However, many of the sailors that I meet along the way have similar schedules to my own: we don't have one.

For me, cruising is a lifestyle. My boat feels more like home than any house I've lived in. I thrive on the thrill of travel and the phrases I pick up in foreign languages. Not having a schedule means that if I find a place I like, there's nothing holding me back from getting to know it better. French Polynesia was only supposed to be a three-month stop on the highway to New Zealand. This is the classic route of many sailors: through the Panama Canal,



Foraging for food. Makemo Atoll, Tuamotus.

a few months in French Polynesia, a few months hopping west through the rest of the Pacific, then a winter in New Zealand. This will eventually be my route as well. However, I've added a stopover in French Polynesia for a year. The islands captured my heart, and who was I to say no?

Three thousand miles of ocean stand between me and New Zealand. The season for arriving in New Zealand lies between October and December. The time I leave French Polynesia depends on whether or not the islands between here and New Zealand open their borders this coming summer. I could leave as early as July, or as late as October. My current plan, such as it is, is to spend most of my time in the Tuamotus archipelago, where I'm learning how to kite surf. As spring progresses, I'll slowly make my way through the Society Islands, which include Tahiti and Bora Bora. If nothing changes, I'll be in New Zealand in nine or ten months. However, one of my favorite parts of my lifestyle is that I'm never sure of my future location. My travel plans change according to whim, weather, and the people I meet along the way.

Even though the islands and reefs of French Polynesia lie scattered over almost a thousand miles of ocean, I run into the same cruisers over and over again. Many of them are people I met in Panama. We provisioned for our big Pacific crossing together and discussed different routes. I meet them over and over in countless bays on countless islands. Often we coordinate our locations so that we can spend more time together. Many of the destinations in French Polynesia are quite remote. Cell service is a luxury—as are stores that sell more than the basic rice, flour, and crackers. The locals are always friendly and fun, but other cruisers prove the constant in my ever-morphing landscape.

In particular, I've been buddy boating with another single-hander whom I met in Panama. Jarne is a Belgium sailor who left Europe on his Spirit 32-foot sloop a few months after I arrived in the



Climbing the mountains of Fatu Hiva, Marquesas.

Caribbean. We met on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal last March and spent three months getting to know each other during the throes of lockdown in Panama. The two of us—along with 10 or 20 other sailors—spent our time in a small archipelago of islands about 30 miles off the coast of Panama. We only set foot on deserted beaches in uninhabited parts of the islands. We bought fruit from the local fishermen and spearfished for our protein. When the Pacific opened up last spring, the group of

friends I'd made in Panama all left for the Marquesas islands around the same time.

While I sporadically continue to see my other friends from Panama, Jarne and I intentionally sail to all the same places together. We both love being at sea alone, but when we're in an anchorage with an island to explore, we prefer each other's company. Jarne has similar dreams to my own. We both want to cruise indefinitely. We have no concrete plans for the future, and we plan to work



Kite boarding in Fakarava Atoll.

as we sail, to be able to continue our adventures.

Perhaps one of the reasons I'm unconcerned about my timetable is that my brain has slowed to "island time." Individual weeks have no meaning out here, and a facetious question between sailors is: What month are we in? Our daily lives are governed by the sun. Like the locals, most sailors awaken at daybreak—around 5 a.m. in the morning. When the sun sets at 6:30 p.m., we settle in to dinner and books. Most sailors are in bed by 8 or 9 p.m. This time is ironically referred to as "sailor's midnight."

Last week, I sailed to an anchorage surrounded by staggeringly high mountains. The village in the valley boasted a population of several hundred people. I had just spent a month living in a nearly deserted atoll, so for me, the activity was overwhelming. Jarne and I sat for over an hour the first evening, watching the bustle of the town. There was a group playing volleyball. Kids were body surfing in the waves on the beach. A group of fishermen were unloading their day's catch. Teenagers listened to music on a boombox, and a group of older men were playing catch. We didn't know where to look first, and we joked that it was better than watching TV. Going spearfishing for dinner can be my whole day's task, and I find that completing one task with intention is much more satisfying than distractedly checking off a to-do list. I guess my brain and body have finally slowed down to the rhythm of life in a small village by the sea. •



Climbing coconut trees in Fakarava Atoll.



A financial future to count on.

For personalized options and the lowest fees guaranteed, people like you choose PeoplesChoice.

Saco | Biddeford | Sanford | Wells | Windham
peopleschoicecreditunion.com



“To help patients through the challenges of a cancer diagnosis is why I get up in the morning.”

—BRIDGET FRANCIOSE ACHPN

Our Supportive & Palliative Care Specialists focus on quality of life from the very start of a patient’s cancer journey.

“It’s humbling to see the strength of the human spirit as patients and families face cancer. I feel privileged to offer them the emotional and other supports they need.”

While our oncologists focus on patients’ best medical outcome, our Supportive & Palliative Care team help them with pain, fatigue, anxiety, nausea, and other symptoms related to cancer or its treatment. They also help with decisions on treatment options and other issues.

Supportive & Palliative Care is available whenever a patient chooses, and is covered by most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Call us at (207) 303-3300 for more information about Supportive & Palliative Care, or our entire range of cancer treatment services.



NEW ENGLAND Cancer Specialists

NewEnglandCancerSpecialists.org





Justin and Kate Russell with their son Harry. Photo courtesy of Chelsea Ellis/Maine Children's Home

FAMILY OF FIVE

Kate Russell's Full-Circle Story of Adoption

BY AMY PARADYSZ

Stories of paying it forward don't get much bigger than this. Kate Russell was adopted from an orphanage in Seoul, South Korea, in 1985. And this past summer, she adopted a son from that same orphanage.

Back when Kate was a student at Colby College, she had a chance to spend a summer in Seoul at an orphanage.

"I never felt like I needed to go there to find another family or to go there to find answers as to why I was put up for adoption—because I was happy," Kate says. "But I wanted to connect with my roots and see the country."

Once she was there, however, she was curious enough to do some digging. The first surprise was that she had been celebrating her birthday on the wrong day all her life, that she had been surrendered to the orphanage—not born—on January 9. The second surprise was that her birth mother had been 15.

"Domestic adoption isn't popular in Korea," Kate says. "There's still this belief that their children need to be connected to their family by blood. Unwed mothers are often rejected by their families and give up their children anonymously. But those children can never be adopted internationally. I realized that my mother must have given her consent, which meant that she must have revealed who she was. She brought me to a hospital and specified that she wanted me to be adopted by an American family."

Consumed with gratitude for her birth mother's selfless act of love, Kate wanted to thank her. But she realized that her mother would then have been 35 and would likely be married and have had another child—or children. She might have a whole family who had no idea that she'd surrendered a 2-day-old infant named Soon-Hee two decades earlier.



Clockwise from top left: Hiking the Boulder Loop Trail in Albany, N.H. Photo by Jan Gourley | Kate Russell shares a unique bond with her son Harry—both were adopted out of the same orphanage in South Korea. Photo by Kate Russell | Kate and Justin Russell of Scarborough with their kids Bella, 6, Harry, 2, and Ivy, 3. Photo by Amy Paradysz

Kate made two decisions that summer: To not look for her birth mother and to come back one day and adopt a child.

In 2011, she married Justin Russell, whom she'd met playing ultimate Frisbee at Colby. They have two daughters: Bella, who is now 6, and Ivy, who will be 4 next month.

"We always wanted to have biological children," Kate says. "That was important to me, too, because I'd never had anyone connected to me biologically. But, over the years, South Korea has opened and closed doors to adoption. I was nervous that by the time we were ready to adopt that we wouldn't be able to."

In 2019, the Russells contacted an adoption agency based in New York that works with the South Korea orphanage. The Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers, based in Waterville, did a home study. Kate studied Korean. And she waited.

"The hardest part was waiting," Kate says. "After we were matched, we had to wait 9 months to get Harry. It's not like when you're pregnant and you know that a baby is coming but you don't see them. It was from afar. They would send us pictures. You feel like you're missing a lot of milestones. He took his first step. He said his first word. In Korean."

All over the world, plans were disrupted by the COVID pandemic, and this family's story is no exception. Both parents were required to be present for the first court appearance in Seoul, which was originally scheduled for April 2020 and was postponed until June.

"By then Maine had closed the border to people coming in unless they quarantined," Kate says. "All my family is from out of state. Also, Korea had a quarantine restriction, which meant that if we were going to go to Korea, we were going to have to go for at least a month. We can't be away from our kids for a month, and our parents can't come for a month. We thought about taking our girls with us and quarantining in a hotel room for two weeks. We tried applying for passports for them, but the passport office was closed due to COVID."

Out of other options, the Russells emailed the judge reviewing their case and pleaded that they could send only one parent. Kate could stay home with the girls. Justin could fly to South Korea, quarantine while working remotely, make the court date, wait out the two-week grace period, finalize the adoption, get Harry a visa and a plane ticket, and fly home. In two months, they would be reunited as a family of five.

Luckily, the court granted the exception.

"Korea had an interesting quarantine procedure," Kate says. "Justin got off the plane and they put him on a bus and brought him to a hotel room, a government facility, for two weeks."

Three times a day, Justin—who doesn't speak Korean—would get an announcement to open his door for food. Open the door for any other reason and he could have been deported.

"He was a really good sport about it," Kate laughs.

Two months later when Kate and the girls met Justin and Harry at Portland International Jetport in July 2020, she was overwhelmed with joy.

"It was surreal and amazing, and we were all really excited," Kate says. "I was just happy that we were together and that everyone was healthy. The first three weeks, he was really clingy with Justin. But it didn't last too long."

When Harry arrived in Maine, he was almost 2. Over the summer, Kate tried to understand what he was saying in Korean—and whether what he was saying was words at all. Sometimes, he called for the foster mother he'd known in South Korea. But before long, he was calling for Bella, his doting big sister. Soon, he was looking at Kate and saying, "Uppy Mommy."

Because of the circumstances of the pandemic, Kate was Harry's legal mother before she ever got to hold him. But they are no less bonded. She shares a lot with him—both Korean, both surrendered, both adopted, both American, both deeply loved.

"We'd been matched for almost a year," she says, "and I'd always felt like his mother." •

Life is quite busy in the Russell home, as hinted at in this back-to-school photo from 2020. Photo by Justin Russell



Back Cove Women's Residential Program



- Gender-Responsive Addiction Treatment
- Individual & Group Therapy
- Comprehensive Assessments
- Holistic Wellness Services

CROSSROADS®

Fully immersing yourself in a peaceful, therapeutic environment where you can focus on your recovery and healing your mind, body and spirit is essential. The Back Cove Women's Residential Program and Recovery Center in Maine provides just the environment and care you need. This 30-day inpatient program reduces outside distractions and offers a safe, structured environment that provides a solid foundation for recovery.

Contact us today to learn more!
(207) 773-9931



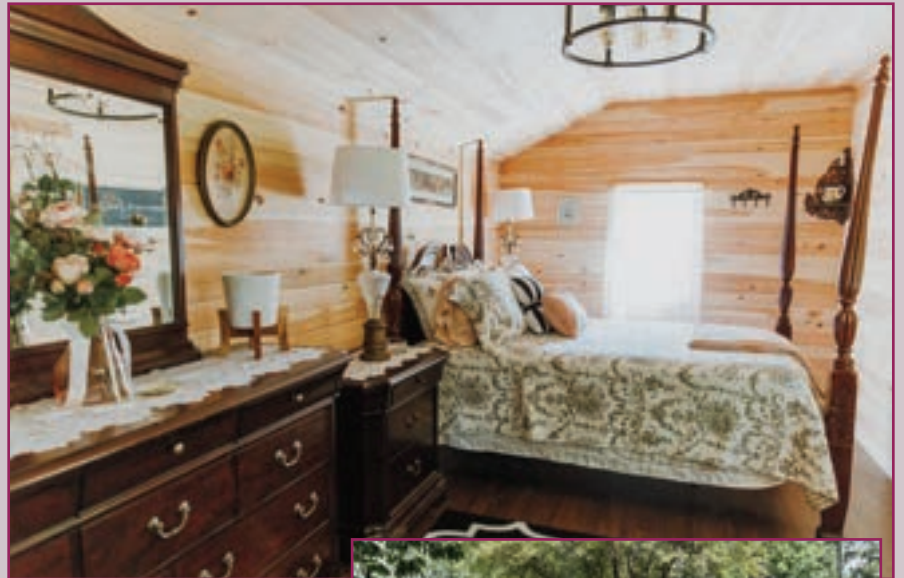
NAATP
National Association of
Addiction Treatment Providers

Remember Who You
Wanted To Be™
crossroadsme.org



COOLIDGE
FAMILY FARM

Getaway
Package



Coolidge Family Farm in New Gloucester offers this deal to couples looking to get away for a night or two to **celebrate their LOVE.**



Includes:

Overnight stay in one of our romantic Cottages with queen bed, full bathroom, porch swing, sweetheart Adirondacks, fire pit & wood, outside dining area, and complimentary bottle of champagne.

- Cottages #1 & #2 are **\$200** with all of the above.
- Cottage #3 is larger with an inside sitting area, coffee bar, and hot tub (robes & towels too) for **\$250.**

Additional nights are only \$100. Dates subject to availability.

Three Course Personal Chef Experience \$200.

Other options include

**Happy Hour Charcuterie Board and
Homemade S'mores Basket** for your fire pit.

Email misty.coolidge@gmail.com
for more information!

coolidgefamilyfarm.com



Photo by Jonah Lorsung



Photo by Jack Murray

Lady Lamb is Doing Her Thing

After a decade in NYC, acclaimed local musician Lady Lamb returns home to Maine.

BY ALTHEA KASTELIC

Warm afternoon light streams through an off-camera window as musician Aly Spaltro, known by her stage name “Lady Lamb,” settles herself in front of her computer. With thick-squared-off glasses and a blue flannel button-down, Spaltro looks like she could have popped out of an L.L. Bean catalog. “I’m wearing my State Theater shirt right now!” she laughs, a serendipitous reminder of how fundamental the Maine community was to her beginnings as a musician. It’s a connection further evidenced by her work to make the socially distant summer of 2020 more bearable for her fellow Mainers.

This past spring, Spaltro had just settled into her new Midcoast Maine property when the state went into lockdown. With touring out of the question, she turned to making her new space into a home.

As Spaltro stripped logs in her backyard, built a firepit, and re-painted her house, an idea began to take hold. She wanted to share her space, and after months away from music and performing, the urge to connect with others through her work began to grow. When she happened across a free vintage movie theater marquee on a drive home, Spaltro began to seriously consider hosting shows in her backyard.

