

MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2021

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Photo courtesy of Gretchen Evans

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The nonprofit organization benefits and assists post-9/11 veterans who have been injured in active duty or as a result of their service.

50 ALEX SERRA

Spinning experience into public affairs leadership.

Cover photo by Jason Paige Smith

39 MAINE'S FALLEN WOMEN VETERANS



This month we celebrate all veterans. We are especially honored to learn about the organizations in Maine that create safe havens for veterans.

I encourage you all to read the amazing story of Gretchen Evans, a true Maine hero.

I am amazed at how these women give back. They have done their service and then spend their lives helping and caring for other women veterans.

They have truly learned it is the giving that pays them back for all their sacrifice. I also interviewed the women who run the Travis Mills Foundation here in Maine. These are women who spend their time making a difference for veterans all over the country who come to Maine to heal physical wounds, and wounds of their hearts and minds.

I honor the dedication of these organizations and the strength of so many to give back. The lesson in life is that it is giving back that truly seems to be the healer.

There is no medicine like kindness and caring for another.

“Courage, sacrifice, determination, commitment, toughness, heart, talent, guts. That’s what little girls are made of; the heck with sugar and spice.”

—Bethany Hamilton

*Much love,
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

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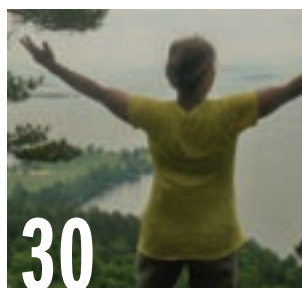
AUTHOR GIGI GEORGES

Publishing *Downeast: Five Maine Girls and the Unseen Story of Rural America*.



A LIFELONG COMMITMENT

Portland art gallery SPEEDWELL aims to create lasting legacy for women artists.



WILD WOMAN

The Maine wilderness is a place of beauty and peace and Lew-Ellyn Hughes's favorite place to be.



MAINE WOMEN AND WAR

This article is reprinted with much appreciation to the Maine Historical Society.



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

The organization's story is as vast as the acres it takes to produce the wreaths.



WOMEN VETERAN'S GLAMPING

Nichole Jordan founded this group for women vets to meet each other in a safe environment.



PATRICIA SCHIMPF

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| LETTERS TO THE EDITOR |

I find *Maine Women Magazine* to be my very favorite magazine to read.

The stories are all so different and each one makes me look forward to another.

I live in California, but have visited Maine. I just love the people in Maine, and your magazine keeps this fun and exciting people in my view. *Cabin Masters* story was so fun to read. I really love the show. Thank you.

—Jeannie, California

My favorite recent series was your interviews with the fascinating and most talented ladies of Damariscotta! What a great group of women!

—Linda, Brunswick

I really loved the story on Edwin O’Shea. I have read it twice and it just makes me so happy. Please thank Mary Frances for me.

—Joan, Portland

Love this whole [September] issue! Fans of *Cabin Masters*, sister went to Westbrook Jr College and my wedding reception was there, visited Cellardoor on Route 1, watch 207 religiously, etc. Great job!

—Judi S, Scarborough, via Facebook

MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

| CONTRIBUTORS |

Annika Earley is an artist who works in drawing, print, and sound. She is the managing director of SPEEDWELL in Portland. She makes multidisciplinary work about transformation, in-between states, and the experience of being a woman.



Lew-Ellyn Hughes is an award-winning columnist and author. Her column *Away with Words* is an eight-time winner in the Maine Press Association’s Better Newspaper Contest. She writes nonfiction stories about the people, places, and lifestyle of rural 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.



Joy Hollowell is the co-anchor of the WABI TV 5 Morning News as well as a reporter for the station. Additionally, she is an adjunct instructor at Husson University’s New England School of Communications.