“I sat on the idea for another seven or eight weeks because, psychologically, it didn’t feel like quite the right time,” she shares. “June still felt early for people to come. We needed to see what was going to happen with cases. Finally, I realized, ‘Okay, if I don’t do this now, I won’t be able to do it this season.’”

Her shows, marketed as “Live from the Hive” (a callback to her first stage name “Lady Lamb and the Beekeeper”), offered a small, entirely outdoors, socially distanced respite where people (no more than 50 at a time) could come (masks required) and enjoy a few hours of live music away from the world, accompanied by sanitization stations.

A clip of Spaltro performing one of her Live from the Hive shows is posted on YouTube. Banjo in hand, strings of lights twinkling above her, Spaltro stands in front of a microphone on a small stage in her backyard. Drowning out the drone of crickets, her distinct vibrato tones and the twang of the banjo strings fill the warm summer night as she begins the first few lines of her song “We Are Nobody Else.” It’s a poignant and popular track from her 2016 EP *Tender Warriors Club*. Spaltro’s lyrics ebb and flow like a ribbon twining itself around vivid image after image, as she moves into the second verse:

“There’s nothing holier than the laughter of our friends
There’s nothing more I need, I have everything
I’ve got the gold in your hair, the sun in your hair
I’ve got the honey in your hair
And my hands in your hair, night into day.”



Photo by Erica Peplin

Not many musicians would offer up their backyards to strangers, especially during a pandemic, but for Spaltro these shows were not only a safe way to do her job, but also a way to give back to the community that made her.

“Performing this year has been even more meaningful than I could have imagined . . . It’s really made us all understand how much we value and need the arts and venues. We need togetherness through music. I think regardless of what happens next year . . . I know that I’d like to keep doing these Hive shows. It’s really fun and special to have people come out here.”

For Spaltro, moving back to Maine was a meaningful, triumphant, and long-awaited return. “I longed my whole life for a family history,” she says. “My whole childhood, I was getting stories of Maine. My grandparents were here, my aunts and uncles, my cousins, and then stories from both my parents of their childhoods. [Maine] is where my family’s history is. As an Air Force kid, a lot of us long for a solid family home or history. I have that here . . . Coming to Maine was actually the first time I really felt at home.”

Spaltro’s music career began in her early teens when, as a budding poet, she found herself drawn to songwriting as a means of coping with her parents’ divorce. “I was very emotional and wanted an outlet for it. I wrote a song when I was 14 and I sang it for my sister, and it made her cry.” However, Spaltro says her younger sister had difficulty articulating her thoughts about Spaltro’s vocal performance, and her warbling imitations did not leave Spaltro feeling confident.

“At the time I was horrified, like, ‘Oh my God, she thinks I’m singing like a goat? What does that even mean?’ She was 12 years old, and now as adults we’ve talked about it, and I realized she meant vibrato! But at the time I was horrified, and I didn’t sing again for four years, I was so mortified.”

After graduating from high school, Spaltro found herself drawn back to songwriting as a way to cope with the loss of her gap-year plans due to the 2008 economic crisis. She began to perform regularly at open-mic nights and became more involved with the local music scene. “I realized that music was my passion,” says Spaltro. This realization led her to set aside plans for college and move further south along the coast to Portland, Maine, in an effort to fully commit herself to her work.

After over a year of building her audience and gaining positive attention from local press, Spaltro decided the time was right to test her abilities on the stages of New York City. “I just felt like I needed even more of a challenge,” Spaltro says, an earnest smile breaking across her face.

Despite being a self-described introvert, Spaltro says that the seemingly endless streets of NYC helped facilitate her creative process.

“When I’m in the city, there’s so much to see and so many different people to observe and streets to walk down and time to think when you’re out moving. Often when I’m in motion is when I do my best thinking. I’m constantly writing down little phrases and collecting them until I sit down and piece them together into a cohesive thought.”

Spaltro says that her magpie-like collecting process comes to fruition when she is able to carve out chunks of time and space to write, describing it as a sort of hibernation process where she is able to synthesize her thoughts.

“Every song I’ve written has come from a real emotional place. I’m not the type to sit around and kind of twiddle on my instrument and write often. I let it build in me until it has to come out, and so there’s a sense of urgency in a lot of my music and it’s coming from that place. . . . When I’m writing, I’m very, very present and emotional, and oftentimes, even if the song isn’t sad, I’ll end up crying while I’m writing it. To me, that’s the physical feeling of a volcano erupting.”

As outdoor shows could now pose a hypothermia hazard, Spaltro’s new projects include convincing her city-savvy girlfriend to fall in love with Maine, corralling her cats, and building her new music studio out of an old greenhouse that sits on her property. Her face glowing in the golden lamplight, Spaltro states that as soon as her studio has been completed, she will begin to work on a new album.

“It’s a little different obviously. I’m surrounded by woods here. It’s a more steady, quiet thought process. . . . There’s fewer stimuli. I’m excited to write a record for the first time that’s a little more deliberate, where I actually sit down and carve out time to be like, ‘Okay, I’m going to see what I can do today,’ as opposed to running to the studio and having it pour out.”

Over the course of her career, Spaltro has created an extensive body of work, including the highly successful, entirely acoustic, and deeply intimate EP *Tender Warriors Club*, and three studio albums. From her studio debut with *Ripley Pine*, to her indie-pop inspired album *After*, to her fourth and most recent album *Even in the Tremor*, which poses philosophical musings about the seemingly mundane aspects of everyday life; Spaltro has taken on each new project as a welcome challenge, and her newest concept is no different.

“There’s been more or less a theme, or an idea of something I’m trying to accomplish with every record. Usually, I write from my own perspective. My next record . . . I’m going to try to write from other people’s perspectives and see what that pulls out of me.”

Through combining her passions for music and film, Spaltro says she hopes to explore the reaches of her creativity by writing from the perspectives of characters in films that are important to her. “I want to see what kind of empathy I can have in trying to get into the head and the heart of someone else, but also see what that pulls out of my own past and experience.”

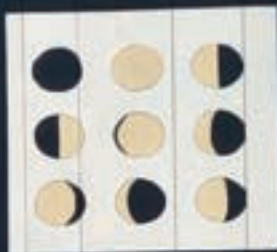
As the last vestiges of sunlight fade away, Spaltro describes how moving back to Maine and laying down roots not only inspired her new creative endeavor, but also serves as a point of pride. It is a tangible reflection of her success in an industry that has been known to take more often than give. “I think that there are people in the industry who care more about making money,” she says. “They would prefer that you be different than who you are.” Throughout her career, Spaltro says that she has worked to remain steadfast in maintaining her authenticity.

“I’m not in this business to become wildly successful through changing who I am,” says Spaltro. “I would much rather have my integrity. I have felt successful my whole career because I’m making the most honest choices for myself. That to me is real, true success. The fact that I have found a way to make a living with my art and still be able to hide out in the woods and do my thing is exactly what I want.” •

*Lady
Lamb
presents*

LIVE

FROM



THE

HIVE





| SPECIAL EVENTS |

Meet Lisa Sturgeon, Wedding Planner

BY MARY FRANCES BARSTOW

We at *Maine Women Magazine* were wondering what it was like being a wedding planner, in winter, in the pandemic. Lisa Sturgeon graciously shared her time to help give a sense of the joys and challenges. My takeaway point (and not for the first time): People in Maine are resourceful.

MARY: Are you originally from Maine?

LISA: Born, raised, and decided to stay.

MARY: Is it true you hold several demanding jobs at the same time?

LISA: Yes, I work for an advertising agency, I teach business courses part-time at Husson University, and I am a wedding planner and officiant.

MARY: That is an unusual combination! Would you describe yourself as both artistic and business-oriented?

LISA: I include beauty in all of the things that I do, yes. In customer service, hospitality is at the core of what we do—helping others achieve their goals. Whether the goal is to have a beautiful wedding, or to get an education in business, or to grow your company through marketing, I try to be a conduit of how we can [harmoniously] work together.

MARY: How did you get involved in wedding planning? And what effect has COVID had on your wedding planning company?

LISA: Well, I had been making events happen for the past 10 years, unofficially, doing the planning and design. Then COVID happened. One of my best friends was getting married, and we had been planning her wedding. They had been going to have a destination wedding in Jamaica, but obviously when COVID hit, that plan was canceled. Soon, I went from being a wedding planner, to my friend asking me to officiate the wedding. That way, there would be one less person involved, without having to cut the guest list.

I became a notary so I could marry this couple, and they got married this past summer here in Maine. I realized that I actually had a good opportunity to diversify what we were offering as a company. I was now able to offer officiating services, in addition to planning and design. I had never thought about putting the three things together. Planning and design are obviously two separate activities, but then adding that trifecta of officiating gave us the opportunity to be able to pivot and offer a full service. We like to call it integrated services for couples. We can do everything from planning an elopement to a full-service event, to design, to actually showing up at the wedding and making it legal. So COVID, in a way, helped to bring about these interesting developments.

MARY: Your company just does weddings and events related to weddings, is that right?

LISA: In terms of Getting Married in Maine, we focus strictly on weddings, including related events. The whole wedding celebration could include engagement parties, showers,

rehearsal dinners, the ceremony, the reception, and Sunday morning brunch. Those are all Getting Married in Maine activities.

Let's say you have a company event, a family event, a Bar Mitzvah, or a First Communion that you need help with the planning and designing—I wouldn't necessarily have our regular wedding staff do that. While they're focusing on the weddings, I would probably handle the other events directly myself.

MARY: Do you have a lot of employees, or do you hire them as events come available?

LISA: We have our core group. They're all independent contractors.

MARY: What do you do about the flowers?

LISA: We coordinate the flowers, working with vendors across the States. We'll work with our clients on conceptualizing what the design of the tablescapes should look like, if there are pieces, arbors, arches, and so on.

MARY: You're married with a family as well?

LISA: Yes. I only have one child. He's three, and he's perfect. That's the saving grace of being able to do and juggle a lot of things. Probably the most interesting thing with COVID is that I've been working from home. We're suddenly inside a lot on lockdown, he's home with us, and for a part of the day, his mom's in her office, working, being a wedding planner. He's, like, "What is she doing in there? I want to play, or go on a picnic just with me. Mom's always working." So that's a lot of change—a challenge. But he's great.

MARY: You're also an agent for an advertising company. How did that happen?

LISA: I got both my undergrad and my master's degree from Husson in business, with a concentration on hospitality. My first job out of school was working in the marketing department at Bangor International Airport. I had never really thought of marketing in the scheme of hospitality and how marketing would fit in with what I just learned.

But in that job, I got to travel across the country planning what we call concert events, working with travel agents and travel writers on features and stories for Maine. The idea was to try to convince people to either vacation in Maine or to start a business in Maine. I did not have to pretend to love Maine—I do love Maine. I think it is a very wonderful place not only to grow up, but also to get married, especially with all the state's beauty, to raise a family, to grow older, and to just be. In this past year, I've never been more grateful to be here.

So, I worked at the airport for a number of years and fell in love with marketing and advertising. Then the military flights decreased, and there were layoffs. I survived three rounds of layoffs that the airport had, but it was extremely stressful. That was the year my husband and I were getting married. I started reaching out to my contacts and connec-





Photo by Jenn Marie Photography

tions in the community, to find what I would want to do next if I did get laid off. Geaghan's Pub, the Geaghan Brothers, were a 45-year-old Irish pub located in Bangor. And I fit in—they were looking for somebody to elevate their marketing efforts and serve as a communications manager between the restaurant brand and the brewery brand, internally and externally. My husband had been with the company for four years, at that time. And so for the next five years, the two of us worked together pretty much every day. We were both working a lot of weekends doing beer festivals, events across the State, a lot of traveling.

Then we had our son. One of us needed to make a change. And right at this time, I got a phone call asking me if I would ever consider leaving Geaghan's. The next thing I knew, I was working in an agency, which is very different from marketing for a company. But I've loved every minute of it.

MARY: In your wedding planning business, do you find that you get a lot of customers coming in from out of state, to Maine as a destination?

LISA: Yes. People who have been here and had a good time camping, sailing, or vacationing often want to come

back, if they are planning a wedding. Everyone gets this wonderful affinity to the state. And in talking to them, I get to share the beauty that it has all four seasons. Even spring, in mud season in Maine, it can be beautiful, right?

MARY: What are your final thoughts on your career path so far?

LISA: I feel very lucky to be a wedding planner. There's nothing more beautiful than a couple getting married in Maine and celebrating that love they have for each other and the place. You see the whole plan and effort that you all put together. You see the parts of the

plan come together. You've made their lives easier, and they're happy with the experience. And some of the work that we worked on will be shared for generations and generations in their wedding photos, that will form a memento. That's something to be really proud of.

And I think COVID has taught us to have a little grace, and more grace, and we just keep going.

For more information on Getting Married in Maine, located in Bangor, Maine, please call 207-949-4637 or visit <https://gettingmarriedinmaine.com/about/>.

Photo by Emily McIntosh Photography



Lisa and her husband Brian Sturgeon, with their son Conor.

"You might be ambivalent about prayer, but you'll experience no ambivalence about Wilson-Sanford's warmth, humor, hope...and wisdom."
 —Victoria Zackheim
 Author of Faith: Essays from Believers, Agnostics, and Atheists

3 BOOK SERIES

I Pray Anyway



NOW AVAILABLE ON AMAZON!



Sprague & Curtis Real Estate

a childhood dream.
 your own home.



worth the wait.

www.spragueandcurtis.com



75 Western Ave • Augusta, ME
 207.623.1123

We Care.

At Vetted, we have over 40 combined years of nursing experience working in the Veterans Administration Healthcare System. So ours is a tradition of caring.



That's why our nurse practitioner is on-site, to curate a precision-dosed, one-of-a-kind experience that suits your specific needs. All from the purest strains of healthy, hand-grown plants.

First time customers receive 10% off, and veterans receive a lifelong 20% discount, with free medical cards for all Maine veterans.



1609 Main Street, Sanford, ME 04073
www.vettedcannabis.com
 (207) 401-4141



SABATTUS REGIONAL CREDIT UNION

We're Here for You!

2 Middle Road, Sabattus
 (207) 375-6538 | (800) 503-0434
srcu4u.com



Blush Pampers Brides, in Person and Virtually

BY SHEILA D. GRANT

Courtney Wetzel bought her first business, the former Pancsofar's Bridal Shop in Presque Isle, from her best friend's mom in 2011. Now in 2021, the rebranded Blush Bridal & Formal in Presque Isle is approaching its big 10-year anniversary celebration, and the company has locations in Bangor and South Portland, as well.

Courtney, who purchased the first store at age 23, said she's always known she wanted to be a business owner. She worked as an office manager and as a financial coordinator for a few years before purchasing her first shop.

"We just celebrated five years in Bangor this past January, and I opened that one from scratch," she said. "As luck would have it, a store went up for sale in Portland's Old Port, and I purchased that just three and a half months after the Bangor store. It was not a bridal shop. It was Tavecchia at that time. But they had formal wear and mother-of-the-bride dresses . . . We eventually decided to align that with what the rest of our stores did, so we rebranded and brought in bridal."

Courtney realized they were quickly outgrowing the 1,700-square-foot space in the Old Port, however, and Blush relocated to a 5,300-square-foot location in South Portland in the fall of 2018.

"We are loving that space," she said. "It gives us a lot more room to do things the way that we do it." The way they did it, at least before COVID-19, included private suites for bridal parties, champagne service, personal style consultants to assist with trying on and selecting gowns, and more.

"We built our whole business model focused on being an experience, so when we had to shut down for 12 weeks, that was a challenge," said Courtney. "We pivoted in about three

days' time and launched virtual shopping. While the doors were locked, we kept all our full-time employees working. It was a personal goal of mine to keep their jobs. We had managers in the store who could do virtual consultations by Facetime or Zoom, and we would ship out for people to try on at home. And if they were up for it, we would Zoom in as a virtual stylist and be there for them during that process.

Women may not have been getting married during the shutdown, but they needed to get their dresses ordered, and a lot of people did take advantage of that option."

Courtney said that Blush was one of the first bridal businesses in the nation to offer virtual consultations. "We were able to share our format with a lot of other bridal shops in the country," she said. "It was a drop in the bucket compared to normal, but it was something to still be able to serve people, and it went well."

Blush rigorously adheres to masking and sanitizing recommendations to make sure customers feel safe. "Things look a little different because [in the past] a lot of times, we would go into the fitting rooms to help them into the dress, and we've had to transition away from that," said Courtney. The shops now offer private appointments on weekdays before normal business hours for parties at high risk or with high concerns about COVID.

"We did have a fair amount of people take advantage of that, as well."

In 2019, casual clothing was added at the Presque Isle location. In response to the pandemic and more customers turning to virtual shopping, a casual line was added in Bangor. And men's formal wear was added to the Portland store. "The pandemic just made the online side of things blow up," Courtney said.



Blush owner Courtney Wetzel.



Amanda Gilpatric, manager of Blush, South Portland, uses Zoom and a ring light to assist a bridal customer. *Blush photo*



Photo by Russell Caron Wedding Photography, courtesy of Blush.



Beautiful Food for All Occasions

social. corporate. weddings. full bar services

lauracabotcatering.com

PO BOX 628 • WALDOBORO, ME 04572

(207)832-6337

laura CATERING
cabot

While it was not intentional, and Blush has had men in management roles in the past, all three locations currently have all-women management teams. “Obviously, the nature of the industry does attract primarily women,” she said, adding that her current team is “a gift. We have, right now, the best team we’ve ever had. This year has brought us so much closer together. Our mission, as a company, is to serve and celebrate and empower women. That’s something that attracts a lot of women to work with us and attracts the kind of customers who value those same kinds of things.”

Courtney is excited about the 10-year celebration for the Presque Isle shop. “It’s been fun to see the girls who came in as prom customers now getting married and buying bridal gowns from us—to see customers as time passes,” she said.

For more about Blush, call 772-1699 (South Portland), 573-1647 (Bangor), 769-8611 (Presque Isle), or visit blushbridalformal.com.



Make it memorable.

Choose a historic setting for
your seaside Maine wedding

wellsreserve at laudholm

207-646-4521 ext 151
wellsreserve.org/weddings



PATRICK MCNAMARA PHOTOGRAPHY



Photo by Michele Stapleton

| SPECIAL EVENTS |

A Conversation with LAURA CABOT, CATERER

BY MARY FRANCES BARSTOW

Based in Waldoboro, the well-established Laura Cabot Catering has two expressions that capture their inviting approach: “Now that you’ve found each other, come find us!” and “We love a good party!” For over 35 years, they have been catering beautiful weddings and memorable events, bringing dedication and experience to each occasion. As I found out while talking with owner Laura Cabot, they are all about listening to their customers, using local suppliers, keeping their menus seasonal, and providing the finest in food and service—even in the face of the long COVID pandemic.

MARY:

Do you cater mostly weddings or all kinds of events?



LAURA:

We do many weddings, that’s for sure, but also birthday parties, anniversaries, family reunions, memorials, funerals, and some more unusual jobs—such as provisioning yachts, or if you are opening your cottage and decide to have a cocktail party. We cater all sorts of occasions.

MARY:

Do you have a full crew of waiters or service people who come in and serve people? Or are your events mostly buffet style? How has COVID changed things?

LAURA:

We do both. I have a couple of valued full-time people. Especially in this pandemic downturn, what we have done mostly, this past year, is curbside [delivery of food]. It requires prep work and preparing things so that people can set them out themselves. We did one event last season that was what I would call “lightly serviced.” Now I am trying to build my team again for this coming year because I think by fall, we’ll be able to go back to fuller serviced events.

MARY:

We're all hopeful for that.

LAURA:

Certainly, but I have brides who are just skipping right to 2022. They're going to wait it out.

It's about the full service. For many brides, it's their dream to have their wedding reception meal be a certain way, and if pandemic restrictions prevent it, they are frustrated. So, some decide to wait.

MARY:

Do you have a full commercial kitchen?

LAURA:

I have a licensed commercial kitchen, what I would call a prep kitchen, with a lot of refrigeration, a lot of metal surfaces. Easy to keep clean, sinks, that sort of thing. I used to have a restaurant, and it's far less equipment than, say, what my restaurant had. But it serves me very well for preparing for groups of up to 200 or more.

MARY:

What food or dish is the most asked for—the most requested item, that people just love?

LAURA:

Typically, what people want at a wedding reception meal is a combination of fish, chicken, or beef.

And we like to go local and sustainable wherever we can. That's a question that I always pose to the couple because often people are on a budget, and let's face it—sustainably raised proteins cost a little more. Some people have the money for it, and some people don't. And some people don't, but it's so important to them that they find the money for it by changing plans and reducing on something else.

Nowadays, especially with the pandemic, I recommend using sustainable bamboo or birch disposables. That saves on renting and on an extra person to be a dishwasher. Then, going that way, the client will have a little more for the food. I say time and time again, people will remember the food. That's what we want to spend our dollars on.



Photo by Michele Stapleton

Allison V. Bishop, CPA
FINANCIAL COACH



WHAT CAN FINANCIAL COACHING DO FOR YOU?

Make thoughtful, conscious, and mindful decisions around your money

FREE Initial Phone Consultation

allison@allisonbishop.com
207.805.8400

For more information:
allisonbishop.com

Maine Veterinary Medical Center

A specialty and 24/7 emergency animal hospital in Scarborough, Maine

For 24/7 emergency pet care, call 207.885.1290



Open every day, seven days a week including weekends and holidays



1500 Technology Way in the Enterprise Business Park
Off Route 1 • mvmc.net

Photo by Michele Stapleton



One of the things that people like is that we are willing to listen to people's needs for special diets. And these days, people's diets can be precise. If someone says to me, "I need a vegan entrée and a couple of gluten-free choices," we can do that.

MARY:

What are your favorite dishes that you are known for? What do you most enjoy cooking?

LAURA:

I love going to the farm stands and letting what I see there inform my choices. And smart customers will give me some latitude because that's how people work best, I think—allowing some choice of ingredients depending on what looks best in the market at a particular time and season.

In terms of a favorite dish we're known for, well, I think we make one of the best lobster rolls around! Probably, the homemade mayonnaise is part of that. We put a little bit of lemon zest in it, and make sure the bun is toasted just right. People are just crazy about these lobster rolls.

Other than that, I would say garden cuisine and stellar salads. We're noted for them because we do grow our own specialty herbs and greens, as much as we can. And I feel like sometimes people overdress salads, or don't take care. They cut the leaves, and then the leaves turn

rusty-looking. We are always just super picky about our vegetables in our salads. We have one especially distinctive salad, with a very special mustard vinaigrette. It's got a little truffle oil in it, which gives it a unique flavor, whole grain French mustard, and fresh tarragon.

MARY:

Do you do baking as well?

LAURA:

Well, you know, that's interesting. When I moved to Maine, I had just sold my first business at the age of 21. I had had this bakery called the Grateful Bread. It's kind of . . . okay, I might have been a hippie. I liked the Grateful Dead, and I made my business the Grateful Bread. I sold it to move to Maine and hike the Appalachian Trail. I adored handmade bread making. We didn't use machinery except for in the small mixers. Not big mixers. And we continued baking and doing all homemade desserts at my restaurant, which was called, by the way, the Pine Cone Café.

But when I moved up to where I am now, on Marble Avenue, my kitchen doesn't do big baking, doesn't have the right kinds of ovens for it. So, I generally outsource that part and the big wedding cakes. We do simple desserts, fruit pies, cobblers, crisps, cookies, things like that. But sometimes, for example, I have calls for French pastry. I have a guy who does



Photo by Laura Cabot

that kind of baking really well. I'm not going to try to go there.

MARY:

Over the years, have you noticed changes in the appetites of people and what they want?

LAURA:

Yes. I'd say that a more plant-driven, plant-forward menu is something that people are embracing. I mean, I think even the people who still enjoy meat, many times they're going to eat vegetarian. I see an uptick in gluten free.

And other than that, I think smaller portions. There was a time when people just put a lot of food on their plate. But now there's a move in restaurants towards small plates. Owners want you to sample more different things, so they give you smaller portions. It gives people a different style of dining experience, whereby they can experience more variety.

MARY:

Are vegetarian dishes requested more?

LAURA:

Yes, and Maine seafood is often requested, of course. What I commonly hear, especially with weddings and especially hearkening back to the pre-COVID days, is "our guests are coming from all over the world, and we want to really showcase Maine flavors." So, they will want to go with fresh lobsters, blue-

berries, scallops, whatever is in season. Winter is scallop season.

MARY:

What areas in Maine do you work in? And what effects can different Maine venues have?

LAURA:

We work state-wide. In terms of venues, sometimes the facilities available at the wedding or event venue will inform the menu. You know, if there is no kitchen at all, then we know we have to bring in our own water, and we have to build a field kitchen. If it's, say, a summer camp where they're accustomed to feeding 200 people a day and they've got a good big kitchen, then the options for the menu increase. You might have lots of ovens and a flat-top grill, so you can do different techniques because it's all there for you.

MARY:

What are island weddings like?

LAURA:

Well, with those, there are the usual million details and then the heightened expectation of not missing a ferry and doing all in an extra-timely way.

But they are delightful when all goes well.

For more information, please call (207) 832-6337 or visit <https://www.lauracabotcatering.com/>.

*Covid Stressed?
Feel Better Fast!
Book a free consult today.*

TouchPoint

*Karen St. Clair
EFT Tapping*

karenstclairEFT.com ☘ 207-878-8315

DIY CREATIVE STUDIO

the WORKSHOP

YOU COULD MAKE THIS!

SIGN UP FOR A MAKE-AND-TAKE CLASS AT THE WORKSHOP AND LEARN NEW SKILLS WHILE CREATING NEW HOLIDAY PROJECTS JUST POSTED. GIVE THE GIFT OF DIY!

USE CODE "MWM121" FOR \$5 OFF YOUR FIRST CLASS!

REGISTER TODAY:
THEWORKSHOPATACE.COM

f f THEWORKSHOPATACE



| SPECIAL EVENTS |

FLOWERS IN WINTER and All the Year 'Round

Rachael Smith Brown's Fleur De Lis, Floral Design

BY MARY FRANCES BARSTOW

Flowers are important—for how they can send caring messages, mark special occasions, uplift a mood, and transform a room.

The people who work at Fleur De Lis Floral Design understand this importance 100 percent. They see up close the many ways that flowers can make life better and more beautiful. Their varied customers include groups of all types: Realtors en route to open houses and financial institutions for closings. Guests on their way to dinner parties, in need of a hostess gift. Students going to prom. Families celebrating the joy of a birth, graduation, Mother's Day, anniversary, or other holiday. And of course, people planning weddings, from small intimate wedding showers to grandiose events and everything in between. Weddings are known for their lovely bouquets, boutonnieres, corsages, chancel and altar arrangements, and reception ban-

quet centerpieces.

Located at 460 Ocean Street, on Route 77 in South Portland, Fleur De Lis is close to the Cape Elizabeth line. Its customers walk in, make appointments, or go online to flowersinmaine.com or fdl@flowersinmaine.com

By whatever method customers contact Fleur De Lis, they find a dedicated team there. As owner since August of 2018, Rachael Smith Brown says, "We love sharing our knowledge and passion! We have an outstanding and diverse regular cast of floral designers, complemented by freelance artists, who range from occasional to seasonal to event-specific. We are all experienced meeting- and event-planners." Rachael is also proud to note that they have achieved the Wedding MBA International Accreditation, awarded by the Wedding Merchants Business Academy.

Rachael says that, for her, part of Fleur De Lis's strength is a feeling of being woven into a wonderful community. As an example, she says, "My daughter, Chloe, our doggo Sparky Boy, and three rescue house cats reside a half a mile down the road, on Waterhouse Road in Cape Elizabeth. Last week I was here at the store at 7 p.m. on a Tuesday night, putting out trash. A client saw me, pulled in, and asked if there was any way she could purchase a plant for a friend whose parent had just passed. The answer was, 'Yes!'" They both understood the human situation, in a way that speaks of treasured community bonds.

Fleur De Lis gives back to its beloved community in more public ways, too. Last spring, they donated many products and services to area nonprofits, such as the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Annual Seafood Festival, the Children's Museum Gala, and the American Cancer Society's Inaugural "Couleur: A Masquerade Ball" at The Masonic Temple. In June, they also donated the floral arrangements for the Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland's Fur Ball gala.

Another aspect of Fleur De Lis's being a local, community-minded business is that they source and shop locally themselves. During the growing season in Maine, they partner with local farms to bring the freshest local Maine color to the shop for their clients. As Rachael describes, "Everything in our portfolio, online and otherwise, was procured, processed, produced, and photographed here at our bricks-and-mortar boutique on Ocean Street in South Portland. We do not use stock photos and are not affiliated with fulfillment centers such as FTD and Teleflora. That being said, we often assist our loyal local clients with orders outside our area, hand selecting a local flower shop in their desired delivery town."

In the pre-COVID world, the flower industry would often be associated with large parties and events—exactly the type of gatherings most canceled during the pandemic. But Rachael says that 2020 and 2021 have surprised them, and they were able to remain open with zero furloughs or financial assistance. They made widespread deliveries, used curbside pickups, and were able to reopen the physical store, with precautions, in July. Last May, "Mother's Day pivoted to Mother's Month, since folks were unable to celebrate due to social distancing. Everyone wanted to send flowers this year!" While it was true that some weddings were canceled, most people rescheduled and appreciated Fleur De Lis's flexibility.



As Rachael says, with appreciation, "Here at Team Fleur De Lis we are lucky to have a bricks, clicks, and mortar 'Fine Floral Boutique' supported by our amazing community. Because of you, our strong network of customers, we do not fund operations with event retainers, allowing us to be accommodating in respect to revisions, postponements, even cancellations—whatever the future holds."

She also gives a big shout-out to the people who helped with the company's 2019 web redesign, which is standing them in good stead throughout the pandemic. Rachael thanks "fellow female entrepreneurs Kathy Allen at Greenlight Websites and Lauren Lear Photography for their unsurpassed quality, service, and patience," saying, "The website was a labor of love."

When asked how she got interested in floral design, Rachael relates how what she does now at Fleur De Lis has deep roots in her past. "This store has been my dream since my earliest childhood memories," she says, when she would spend summers at her grandmother's farm in Whigville, Connecticut. "Grams was a young widow who lived to be 96 years old, living alone on the massive rural farm for over 50 years. During the winter we started seeds. Peas were always planted in March. Spring and summer blessed us with fruits, berries, and asparagus galore, and year after year with delicious jams, jellies, honey, and maple syrup. Memorial Day weekend was when we planted lettuce, kale, cucumbers, tomatoes, beans, onions, and tomatoes. Upon harvest we would pickle, can, and blanch vegetables to freeze for the coming winter. We had a farm stand built by Uncle Al at the end of Gram's drive on Main Street. Fall harvest was all about the squash and potatoes which were stored in the root cellar of her 1800s New England farmhouse."

And, she continues, "Did I mention flowers? In spring there were symphonies of daffodils, tulips, hyacinth, pansies, and pussy willows. In summer, we had peonies, hydrangea, iris, gladiolas, dahlias, and delphinium. In fall, we had cat o' nine tails, and in winter, holiday trees."

The Fleur De Lis website flowersinmaine.com is online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their boutique is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., and Sundays by appointment. They deliver daily to 20 cities and towns in Southern Maine and others upon request.





“Top o’ the ‘Popolis” and Other St. Patrick’s Day Memories

BY BONNIE HELLWEGE

I can be walking on the grass, gardening, or just standing, and—*bam*—my eye goes right to a four-leaf clover. Since I could walk and until this very day, I see them. I don’t look for them, I just see them. And it’s no wonder, I think, for I have a bit of the green in my red blood. My father’s mom, the person I knew as Nana Hellwege, was an O’Neal.

When I discovered that I had this pinch of the Irish, I gave way to the St. Patrick’s Day celebration. I grew up in post-World War II suburban Long Island, less than an hour from Manhattan. We were a great ethnic mix, all around the same age. There were many Irish families that took March 17 seriously. It was fun, and no matter what your ethnicity, we all wore green on St. Patrick’s Day. My mom always made corned beef and cabbage, maybe more because my father loved it than because he was half Irish. There was also Irish soda bread. I still make Mom’s recipe for friends and neighbors. Green color and caraway seeds are optional. Anyway, allow me to share some fond memories of this special day of shamrocks, Leprechauns, and that unfindable pot of gold at the end of that-seldom-seen rainbow!

When I was in Junior High, a bunch of us silly, giggly girls decided we needed some green hair. I was blonde, so it was easy. I do believe we made a concoction of lime jello and green food coloring. Oh, it worked! Not only on our hair but ears, cheeks, hands, necks, and clothes. Our punishment was having to go school looking like the daughters of the Hulk or Jolly Green Giant. Needless to say, the teenage boys had a blast busting our chops for days. It did not wash out easily. That was a one-time event. Another year we did try green glitter. Denise ended up in the emergency room because the glitter got in her eyes and made for a big problem. Shamrocks drawn on cheeks with indelible green Sharpies were not a good idea either. We were only trying to get in the spirit of things, but all we did was land in trouble.

I was in college in 1972—a time of freedom, peace, love, and post-1960s burning o’ the bra! Yup, you guessed it. There was an “Erin Go Bra-Less” parade, complete with signs and lots of green toga-looking outfits. Listen, you can’t make this stuff up, especially when the drinking age in New York was only 18. We didn’t get in trouble, but the guys lined the pathways cheering us on. Yay for woman’s rights! Quite the dichotomy.

New York City! The St. Patrick’s Day Mecca. All traffic stopped the evening of March 16 so the city could spend millions painting a green line down Fifth Avenue from Washington Square to 110th Street. On the next day, Fifth Avenue would turn into a sea of blue. The NYPD Emerald Society. The NYC Police Department was made up of over 50 percent Irish officers back in the ‘70s. I think every one of them marched in that parade.

I was a 20-something living and working in Manhattan. St. Patrick’s Day was a single girl’s dream come true. Work let out, and off we went to indulge ourselves in green beer and dancing with some of New York’s finest off-duty officers of the law. Eenie, meeny, miny, moe! Ok, I’m sorry. Where was I? In midtown Manhattan. There was practically an Irish pub on every other corner. Gleason’s, Paddy O’Doul’s, and let us not forget The Blarney Stone. On this night it was SRO, standing room only. The wailing of bagpipes filled the streets, “Tura, Lura, Lural” resounded, while mugs of warm green beer clanked and spilled, accompanied by shouts of “Slainte.” Boy, was I embracing my Irish heritage! Thank goodness this was only a once-a-year experience. I’m not sure I could have survived more. I’m not a huge beer fan. My introduction to Irish single malt is something I will never forget. By the wee hours of the morning, my girlfriends and I had a serious collection of “get outta jail free cards.” When the last call bell rang, at about 3 o’clock, the revelry stopped, and the bar got silent.

A rosy-cheeked, gentle man got up on a chair, stood tall, and with an angelic tenor voice sang “Danny Boy.” You could hear a pin drop. There were tears, hugs, and pats on the back as we reverently filed out onto Fifth Avenue to find our way home.

By the mid-’70s I was in a serious relationship, mandating the March 17th debauchery come to a halt. George was Greek, but his best friend was Duffy McBride! He even looked like a Leprechaun. He was hysterical. I adored him, and the three of us hung out all the time. We were a triumvirate. We lived in New Jersey. George and I frequented this local Greek restaurant. We coerced Duffy into meeting us there one St. Paddy’s Day. He reluctantly agreed. The restaurant owner, Stavros, had this huge picture of the Acropolis covering an entire wall. He allowed me to drape shiny foil shamrocks on the Parthenon. I put green food coloring in a bottle of Ouzo and loaded a cassette of the Clancy Brothers in the player, then put on my sparkly shamrock Deely boppers. Stavros and the other customers thought it was a hoot! When Duff walked in, he looked around, laughed, threw up his hands, and bellowed “TOP O’ THE ‘POPOLIS! The evening turned into a big Greek/Irish party and became a tradition for some time.

There is one last memory that I want to share. It’s super close to my heart. When my sister and I were little girls, my mom sang us the beautiful Irish folk song “Molly Malone.” If you know it, sing the first verse now, to yourself. Well, we came up with our own rendition. The three of us would perform it for friends, relatives, guests, using our best voices and proper enunciation. We also did it just to be silly. Mom would tie a dishtowel on her head, look at us, roll her eyes, and off we’d go! Sing our rendition with me:

In Dublin’s fair city,
Where the girls are so pretty,
I first set my eyes,
On sweet Molly Malone,
As she wheeled her wheel barrow,
Through streets broad and narrow,
crying WATCHOUT!

It still cracks me up. I called my sister in Colorado, and we sang it and laughed! There are so many more great St. Patrick’s Day memories I could share. I chose my favorites. It really doesn’t matter what your ancestral countries are, at least not to me. The more time passes, the more we find out we’re just a mishmash of each other. If you limit your knowledge and celebrations, you are really cheating yourself.

My suggestion for March 17: be Irish. Wear green and a button that says, “Kiss Me, I’m Irish.” Listen to Bing Crosby sing “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling,” eat corned beef and cabbage, then wash that single malt down with a green beer.

“May you live as long as you want, and never want as long as you live.” •

FREE DATE CHANGES ON 2021 TOURS*



FROM
\$1,749*
\$1,499*

CRIMSON CANYONS & MESAS NATIONAL PARKS TOUR

10 days, departs June - September 2021

Las Vegas • Grand Canyon • Bryce Canyon • Zion • Capitol Reef • Arches & Canyonlands • and more —

Experience the red rocks of these 6 iconic national parks. Travel through deserts, forests, mountains, and to the very edge of the Grand Canyon in this tour.



promo code **N7017**
1-877-325-1285

*Free date changes anytime up to 45 days prior to departure for land tours. Deposits and final payments remain non-refundable. Prices are per person based on double occupancy plus up to \$199 in taxes & fees. Single supplement and seasonal surcharges may apply. Add-on airfare available. Offers apply to new bookings only, made by 3/31/21. Other terms & conditions may apply. Ask your Travel Consultant for details.

Saving a life from a potential catastrophe EVERY 10 MINUTES!

I live
alone

but I’m never alone.
I have **Life Alert**®.

One press of a button
sends help fast, 24/7,
even when you
can’t reach a phone.

Life Alert AS SEEN ON TV

For a FREE brochure call:
1-855-341-6320

LEXIE STEVENSON

Actress, Songwriter, Health Advocate

BY SHEILA D. GRANT

Lexie Stevenson, 22, has always been a driven person, whether the issue at hand is her career, the health of women, or the health of a family member. An actress best known for her role as Mattie Ashby on *The Young and the Restless*, Lexie is also an outspoken advocate for the Endometriosis Foundation of America. And when her own father was a struggling COVID-19 patient in a southern Maine hospital, she became an outspoken advocate for him, as well.

Lexie lives in Los Angeles with Kris Wilkes, former shooting guard for the UCLA Bruins. She was born in Brunswick, grew up summering in Vinalhaven, and lived in Bath during the school year.

Lexie was only 5 when she told her parents, Richard and Catherine Stevenson, that she wanted to be an actress and singer. They arranged voice and acting lessons, and at 12, Lexie began working with international vocal coach and performer Mary Setrakian. This coach had also worked with Nicole Kidman, Forest Whitaker, and Kate Winslet.

In high school, Lexie played Pepper in *Annie* at the Maine State Music Theatre. She earned an invitation to become a member of the Actors' Equity Association, and she landed small parts in *The Vampire Diaries*, *Alvin and the Chipmunks 4: Road Chip*, and Martin Scorsese's *Vinyl*.

Lexie deferred attendance at Purchase College, State University of New York, to pursue her acting dreams in California. After seven months, she was about to give up when she got her role as Mattie Ashby on *The Young and the Restless*.

"My [former] agent had submitted me for the role, so I had gone in, but when I signed the check-in sheet, I had to flip



Actors Noah Gerry and Lexie Stevenson at the Daytime Emmys in 2018. The duo played siblings on *The Young and the Restless*. Contributed photo

through 10 pages of other girls' names," she recalled. "I was thinking, 'Whatever. I am not going to get this.'"

Lexie played Mattie for two-and-a-half years. These days, she is "dabbling in singing and songwriting a little bit more." She counts herself lucky, in the time of COVID, to be averaging three auditions per week.

ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN EVERYWHERE

Pursuing her acting and singing career occurs parallel with Lexie's work in support of the Endometriosis Foundation of America. Researchers believe that about 6.5 million women in the United States have endometriosis, a condition in which tissue similar to the inner lining of the uterus takes hold in other parts of the body, causing inflammation and pain. The condition is not always easy to diagnose, which can prolong its debilitating effects, sometimes for years.

That was the case for Lexie, who suffered for years, from middle school onward, with severe abdominal pain. There were multiple trips to the emergency room before her diagnosis.

"I started doing a lot of interviews about endometriosis because I wanted to share that information," she said. Lexie is gratified when other young women tell her that the information about the condition has helped with their own diagnosis and treatment plans. "If I helped one girl, I'm happy with that," she said.

Lexie serves on the advisory board of the Endometriosis Foundation of America. "I told them, 'I don't know what I can do, but I want to get involved.' So now I'm just helping in any way I can. I continue to try to help people understand how much of a lack of knowledge there still is about it," she said.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: It was love at first sight for Lexie Stevenson and her father, Richard Stevenson.

Even as a child, Lexie loved to play dress up. | Lexie and Richard Stevenson at Sugarloaf in March, 2015.

Lexie and her dad at the beginning of Route 66 in Chicago during her move from Maine to California. They followed Route 66 to its end, at the Santa Monica Pier.

Catherine, Lexie and Richard Stevenson remain a very close family, visiting often between east and west coast. Contributed photos





Lexie and boyfriend Kris Wilkes celebrated his 21st birthday at a winery on September 18, 2019.
Contributed photo

“I didn’t know what was going on. Kris and I had gone out for a walk with our puppy. When we came home, Mom said, ‘Something scary has happened.’”

“There isn’t a cure for it. People say to get your tubes tied, but in many cases, that isn’t the best route. Until we find that cure, or something that will not be harmful, my goal is telling people my self-care plan for those days when I’m down for the count, what makes me feel better.” At times, Lexie must turn to prescription pain relievers, though the stronger ones make her feel woozy and ill. She feels that cutting down on gluten helped. “I wouldn’t say I’m cured, but it’s a lot less frequent. And on those days, I get a warm cup of tea, put a heating pad on, and sit there and pray for the best!”

GOING TO BAT FOR HER DAD, AND INFORMING PEOPLE ABOUT COVID

In another health area, Lexie has been equally proactive. Her father, Richard Stevenson, experienced a COVID ordeal that was not typical, but that all can learn from. He first fell ill in December, before doctors in the United States had COVID much on their radar. Months later, he became extremely ill again, and spent 18 days on a ventilator at Mid Coast Hospital in Brunswick.

“When my Dad had gotten it the first time, he went to the hospital on Christmas night,” Lexie recalled. “Of course, no one knew about COVID or had tests for it.”

Richard may have been exposed during a flight from LA to Boston. He, Catherine, and Lexie’s grandmother had been out visiting, but Richard flew back to Maine on business. A fellow passenger was sick and coughing. Soon, Richard was experiencing chills, fever, diarrhea. He was so ill he quarantined himself at his Vinalhaven home.

With Christmas coming, he flew back to LA to be with the family. Unable to breath on Christmas Day, Richard ended up at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He remained hospitalized for several days, but eventually was sent home with no diagnosis and a warning that it would be a long while before he fully recovered.

By March, Richard hoped he’d turned the corner. In late March, he, Catherine, and her mother returned to Vinalhaven to ride out the pandemic. Lexie and Kris soon followed. But in April, Richard’s fever and other symptoms returned with a vengeance. Catherine was monitoring his blood oxygen level at home, which was dropping, first to the low 90s and then into the high 80s.

“Anything below 90, you should go to the hospital,” Lexi said. “My mom brought him to the hospital, but she couldn’t go in.” Richard’s blood oxygen continued to dip, down to dangerously low levels, she said.

“You have no choice but to put somebody on a ventilator at that point,” said Lexi. “I didn’t know what was going on. Kris and I had gone out for a walk with our puppy. When we came home, Mom said, ‘Something scary has happened.’ At this point they were pretty sure my dad was not going to make it. Mom said, ‘We need to have a Facetime call later, and you need to say goodbye to Dad.’ I don’t think I have ever heard anything more scary in my life.”

Lexie doesn’t remember that moment, but family members have told her that she screamed.

“I don’t think anybody is equipped to deal with something like this, no matter their age,” Lexie said. “I am really close to my dad. So, when we called my dad that night, instead of

goodbye, I told him, 'Listen, dude, if you give up, I will be really disappointed in you and really angry . . . You need to pull through!' I was not ready to see him like that," she said. "It was very scary, and I got angry, not at him, but at the virus, at the world."

These were early days in the pandemic, with very few treatments available.

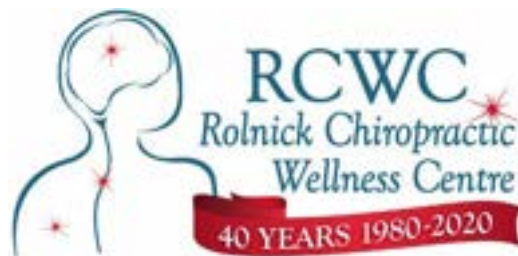
"I've had friends in high school who have passed away, and even though it wasn't my fault or anything, I always wondered, 'Is there anything I could have done?'" Lexie said. "I think that's what happened to my mom and me. She had seen information about [convalescent] plasma transfusion, and we thought, 'okay, we have to get this.' Kris and I have these big social media platforms, so we said, 'Let's really push this and see if we can get somebody who's a match.' I think at that point, his condition was so critical that we were willing to do anything!"

The family heard from the American Red Cross, which agreed to ship plasma to Maine for Richard. "When it arrived, the bag was broken," Lexie said. "I was so angry! At that point, you don't even know who to yell at."

Lexie credits one nurse at Mid Coast, Morgan, in particular with saving her father's life. "Morgan started reaching out to as many people as she could, and we found somebody in Delaware or Maryland. This time, instead of having it transported, [extended family members] drove down and got it back in the same day. After that, my dad took a huge turn for the better."

Richard came off the ventilator a little over a week after receiving his transfusion. Nearly nine months later, "he's recovered," Lexie said. "But the damage that COVID does to the lungs can be substantial, so he's still working on that. It's like being really, really out of shape. He's going on walks and building up his lung capacity so he will be able to breathe as well as he could before."

The donor chose to remain anonymous. "If that donor is out there and reading this, thank you for saving my dad's life and making sure that, a 21-year old, at that time, didn't have to know what life was like without her dad," Lexie said. •



Dedicated to gentle, effective care
for chronic stress and pain.

rolnickchiropractic.com
413 Alfred Street, Biddeford

207.283.1168



**LuluB • Parkhurst • Tribal Fashions
Cotton Country • Vintage Concepts**



**266 MAIN ST.
SACO
207.494.8626.**

Winter Hours:
Tuesday - Friday
10:00am - 5:00 pm.
Saturdays 10:00am - 3:00pm

Beginning April 1, 2021 Hours:
Monday - Friday
10:00am - 5:00pm
Saturdays 10:00am - 3:00pm

**7 OCEAN AVE.
KENNEBUNKPORT
207.967.1292**

Open in May
10:00am - 5:00pm
7 days/week



SUBSCRIBE & SAVE 45%
off the cover price.

**Only \$39.29 for a full year -
12 big issues!**

Call today **207-706-7000**

Danger and Joy in

Ali Farrell's *Pretty Rugged: True Stories from Women of the Sea*

BY SARAH E. REYNOLDS



If you've ever imagined that catching lobsters for a living would be fun, you must have an interesting definition of "fun." Ali Farrell's book, *Pretty Rugged: True Stories from Women of the Sea*, portrays some of the women in commercial fishing, and while they do know how to have a good time, fun is not the main component of their work. In fact, *Pretty Rugged* really encapsulates these physically and mentally tough women of the sea.

In exchange for the satisfaction of being their own boss and working on the water, these women endure physically punishing work and harsh, even dangerous, conditions on a daily basis. Their livelihood is subject to the vagaries of nature, as well as government regulations and a changing market, and just getting started in business is an expensive proposition.

Despite all that, one after another of the women—whose fascinating stories Ali tells in the book—said they wouldn't have it any other way. More than many of today's occupations, fishing is not only a family business, but also a way of life, they tell her. Fishing communities stand by their own, helping each other out in emergencies or when times are tough.

Ali herself lived in Camden until she was 6, and at different times both of her parents fished. She said her dad had lots of great stories about his work on the water. At one point, her father was fishing out of Newfoundland, and her mother worked for *The Camden Herald*. Later, her parents had a business making lobster tanks for restaurants and grocery stores. Even after the family moved to Massachusetts, she told me, she spent summers in Camden.

So, it came naturally to her when she returned to Maine as an adult four years ago, to hang out at the Waterfront Restaurant in Camden, where she met and became friends with several women who lobster. Some of them also have jobs on land—they are, or have been, state legislators, attorneys, scientists, pilots, community leaders, and more. "I met some really incredible people out there," she said.

Some of those interviewed for the book are Ali's friends, and others she connected with through a Facebook page, "All Things Lobstering." Many of the women are based in the Midcoast, while some are from other areas. Since she is a professional photographer, she took some of the photos in the book and met other photographers through Facebook. Nearly all the photos were taken especially for this book, she said. In addition, Penobscot Marine Museum granted permission to use some of its historic images.

The project took Ali two years to pull together. Like her first book, *Pretty Combat: Nonsense, Shenanigans and Tactful Life Domination* (2019), the new book was self-published through Sea Street Publishing in Camden. She said the COVID-19 pandemic not only made meeting people for interviews more difficult, but it also hit the fishing industry hard, especially at first. Initially, she told me, many lobster boats weren't even in the water, so photographing the women at their work was impossible. Fortunately, things improved during the summer. Ali and the photographers who worked with her were able to go out with the fishermen. She said about half the interviews were done in person, with others conducted by email.



Ali Farrell



Capt. Heather Thompson of Harrington displays her massive catch of the day. Photo courtesy of Heather Thompson



Capt. Kelly Wallace fishes out of Friendship. Photo by Jennifer Bechard

If you enjoy armchair adventures, you're sure to like this book. Its portraits of women who make their lives on the sea include stories of danger, death-defying rescues at sea, and of course battling the vicissitudes of wind and weather. There are also stories about practical jokes, girls coming to love being on the water by growing up in what Ali calls "daddy daycare" on their fathers' boats, and a true reverence for nature's beauty and power.

The women portrayed range from young mothers in their 20s and 30s to Capt. Virginia Oliver of Spruce Head, still fishing at the age of 100, and known to many in the community as "Mom." Some of the women are active in trying to influence legislation affecting the industry. Ali herself, in addition to being a writer and photographer, runs the nonprofit United Fishermen, which helps connect fishermen directly with retail customers.

Fishermen, Ali said, can be wary and tight-lipped on first meeting, but she found that after talking for a while they warmed up to her, and most were excited about participating in this project. Even better, to her, is the fact that those who have seen the book, which came out several months ago, have been pleased with it. She said the women have been grateful to have their stories told and excited to have something to pass down to their daughters and granddaughters.

When I asked what surprised her in doing the book, she mentioned the high cost of being in business for fishermen. The first portrait in the book, of Capt. Heather Thompson of Harrington, includes a breakdown of the investment required to get into com-

mercial lobster fishing. "You're looking at about \$267,750 in basic expenses, as of 2020," she says in the book. With that in mind, she suggests that readers think twice before complaining about the price of Maine's signature crustacean.

One of the things that especially appealed to me about the book was the sense of belonging evident in the women's stories. Most of them have grown up in lobstering families, and even if they hadn't at first planned to fish themselves, they have always been around fishermen and the culture of the fishing community. They exude a sense of knowing exactly who they are and what their lives are about that many an office worker might envy. Having a well-marked path laid out with milestones along the way gives youngsters growing up a sense of purpose and direction. And there is always the community to back you up, guide you, correct you when you mess up, and laugh with you about it later.

To read these stories is to step back into the ethos of an older America, notwithstanding the electronics and newfangled gear on the boats—one where people's first loyalty was not to themselves, but to their community.

Pretty Rugged: True Stories from Women of the Sea can be purchased at www.PrettyRuggedBook.com as well as at the following local bookstores: *Sherman's Maine Coast Book Shop* (Bar Harbor, Boothbay Harbor, Damariscotta, Freeport, Portland), *Riverlily* (Milbridge), and *Mockingbird Bookshop* (Bath). •



Capt. Virginia "Ginny" Oliver of Spruce Head, known to many in the fishing community as "Mom," still fishes at 100. *Photo by Hannah McGowan*



Proving that fishing is not all hard work, Sarah Leiter of Goose Cove relaxes atop a stack of lobster crates. *Photo by Hannah McGowan*



Kelly Wallace's son, Charlie, plays in a lobster crate onboard with Mom nearby. Many children in fishing families grow up literally on the water. *Photo courtesy of Kelly Wallace*

FROM COMMITTEE TO PROGRAM: A Celebration of USM's Women and Gender Studies

BY PAIGE MARCELLO

The first Women and Gender Studies program to offer a degree in Maine celebrates its 40th anniversary this spring. The program at the University of Southern Maine allows students to think critically about gender, race, sex, class, and other social categories, in hopes that students can bring positive change to the communities around them.

In 1980, the focus was to “provide a physical and intellectual space for women to study women,” as Dr. Nancy Gish recalls. At the time, these types of spaces for women were not common and were dismissed all over the country as not of great importance. But when she arrived at USM, she was intrigued by a committee that was just beginning to form. Bob Woodbury, President of USM, had started a committee to

study the changing roles of men and women. The formation of this committee led to what was known then as the Women Studies program in 1981.

Dr. Nancy Gish, a professor who taught at Penn State University, Michigan University, and Wayne State University, was one of the founders and first directors of the program. Once the committee was formed, two separate groups were established. One group focused on planning the programs curriculum, while the other planned a convocation. It took many months of planning, organizing, and gathering tenured professors to formally assemble the program.

One of the difficulties, Dr. Gish remembers, was finding tenured or tenure-tracked women professors. During the





USM's Women and Gender Studies program's class of 2012. Students pictured include Katelyn Smith, Hannah Schwenk-Sandau, Sarah T. Moon, Bethany Winter, Megan Giossi, and Katherine Hulit.

1980s, there were very few of them. Dr. Gish's hope, as the first director, was to bring awareness to women's contributions throughout history. A student at the time questioned her, "Is it true that there aren't women philosophers?" Her response was, "No. Students just never have been given works done by women." A true statement of the time.

In 1984 the program was recognized, allowing the faculty involved to assemble courses. At first, they were unable to offer a degree, due to their unofficial status. After some time, the program could offer a degree through the College of Arts and Sciences. Their mission, as Dr. Gish explains, "wasn't simply to offer degrees in the program, but to create courses that would be available to other departments." In 1997, the Women Studies program was considered a free-standing major.

Dr. Gish was the director for ten years. She notes that the extended duration of her directorial duties was due to the continued lack of tenured full-time professors. "You can't have an untenured person in that political position because they have to have a certain degree of safety." As director, Dr. Gish was responsible for conducting reviews, organizing the curriculum, delegating meetings, and developing the structure of the program so that they could make it a program with standing and faculty.

Dr. Gish credits Kathy McPherson as being "one of the most important people in the beginning." McPherson was the first Chair of the program, and her ability to handle political positions was critical to making the program official. As Dr. Gish stresses, "we had wonderful administrators, presidents, and provosts who supported us." The most heroic, she states, "was Mark Lapping, who always took up with the board of trustees."

Over the years, the program was able to bring guest speakers including Maya Angelou, Jacqueline Margaret Kay, Sonia Sanchez, and Betty Friedan. After Wendy Chapkis became director of the program, she changed the program's name to Women and Gender Studies, in 2007. She encouraged students and emphasized the importance of obtaining degrees.

The WGS program at USM has produced many graduates, some of whom have moved on to work in their communities as social workers, family crisis advocates, peace organizers, teachers, advocates for domestic violence survivors, prisoner rights advocates, and educators for the Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine. In conclusion, Dr. Gish says, "There were always women, and they were always brilliant: this is our inheritance. This is a serious, serious study, and it changes our thinking of the world." •

The Wright Gallery

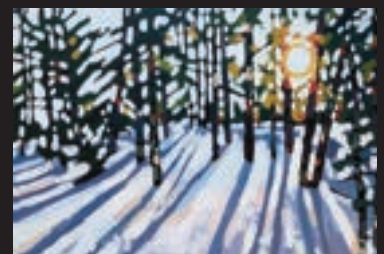
Maine Inspired Fine Art



Berri Kramer



James Nelson Lewis



Holly Lombardo

thewrightgallery.com
 5 Pier Rd., Cape Porpoise
 Kennebunkport, Maine
 207-502-0012
 Open by appointment.



A Dog Sledding Delivery Service Helps Caribou Community during COVID

BY JODI HERSEY

Hannah Lucas, a musher living in Caribou, has traveled many grueling miles over the years, and her journey hasn't always been idyllic. At just 24 years of age, Hannah's not only traded in the beaches of Virginia for the woods of Maine, but she has also experienced both homelessness and home ownership in her short lifetime. Despite all the hills and valleys she's traversed, she says that by being in The County, she is finally living her best life.

"I'm probably the most happy I have ever been," Hannah said. "Sometimes I think what would've happened if I hadn't just jumped into things and bought a house in Maine? I think I would've been a bit miserable."

In 2018, Hannah settled into a three-bedroom, two-bath house along with her fiancé David and their 18 hair-shedding, four-legged roommates. During the week, Hannah works as the store manager at the Irving Circle K in Caribou. In the evenings and weekends, she is off the clock, training her dogs while doing service for others in need. With no dog sled races scheduled for 2021, Hannah is keeping her team in tip-top shape and helping to limit the spread of the coronavirus by delivering groceries and medicine to her neighbors in Aroostook County via her dogsled team.

"It worried me a lot when the pandemic started because you could tell people were nervous being out and about. They'd come into the store and just buy milk and eggs. The thing that kick-started this for me was if they're just leaving their house for one or two items, I could just pick up this stuff and then plan the deliveries and save these people the time, but more importantly the exposure," Hannah explained. "This [unusual situation] has given me a lot of purpose."

With her notebook in hand, Hannah started taking grocery requests by phone, text, or through social media. Next, she would map out a route along the state's snowmobile trails that would allow her and her dogs to deliver to as many people as possible.

"What I experienced is families that weren't currently working. So, I'd take money out of my own pocket to buy groceries for them. Sometimes people would pay me once I got to their house or I'd meet them at one of the ITS [Interconnected Trail System] trail openings, where I can bring the dogs right off the main road. I'd tie the dog sled off to a tree, and then I'd wipe everything down with Clorox wipes and have the bags 10 to 15 feet away from the sled, so I could keep a safe distance. I'd have them go through their bags and make sure everything they'd asked for was there," Hannah explained. "A lot of times people would get really emotional and want to give me hugs and handshakes, and I would let them pet my dogs instead, just to keep people safe, and the contact to a minimum. I've been homeless, so I know how it feels to struggle and live in uncertainty. I'm really just happy to help anyone out, however I can."



Photo by Pete Freeman

With requests from as far north as Madawaska and as far south as Bradford, Hannah and her team have sometimes logged close to 75 miles on their delivery days. And almost all their deliveries are to complete strangers.

"With the pandemic, I haven't had a chance to make friends or anything since moving here. The only people I know are my coworkers," she admitted. "I've picked up prescriptions for people and run them out during the night, which works fine for me because I want the dogs to be able to go any time of day. But weekends are easier for me. Last year we were doing eight to



Photo by Brynne Matula

In February of 2020, Hannah placed 14th in the Can-Am Crown International Dog Sled race that was held in Fort Kent. Coming in the middle of the group was exciting for Hannah because she said, “A lot of mushers are using Alaskan Huskies or Eurohounds, which are breeds bred for different speeds. My dogs are all pure-bred Siberian Huskies, so they’re a little more slow and steady, and keep going over long periods of time. I’d like to be more competitive, but they have the superior genetics being able to breed Alaskan Huskies and Whippets.”

Hannah’s dogs are far more than a race team. They are her family. When it’s time to renew her kennel license, Hannah can rattle off each of her dogs’ names and birthdays, just like they were her kids, without looking at their paperwork.

“I hate to say I have a favorite, but I do have a dog that is close to my heart. Her name is Acacia. She’s more calm and collected and laid back. But she has this switch where she’s 100 percent into her work. Anytime we’re out running, she’s in the lead spot, leading my team. Last year, she ran 603 miles just in races for my sled team,” Hannah explained. “Like Acacia, the rest of them are all named after trees because I love nature. I love spending time outside. I think that’s why I love dog sledding so much.”

“The main thing I wanted to do was slow the spread of the virus up here as much as possible, so things could just go back to normal,” she said. “I really like to give the credit to the dogs. They’re pulling all this weight. I’m just the driver. It’s them doing all the work.” •

ten deliveries on Saturday and Sunday. We really try and do as much as we can.”

Customers have been more than grateful for Hannah and her pack of pooches. However, the response she’s received from the mushing community hasn’t been nearly as positive.

“I faced a little bit of backlash from the dog racing and mushing community because people thought I was trying to steal the spotlight away from the sport. They felt animosity towards me,” Hannah shared. “I never expected anything [I was doing] to go viral, but I’m happy to use this little platform I have to advocate for the sport because it is so much fun and a rewarding experience. I just thought me helping the dogs reach their potential and do what they were bred to do, while also helping other people by bringing their groceries to them so they don’t have to possibly get sick, was a win-win.”



COMPASSIONATE CARE & EXPERTISE
24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK

Animal Emergency & Specialty Care
+ Portland Veterinary Specialists
have teamed up to become
Portland Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Care

739 Warren Avenue, Portland PVESC.com 207 878 3121



Encouraging Youth Wellness through Art: JAMIE SYLVESTRI AND THE STAFF OF ARTVAN

BY PAM FERRIS-OLSON

This vehicle is designed to promote change. Since 2004, the ArtVan and its occupants have delivered therapeutic art activities to underserved communities in Sagadahoc, Cumberland, and York counties. The project, conceived and directed by Jamie Sylvestri, rolls up to neighborhoods and invites kids (average age 9 to 12 years) to express themselves through art. The children engage with various materials and discover outlets for healthy self-expression.

Jamie Sylvestri and her ArtVan colleague Bailey Knox are expressive art therapists. Believing in the power of creative energy, they use art projects to help children. Both women hold master's degrees in expressive art therapy from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Both were fine artists before choosing to focus on art therapy. "We have the skill set to support a kid if they want to draw a portrait or a horse," Jamie said. "What is different about the art therapy piece of what we do, as opposed to an art class, is that we are not product-focused. We are process-oriented."

Jamie learned about art therapy while living in New York City during the late 1980s. At the time the Poughkeepsie,

New York, native was trying to establish herself as a professional artist but found it necessary to work three jobs in order to support herself. During one of her subway commutes between her jobs working at a bar, a jeweler, and a Boys and Girls Club, she was intrigued to read an article about art therapy. The young woman decided that's what she wanted to do and attended Lesley to get an advanced degree in art therapy. After graduation, she worked a year in Natick, Massachusetts, before moving to Maine.

In Maine, Jamie worked as an art therapist in the adolescent Psychiatric Unit at St. Mary's Hospital. Once she began having her own children, Jamie transitioned to part-time work which placed her in a variety of settings. She became more aware of the kids in the community who needed her attention—in her words, they were wandering the streets, experimenting with things, and truant from school. When her three children were all in school on a full-time basis, Jamie explored the potential for her to do more for the community's children. In 2002, she participated in the Bath Skate Park Committee, a park envisioned as a place to channel kids' restless energy. The park, originally locat-



ed in the Bath YMCA, didn't serve all kids. Jamie realized that some didn't have an interest in skating, others lacked transportation to get to the park, and there were other impediments. When Bath's Department of Recreation offered Jamie a derelict van, she seized the opportunity and got the ArtVan on the road.

It may not be obvious to the casual visitor, but programs such as ArtVan are sorely needed resources in communities across Maine. The US Census QuickFact data on Bath, for example, identifies that nearly 14 percent of residents live in poverty and that 22 percent of all residents are 18 years old or under. The problems that the community face in a good year were compounded in 2020 by COVID-19. ArtVan offers kids a chance to release pent up feelings, connect with their creativity and imagination, and feel a sense of positive possibilities for themselves. The intent? Greater wellness.

Prior to an art activity, Jamie and Bailey plan a theme for the week's session. One recent theme was, "What's your magic power?" Jalin Coleman found one of hers through her participation in ArtVan. She first became involved while in seventh grade. "ArtVan was a great escape from anxiety and depression," Jalin said. On occasion, she works as a contract artist for the organization. The young artist proudly showed me one of her artistic creations that she had stored on her phone. It was colorful with expressive lines. Jalin hopes someday to express her in a different way. She would like to be a baker specializing in desserts.

Because attendance in ArtVan activities is voluntary, participants can change on a weekly basis; thus, each session begins with a quick assessment to help the art therapists gauge the average age of the group, the group's energy level, and their willingness to engage in the activity. The way a project is presented is tailored and adjusted based on that day's assessment. Jamie's foremost evaluation of success for ArtVan activities is whether a child feels sufficiently safe to engage with the materials and express how they are feeling. The next level for success is whether they can share their feelings with ArtVan staff and other participants.

During the warm weather months, ArtVan activities are held outside. Because of COVID-19, staff used hula hoops, set six feet apart, to create individualized art spaces. In inclement weather, ArtVan has traditionally relied on community centers, but the closure of these centers due to COVID has caused Silvestri to adapt. ArtVan now delivers supplies directly to the kids. Bailey Knox misses the "level of fun and chaos that you have with groups of kids." Although group activities have been curtailed, ArtVan has not, as yet, restricted the number of kids they serve, which is about 2000 kids a year. The costs to provide their service, however, has increased. In group settings, supplies were reused or repurposed. The art bags that ArtVan delivers contain supplies that are not meant to be shared. The annual budget for ArtVan has been less than \$140,000 and covers the salary for two part-time professional art therapists, two other part-time employees, a bookkeeper, and supplies.



Shannon Els, who manages the development and communication functions for ArtVan, observes that art is a powerful tool, one that builds resilience and creative problem solving. Art has been an important element in what has helped support many through the pandemic, such as "theater, books, comedy, painting, sculpting, knitting, etc. Everyone deserves to explore their own creative gifts," she says. The people of ArtVan "offer a safe space to come as you are and create what comes to you naturally."

Jamie Silvestri has no desire to expand the size of her organization. She would, however, gladly share her model with any art therapist who wanted to recreate it for another community. Jamie believes ArtVan is the only art therapy organization in Maine bringing programming directly to those who would benefit. One thing she would change is to have sufficient funds to employ her staff full-time and increase salaries so they are on a par with others in the industry and commensurate with the staff's professional training. Otherwise, Jamie Silvestri believes her group is doing a good job to fill the needs of the community they serve. ArtVan brings clinical expertise in art therapy and provide projects designed to promote "overall human wellness."

For more information: ArtVan's mailing address is 10 State Rd., PMB 272, Bath, ME, 04530. Their website address is artvanprogram.org. Cash and material donations are always appreciated. Materials needed: acrylic paints, oil pastels, colorful card envelopes, card stock, scrapbook paper, paper towel and toilet rolls, and office supplies like printer ink.

Trail Running Clubs Thriving Despite Pandemic

BY SUSAN OLCOTT

Trail running is not for the faint of heart. You can get mucky, have to deal with gnarly footing, and even get lost in the woods. It has often been promoted as a super sport, for those looking to push themselves to go fast and far. But COVID and the related increase in virtual experiences have opened things up in new ways, allowing women across the state to try something new.

Running groups can't exactly gather in larger numbers or hold trail races right now, so they have gotten creative by offering virtual options to connect. The result has been that new runners are participating more than ever. These clubs plan to continue their virtual offerings, even once they're able to gather and race up actual mountains together.

Trail Monster is an organization based in Southern Maine that's been around since 2007. They host group runs and races for men and women throughout the year. Valerie Abradi is a long-time member and organizes the Sunday group runs, among other duties. "When we weren't able to have group



Top: Runners on the Gull Crest Trail in Cape Elizabeth. Photo by Mari Balow

Bottom: At Knight's Pond Preserve in Cumberland. Photo by Kristen Michaud

runs, we still wanted to be connected,” she said. So instead of running together, members posted weekly challenges on their website and sent out trail bingo cards to those interested. They could post pictures of what they found and earn a prize for their efforts.

“Even when we can get together again, we will continue in this way. It was fun to see our members, and also new people try it out,” she says. Trail Monster aims to be as inclusive as possible in their efforts. That includes preventing any economic barriers. As posted on their website, “membership dues are paid in the form of sweat and blood on the trails and are collected on a weekly basis.” Even so, running virtually has provided opportunities for newbies to try it out with no pressure.

This level of encouragement has translated to the few in-person events that Trail Monster has been able to hold during COVID. “We’ve had group runs, with social distancing rules in place, and we stop at every turn and make sure no one is going to be left behind,” says Valerie. “We want to offer a space where anyone can come and run.”

Bradbury Mountain is their home turf and home to a series of trail races known collectively as Bradbury Dirt. But they also hold a different type of event a couple of times a year. These are usually loop runs and aren’t timed like a race. Everyone brings some delicious goodies to share afterwards, and it is more of a social event than a race. “A party that is a run is the perfect combination for running friends,” says Valerie.

Up the coast is Trail Runners of Midcoast Maine (TRoMM), which also hosts regular group runs for their members and organizes an annual trail festival. Founder Emily McDevitt is enthusiastic about the way the organization has shifted during the pandemic. “Our membership has really stepped up,” she says, “When we couldn’t get together for group runs, they dove in and started posting their runs on our Facebook page. Our members realized how much the club meant to them, and now we’ve become much more of a member-driven club.”

Aside from their usual members, Emily says they have definitely seen an increase in interest. “There are more people out on the trails, no doubt. And more new people are posting questions, like ‘What do you do for running in the snow?’ We welcome runners of all abilities,” she adds.

Further up the coast is Emily’s friend, Donna, member of Bold Coast Runners. “We have a pretty different population density up here, so we have still been able to have our weekly group runs in small groups. That’s good because I’m not on social media. I just had my first Zoom meeting last week,” she says laughing.

Several of their members did take part in a virtual event this fall, however, in support of Down East Hospice. “The Cobscook Social Distancing Challenge was a highlight for our club members,” says Donna. They have also seen an increase in their membership, particularly in women. “I think women of a certain age are more aware of staying healthy, but they also want to do the healthy activities with friends,” says Donna.

For those who want a running club that’s just for women, Trail Sisters is all about running with friends. It’s a national



Emily and Donna “ran” the North Traveler Loop plus the Black Cat Mountain loop in Baxter State Park on August 31, 2020. Photo by Jonathan Aretakis

organization that has local chapters throughout the country. Maine’s only Trail Sisters club is in the Greater Portland area. It began in 2018 when Mari Balow decided to start a local chapter. She had known Gina Lucrezi (founder of the national organization) for a while and she says, “I realized this was a great opportunity to help broaden the reach of the organization and get women out on trails in our area.”

The group focuses on the creating connections between its members. “Running for us is a social gathering—a chance to talk to people and not be judged,” says member Kristen Michaud. “It’s a really great confidence builder for women. They can go to a trail they might not know, and they might otherwise be worried they might get injured or lost. But we work together to make it a comfortable, low-stress, low-impact experience,” she adds. Early on in the pandemic, they’d set up Zoom calls with their members to get each other excited to run. Now, they’ve been able to get back on the trail in small groups. “There is definitely increased interest in trail running,” says Mari.

Right now, she is working on getting more people involved that might not have the resources to start running. Mari started a non-profit called the Northeast Runners Alliance in 2019 with the goal of gathering donations of running shoes and gear to give to women who can’t afford it. They’ll also pay for registration for one race each year. “We are aiming to eliminate barriers and increase access to running. My hope is that this will also provide a framework for a more diverse group to feel safe going out to run and have a network of support,” she says.

Breaking into a new sport is never easy. In advance, you might feel you don’t have the right snazzy gear, energy bar, or hydration pack. You might want or need to start with a few miles. You might look at others involved already and see a fit, hearty-looking bunch of trailblazers.

But all of these clubs are full of intrepid, dynamic women who are working to expand the reach of the clubs, in spite of the pandemic—to reach more women across the state of Maine. It is an unexpected opportunity to get more women into a healthy, active sport that fosters confidence and appreciation for the outdoors. •

Three Financially-Savvy Ways to Give to Charity

By Katie Brann, Financial Advisor

As a financial advisor, most of my conversations with clients revolve around their families' goals. These days, however, I'm finding that more and more clients want to discuss charitable giving. They recognize that community and non-profit organizations need help now more than ever, and it's rewarding for both me and my clients to accomplish charitable goals.

There are many ways to be savvy with your own finances while giving to charity. Below are three of my favorites.

Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

This strategy applies to individuals over age 70 ½ who have traditional IRAs. Typically, a distribution from a traditional IRA is considered taxable income. However, up to \$100,000 can be transferred from your IRA directly to a qualified charity annually and is excluded from taxable income. A QCD can be used to satisfy all or part of a required minimum distribution as long as the funds leave the IRA by year-end.

Gift of Appreciated Securities

Before writing a check to your chosen charity, review your non-retirement investment portfolio. If there's a stock or fund that has appreciated in value and would be subject to capital gains tax when sold, consider gifting shares themselves to charity. Capital



Katie Brann

gains tax will not apply on the gift and if you itemize deductions, the gift amount may be deductible, up to applicable IRS limits. Be sure to confirm with the charity ahead of time that they can accept the securities you intend to give.

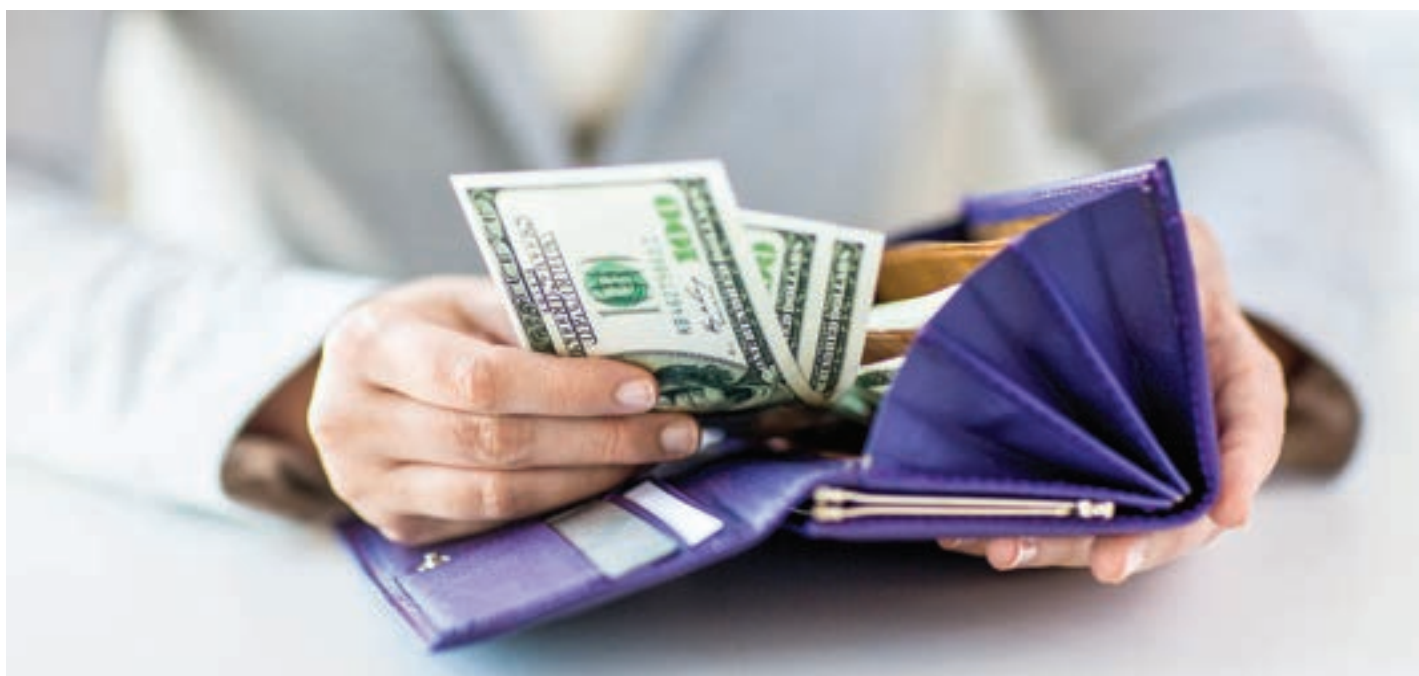
Conversely, if there is a depreciated stock or fund in your portfolio that you no longer wish to own, consider selling that investment for cash and gifting the proceeds to charity. This creates a capital loss that can be used to offset capital gains and ultimately may result in a lower tax bill.

Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)

This option gives you great flexibility to contribute to multiple charities over multiple years. A DAF is funded by a donation of cash and/or securities which can create an immediate tax deduction. Contributions to DAFs are irrevocable, meaning they cannot be returned. Once assets are transferred to the DAF, they have the opportunity to grow tax free, and you as the donor can select the recipient, timing and amount of gifts going forward.

Another tax advantage of a DAF is the ability to "group" deductions into one year. Let's say Mr. and Mrs. Investor give \$15,000 to the Alford Youth & Community Center annually. If they file jointly and take the standard deduction of \$25,100, their gift does not result in a tax deduction. By contributing \$60,000 to a DAF, they now exceed the standard deduction and can benefit from their gifts while having the flexibility to grant \$15,000 from the DAF to the Alford Center each year.

These strategies are not "one size fits all," and a financial advisor can help determine the appropriate strategy for you. I also recommend consulting with a tax professional to evaluate how giving could affect your personal tax situation. •



Maine's Own Chai Wallahs

Leigh Tillman and Ruthie Ellis

Calming and Connecting People, One Cup at a Time

BY LIZ GOTTHELF

When someone sits down with a cup of chai, they're not just grabbing a hot beverage on the way out the door. That cup is part of an experience, whether it's connecting with friends or enjoying a tranquil moment of quiet alone time.

No one understands this phenomenon more than Leigh Tillman and Ruthie Ellis, owners of Chai Wallahs. From their homes in Brooksville and South Portland, Ruthie and Leigh lovingly create chai, combining Assam black tea with a unique blend of spices. (A chai wallah, in Hindi, is someone who makes and sells tea.)

The Maine company Chai Wallahs has grown a fan base of customers who enjoy starting the day or taking a moment of pause with a cup of chai. It is a good beverage to drink at home, while we're home more.

Friends and customers have sent Leigh and Ruthie messages such as "starting my day with you," "feel your warmth as I sip my chai," "putting my feet up and drinking your chai," "my

partner is with the kids, and I am having a moment by myself, drinking your chai," and "it's getting wintery. Time for chai."

Ruthie describes how their tea is consumed and how making the tea is a part of the whole experience: "Using our Organic Assam chai blend of loose-leaf spices, you bring the spices to a boil in water and add milk and honey, then stain, serve, and enjoy!"

To explain chai to someone unfamiliar with it, Ruthie said, "Chai means tea in Hindi. It is a beverage traditionally and widely drunk in India. Chai is a form of usually black tea that is mixed with aromatic spices, such as cinnamon, ginger, carda-





mom, and sometimes black pepper (to add a little kick). Chai has a rich creamy taste made with milk and some kind of sweetener—we suggest local honey. It is served up hot on the streets of India, but it can be enjoyed in so many different ways here in the States. Several local coffee shops in Maine serve our chai on their menus as chai lattes, iced chai—lots of creative ways to make our chai.” It is also used as an ingredient by other Maine companies, in products such as ice cream, mead, kombucha, and cheesecake.

Ruthie and Leigh’s business grew organically, much like their friendship. The two women met in 2008, when Ruthie and her husband came to live on the farm Leigh was caretaking in Brooksville. Leigh had met Ruthie’s husband while doing post-Katrina relief work in New Orleans.

They sold vegetables at farmers markets and began selling tea along with the produce. Not only did they enjoy sharing their tea, but the two women valued and enjoyed the community of people who congregated at their stall.

“I loved experiencing the conversations that would be sparked as people lingered to drink out of small cups,” said Leigh.

Leigh and Ruthie brought their tea to the Common Ground Country Fair in Unity, where it proved popular as well.

The fair is now a fall tradition. With their families in tow, they set up their stand and make thousands and thousands of cups of chai.

“People kept asking us, ‘Where do we get the chai the rest of the year,’” said Leigh.

After years of making cups of tea by eyeballing measurements and serving them at fairs and outdoor markets, the two friends got down to business. They created instructions for customers to make the tea at home and offered the tea blend in 4-ounce, 8-ounce and 1-pound packages. The recipe is influenced by teas the two sampled during trips abroad to India and Africa.

Ingredients are thoughtfully sourced, using fair trade and organic items. The Chai Wallahs team keeps freshness and quality in mind when creating the aromatic blend. Packaging is ecologically sustainable.

A few years ago, *Bon Appetit* listed Chai Wallahs in the category of “The Best Chai You Can Buy.” They described the drink as having “that serious ginger and cardamom punch you’d experience from a cup poured by a vendor in India.”

That same year, Chai Wallahs’ tea was listed on *India.com* as one of “Five American Teas that Will Remind You of Chai from India.”

Chai Wallahs tea has proven to be pop-

ular in Maine, but Leigh and Ruthie also have customers from all over the county. “When we

ask people from across the country how they learned about our tea, more often than not we hear, ‘Oh, you’re my best friend’s favorite chai, so I had to try your tea for myself,’” said Leigh.

The two women have found a way to balance their busy lives and keep their business going, all while living three hours apart from each other. They meet periodically, at a spot midway, usually by the ocean or in the woods. There, with Maine’s beauty at hand, they discuss the future of the business and catch up on life. It’s been a positive journey, and the two say they have learned so much along the way. They want to grow the business sustainably, keeping true to their core values. Looking forward, Ruthie said, “We hope to gather more and more people around cups of tea and continue to offer a product that is earth friendly, mindful of others, and delicious to our customers.”

“It’s been an adventure for our family to be able to have my own business and teach my children all sorts of wonderful things through having my own business,” said Ruthie.



She's found that homeschooling her two boys and running a chai business have blended together quite well in her life. "Our children get to see the underlying of what it takes to run a business. Filling orders, shipping, and weighing spices all can be applied to their everyday learning skills. My boys have been right my side, working eagerly with me since they were little. Wanting to pour cups of tea for others and deliver bags of chai to stores is a part of their lives and learning," said Ruthie.

Leigh also runs a facilitation business and finds mixing spices a nice way to unwind and relax at night. Like Ruthie, running Chai Wallahs is a family affair, with her husband delivering orders to local coffee shops and markets and her three-year-old applying shipping labels.

"It's been right-sized for our lives," she said.

Chai Wallahs tea is sold in retail and bulk at several locations in Maine and is available online at <https://chaiwallahsofmaine.com>.

European Auto Service
AUTOWERKES
Maine

Maine's Premier European Auto Service Facility
The Dealership Alternative

We Confidently Repair Even the Absolute Newest Cars
BMW • Mercedes • Audi • Porsche • Volvo • Mini • VW

US Route 1 Freeport, Maine
www.autowerkesmaine.com
207-865-6600

Servicing Finer European Cars With Personal Regard

DINAN
BOSCH SERVICE

SALLY A. MORRIS

ATTORNEY AT LAW, LLC



Guidance, Dedication & Compassion

I have been both an employment lawyer and have represented nonprofit entities for 25 years.

If you have been harassed or discriminated against, I know you are fighting for your dignity. I listen to you and fight hard to protect your rights.

Maine nonprofits work tirelessly and passionately to fulfill their missions. I am here to stand beside your organization and guide you through policy, compliance and tricky situations.

Six City Center, Suite 300, Portland | 207.558.6161 x109

www.morrisemploymentlaw.com

NABOS: A UNIQUE BOUTIQUE

Making Shopping for Clothes a Positive Experience

BY SUE SMITH



The Nabos staff frequently hears people state a key reason they love the store: because it helps them find clothing that won't be worn by everyone else in town.

In other words, they can find beautiful and unique styles at the shop. But "Nabos"? What does that mean? And what does that have to do with style and fashion?

Amanda Smith's dream, when she graduated as a top-10 student in her class of 1998, was to open a boutique in Kennebunkport. Age of 20, that dream came to fruition when she opened the first Nabos at 7 Ocean Avenue in Kennebunkport.

Where did the name "Nabos" come from? High school Spanish vocabulary had a good ring to it and allowed for a play on words. Nabos actually means "turnips," and the company's slogan became, "What will turn up next?"

To make a long story short, Amanda moved to Bethel, where she opened several iterations of the boutique, finally settling on designing and producing handmade silversmith jewelry (available at AmandaMoranDesigns.com).

The year 2014 brought the new Nabos clothing store in Kennebunkport, just two doors away from the gift shop, where the company first began selling goods for both women and men.

Several years later, Nabos opened another location in the Saco Biddeford Savings Bank building at 266 Main Street. This old building has its original tin ceilings and lots of huge windows, providing a warm, charming environment for folks to shop for brands such as Lulu B, Tribal Fashion, Parkhurst, Vintage Concepts, and more.



This sterling silver satellite necklace by amandamorandesigns.com, founder of Nabos. Each piece is a little different, just like you. Made using a process called reticulation, the surface of the silver is carefully heated and cooled to create a one-of-a-kind texture. This necklace is a sure show-stopper, with no two pieces exactly alike.

Top: The Parkhurst Covi Wrap is perfect for the everyday woman. This one-size-fits-all, cotton-rich shoulder wrap comes with a loop that helps "avoid the struggle," so your wrap never comes undone.

Bottom: This classy camel and black plaid jacket with a hood and large pockets is just right for keeping you looking fashionable while feeling comfortable!



From left: The polka dots in this sweater will brighten your day and show off your fun-loving personality. | This wrap is great for running through the airport on business, taking the kids to the park, or dressing up for that special night out. You can wear it over absolutely anything, from casual jeans to a beautiful evening dress. | LuluB, with UPF 50, is a fabulous choice for all. It looks great on all body types, and comes in a variety of styles and prints.

The Nabos staff offers customers a personalized shopping experience, providing assistance with no pressure to buy anything. They're also happy to make recommendations for accessories.

Look for their handmade, magnetic scarves to perk up an outfit. Or, for jewelry, check out the homemade pieces crafted by Mary, former owner of Visibility in Portland. Her jewelry is reasonably priced and made with quality semi-precious gemstones. Many pieces include beautiful, authentic Swarovski crystals or pearls. It's available both in the store, as well as at nabos.myshopify.com. And customers should not hesitate to ask Mary about the creation of custom pieces.

The Nabos folks offer customers quality items at fair prices in a safe, friendly atmosphere. And that's important.

As businesses have struggled to stay open during the coronavirus pandemic, Nabos has begun offering private shopping appointments and online shopping at nabosinc.com. Items can be shipped, picked up in-store, or delivered to you curbside.

You can also stay connected with their frequent Facebook activity. Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m., you can see Nabos fashion in a Facebook Live event—and you can watch it later, if you miss it.

In these ways, Nabos keeps offering beautiful styles, unique clothing, and a positive, joyful shopping experience. •

**BATH
FITTER®**

**THE BATH YOU'VE
ALWAYS WANTED**
Installed in as little as one day



SAVE
UP TO
\$450*
on a complete
Bath Fitter system

844-943-4471

* Visit our website for conditions and offer details.



"Lemon Slice" *Calibrachoa* will fill containers and hanging baskets to the brim with masses of cheerful yellow blooms.



Spread the cheer with a sunny yellow door like this one, where tops of a metal fence repeat the color for greater impact.



Greet the spring with a bevy of yellow tulips in this year's color of the year. Note this group is blooming next to the colorful and contrasting burgundy foliage of a clematis.

Pantone Chooses Its "Colors of the Year"

Grays and Yellows Can Add Pleasing Tones to Gardens

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LYNETTE L. WALTHER

Color is powerful. It has the ability to energize, encourage, warn, calm, and bring good cheer. Color has been used throughout time to signify such things as privilege and royalty (purple), purity (white), grief and mourning (black), and passion (red). We respond to colors and make good use of them in our everyday lives.

So, it's no coincidence that every year those professional color folks at Pantone come up with an appropriate pair of colors to signify, embolden, and colorize the coming year. Pantone is a company that provides a rainbow of consistent colors for graphic designers, publishers, interior decorators, those in the clothing industry, and others. With its experience, it somehow tests the psychological and commercial "waters" to come up with two coordinating and yet contrasting colors. And this year the people at Pantone have outdone themselves with two colors that match the mood of the entire nation to a T.

The colors for 2021 are a sunny yellow tone, "Illuminating Yellow," and a calming neutral, "Ultimate Gray." We can expect to see these hues two show up to influence fashion, home décor, and yes, even the garden.

Cheerful and perky yellow is often one of the first floral colors we



Gray ghost plant spreads a blanket of soft color. There are many succulents in various shades of gray to use in containers or in the ground.

see each spring as *crocus*, daffodils, and tulips emerge, often through a thinning crust of snow and ice. These harbingers of warmer days are unfailing in their ability to lift spirits.

As days warm and thoughts turn to summer gardens, we might want to employ the yellow color of the year in blooming container mixes or pops of brilliance for in-ground planting schemes. A recent introduction of a unique, sweet, bright yellow cherry tomato, named Yellow Apple, is another way to introduce some yellow into the vegetable plot or perhaps mingle it among ornamentals.

Containers themselves can sport yellow hues to brighten up whatever they contain. Choose glazed ceramic or sturdy plastic, or you can grab a can of spray paint and color your own terracotta or plastic pot in this cheerful yellow.

Beyond containers, another way to add a cheery yellow to the garden is through garden furniture or structures such as trellises, tuteurs, and garden statuary. Or, perhaps go all-out and paint an exterior door yellow to match garden accents or flowers.

When it comes to gray in the garden, some might find themselves at a loss in carrying out this year's color trend. But imagine mixing in touches of gray with the yellow or go all out calm and collected with a selection of silvery-gray plants for a soothing touch. Employ foliage shapes, textures, and growth patterns for contrast and interest.

Think silvery-gray plants such as *Artemisia* with its delicate foliage, the new big-leaved, fuzzy Angel's Wings, or a host of succulents that go ghostly gray. Group them in planters or position them in sunny borders or beds to contrast with and cool down color schemes. Succulents in a range of gray tones can be used for in-ground or container groupings.

Again, that touch of gray can be found in painted garden furniture or accessories of silvery metals, as well as plants. Color-themed gardens are just one of this year's top gardening trends, and when you add the fashionable colors of the year to your garden, you've got a combination that is so 2021. Let's turn on that sunshine for energy, while we stay calm and collected at the same time. •



Subtle contrast of color, form, and texture of gray plants such as this ornamental thistle works magic in the sunny garden.



Garden accents such as substantial containers like this one can deliver a calming dose of gray to any setting.



DELICIOUSLY CHEESY IRISH BOXTY



Photos courtesy Jim Bailey

BY JIM BAILEY, THE YANKEE CHEF

Many people don't realize just how much in common New Englanders have with the Irish, especially when it comes to food. This recipe is one of my favorites, and it would be equally at home here or in Ireland. Boxtys (Irish potato pancakes) are prepared and cooked in many different variations, including some that are puffy and soft. However, being a Yankee, I enjoy this crisp version, for a crisp potato dish with my breakfast.

With the addition of cheddar cheese, I think you will be making this year-round.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup mashed potatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded raw potatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded apple
- 1/2 cup powdered rolled oats*
- 1/4 teaspoon each nutmeg, salt, and black pepper
- 1/2 cup fat-free evaporated milk
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Place all ingredients, except oil and cheese, in a bowl and mix very well; set aside.
- Place oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. When hot, pour half the Boxyty mixture into the skillet, spreading it out to cover bottom of pan.
- Evenly sprinkle cheese over the top. Pour remaining Boxyty mixture over the cheese. Again, spreading it out evenly, covering cheese.
- Reduce heat to medium low, cover and let cook for 6-8 minutes, or until well browned on the underside. Carefully flip over, cover, and continue cooking an additional 6-8 minutes, or until browned on bottom as well.
- Remove from heat, cut into wedges, and serve immediately.

** This ingredient works so much better than the usual flour added to Boxyty, but each are interchangeable. To make powdered rolled oats, simply place oats in a blender or food processor and pulse until it is in powdered form.*

MARCH WINDS

BY SHELAGH TALBOT

It happens most every spring, but this time it was the tail end of a hefty nor'easter with fifty mile-per-hour gusts. The beach near where we lived was a place my 12-year-old daughter and I walked almost every day but, truth to tell, I wasn't sure it was safe to go out anywhere this particular afternoon. The sun peeked in and out of racing clouds, and trees were tousled and bent in the stiff breezes. It looked like it might rain again. She peered out the window and then turned to me with a Cheshire Cat grin on her face.

"I got a great idea, mom," she said conspiratorially. "Stay there!" She ran upstairs and came back in a few minutes with a sheet tucked under her arm, one of sheets with a high thread-count we kept in the linen closet. One of my nice sheets! "We need a tight weave, mom," she said, reading my mind. "Otherwise we won't be able to fly." Fly? I thought. Gulp!

But, as they say, nothing ventured, nothing gained, so off to the beach we went, a wide wonderful beach near Cape Cod. The huge waves rolled in and hurled themselves on the sand, spraying water high over neighboring jetties. The clouds darkened, and we could feel dampness in the air still. I was still nervous. What if we get blown out to sea? What if we fall and really hurt ourselves?

"How did you come up with this goofy idea?" I asked. She laughed and said she had tried it with one of her friends once and it was such fun she wanted to try it with me. "Don't be afraid!" she scolded, noting the wind was a good deal stronger than her first foray. "It'll be great," she laughed again. I took a deep breath. With a shiver in my belly, I was game.

"Now you grab two corners, and I'll do the same," she yelled over the wind. She grinned encouragement to me as we unfurled the sheet. We held it as tight as possible between us, as we kind of crab-walked down the beach. The sheet became a sail filled with air, and in no time the crab-walking turned into crab-leaping. Soon we went vaulting down the beach, sometimes falling, but always getting up and trying again. It was a hoot! I laughed 'til my sides hurt and so did she. A few other brave souls had ventured on the beach to watch the waves. We could see some of them pointing and laughing, which only encouraged us all the more.

Finally after about an hour or so, we shook the sheet off, de-sanded ourselves as best we could, and breathless from the fun and exertion, headed toward the car. While we sat and tried to slow our breathing, my daughter turned to me and said, "That was the bravest and *fun*-est thing we've ever done together!"

"I couldn't agree more," I panted. I still hadn't caught my breath. "It felt like flying, didn't it?"

"Yes, it did," she agreed. "I was a little afraid at times too. That wind was strong!"

"Sometimes it's fun to do something a little bit scary just to test ourselves," I offered.

"You're right, Mom," she said. "That's why I like scary movies, too."

"Not me!" I grimaced. "Sheet-sailing down the beach is just scary enough for me!"

After that episode, we went as often as we could, picking those windy days and sometimes inviting friends to join us, which only added to the fun. It is one of the best and most vivid memories ever for the two of us. And it cost nothing but time and laughter. Oh . . . and one high thread-count sheet. •

QUESTIONABLE ADVICE

BY L.C. VAN SAVAGE

My daughter has an upcoming birthday, and my husband won't stop dropping hints about her gift. I'm trying to keep it a surprise, and he's going to spoil it for her. But he's having so much fun with it that I'd hate to ask him to stop. Is there a compromise here?

—Susan

Hey, your husband has a right to have fun too, but he has to be told, Susan—told—that he's taking a lot of the shine and glitter away from your daughter's day by dropping hints about the upcoming surprise. That it's her special day, not his, and it will be forever wrecked if she knows what the surprise is ahead of the surprise.

My mother is widowed and lives alone. She's terrified of everything COVID-related. I'm relieved that she's following guidelines and wearing a mask when necessary, but she's so isolated. She never sees friends (even outdoors) or gets everything delivered. She is even scared of getting vaccinated. This extreme approach can't be healthy, can it?

—Jeri

Well, everyone handles their terrors in their own way, and this approach is how your mother is handling hers. But what's odd is that many of these people who are "so scared" of COVID ask people to run errands and do shopping for them. So, it's OK for these obliging people to be at risk, but not your mother? Hmmm. There are great therapists out there who can help her on Zoom. Being cautious and prudent and smart about COVID is essential, but not wanting to be vaccinated? The one sort of cure for all this? What's that all about? If she can be made to feel safe after being vaccinated, why then won't she do it? Who gets to care for her when and if she catches the dreaded virus? Why and from what is she hiding, and is it fun for her? Therapy has all the answers.

Should you kill spiders and other creepy-crawlies, or carry them out of the house? My boyfriend always relocates them, but I'm convinced they'll just come back in!

—Loni

Wrong person to ask. We are a no-kill family. Lives are spared here. Creepy-crawlies are tossed into the basement during the winter months and out into the yard in the warm months. Every single creature on this planet is here for a purpose—yes, even us—and none of us has the right to kill anything alive. OK, except for a few exceptions: mosquitoes; anything that's fixing to bite, poison, or sting us to oblivion; anything with large teeth swimming toward us in the ocean with lunch on its mind. Multiples of bugs in our beds or clothing must die, of course, and rodents get re-homed or given to zoos to feed the inmates. I do not pick up anything in my hands because I am unsure of their biting skills, but big plastic wine glasses with pieces of cardboard are in all our rooms so if pests come here, they are quickly escorted away with respect.

I'm 28, and I have known my boyfriend for two years. When we met, he told me he was a year older than me. Now, after all this time, he has finally come clean that he is actually three years younger than me. It is not a huge deal, but it feels like a huge deal. Am I overreacting?

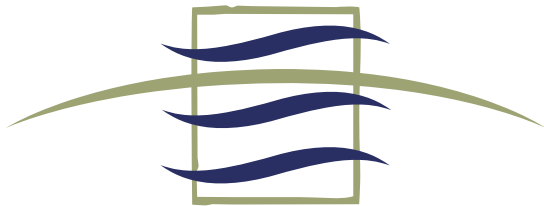
—Morgan

No, Morgan you're not overreacting at all. It is a huge deal. When you've confronted him about this revelation, he probably said woosie things like, "Oh, I thought you wouldn't go out with me if you knew I was younger, and I was sooo in love with you the minute I saw you." Eww. Old saying: "If you always tell the truth, you never have to remember anything." If he's starting out the relationship with this lie and gets away with it, even if for a while, he'll likely keep on enjoying being The Lyin' King. Go shopping. Males being younger than females as potential mates is no big deal anymore, and there are good men out there who don't lie.

Safely Together & Vaccinated!

At Northbridge Communities, our residents are among the first in New England to receive the vaccine.

Join us today!



Northbridge
Communities

Count on us:

- Exceptional quality of care
- The highest standards of cleanliness
 - Fabulous dining options
- Engaging & safe social programs
 - Beautiful surroundings

Independent Living • Assisted Living • Avita Memory Care

Find a Northbridge community near you:

Brunswick

Avita of Brunswick
Sunnybrook

Hallowell

Granite Hill Estates

Wells

Avita of Wells

Westbrook

Avita of Stroudwater
Stroudwater Lodge

Visit online: NorthbridgeMaine.com



The Healing Community

MEDCo

The MEDCo

High Toddy

What You'll Need.....

- 3 oz MEDCo Classic Lemon-Aid
- 1.5 oz Black Tea
- Squeeze of Fresh Orange Juice
- A Dash of Cinnamon
- Honey to Taste

Directions.....

- Add All Ingredients to a Shaker
- Shake Well
- Garnish With Star Anise and a Cinnamon Stick

*Serve Warm or Chilled



741 MAIN ST - 40 LISBON ST

CRAFT CANNABIS | ARTISANAL EXTRACTS | INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

thcMEDCo.com | 1-866-42-MEDCo | Open Everyday 9am - 9pm