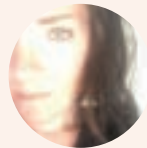
Avery Hunt spent 30 years in New York City in publishing, and has worked both as an award-winning journalist for *Newsday*, and a magazine executive for *Newsweek*, *Business Week*, *Esquire*, among others. She has also written for major magazines and newspapers. In 2001, she and her husband, now deceased,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



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



Sarah Holman is a writer living in Portland. She grew up in rural Maine and holds a BFA from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Sarah is enthusiastic about coffee, thrift shop treasures, and old houses in need of saving.



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POSTCARD FROM HOLLY

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 "postcard" by satellite from the South Pacific, to the readers of Maine Women Magazine.

It's been a while since I saw my folks, so I'm really excited that they landed in Papeete, Tahiti last month. They have British friends who needed their 43-foot Hans Christian sailboat looked after for a month, so they volunteered. I'll be sailing the 300 miles to get there and cruise with them!

We plan to meet in Rainbow Bay on Tahiti Iti. It's all so exciting—I can hardly believe my mom and dad finally made it here!

I heard from them shortly after their first night on the boat. It was in a marina, but they planned to move out to a more secluded anchorage after stock-



ing up on provisions. We are all looking forward to spending a whole month cruising the Society Islands (which are the Tahitian Islands) together. •



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INNA SWINTON

“Momager” to the stars

BY SHEILA D. GRANT

As a successful lawyer, author, and actor, Inna Swinton would be impressive in her own right. Add to that raising and wrangling three children with performing careers, and, well, life just gets crazy!

Inna, also known as Inna Idelchik Swinton, along with husband Rolfe Swinton and their three children, Ava, Alexa, and Maxim Swinton, discovered Piscataquis County, Maine during summer, 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic seemed to be everywhere.

“It was really a happy accident,” Inna recalled. “I’ve always loved Maine. I spent some time there, before I had kids, on Mt. Desert Island and at Acadia National Park. During the pandemic, we weren’t sure where to go. [With COVID travel restrictions] we found ourselves with very few options, so I said, ‘How about we go to Maine?’ My husband and Alexa started researching and found Piscataquis County. We wanted to get away somewhere quiet.”

The family fell in love with Sebec Lake, the farmland, farmer’s markets, hiking, biking, and fresh blueberries! They returned again for several weeks this summer.

“It allowed us time as a family,” Inna said. “Before the pandemic, I was literally driving into New York City twice a day, sometimes three times, going for one child, then another, going for my standup comedy act in the evening. The



Alexa, Ava, and Inna, with Maxim in the foreground, at Sebec Lake in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine, this summer. Photo courtesy of Inna Swinton

pandemic really helped us to reorganize, but I’d have to say I’m not sure it’s lasting, so that’s why we still need Maine. We’ve only been home for a few days and I’m already thinking ‘We need to go back!’”

A FAMILY FULL OF TALENT

Life for the Swintons, who reside in Bergen County, NJ, is hectic. Rolfe is an entrepreneur in technology, data, media, and entertainment startups, and helps Inna manage the family’s calendars and communications, as well.

Inna coaches all three kids for auditions and performances, and, because they are minors, must stay on set when they are working.

Ava, 14, who appeared in *You, Me and My Purple Docs*, *The Early Night Show with Joshua Turchin*, and *Ultimate Vocal Music Summit*, all in 2020, is interested in music and musical theater.

“Ava is very musical,” said Inna. “She also did some acting, but for her, music is something with which she really connected. Ava taught herself guitar during the pandemic and plays cello and piano.”

The end of summer saw Inna helping Ava prepare for entrance exams to a very selective performing arts high school. “She sang for her audition, and she’s doing a musical theater program.”

Alexa, 12, is an experienced actor and also a singer/songwriter. She starred in *Sometime Other Than Now*

opposite Donal Logue and Kate Walsh. She played opposite Paul Giamatti and Maggie Siff in all five seasons of Showtime’s *Billions*. In 2019-2020, she played the role of Piper on ABC’s *Emergence*. These days, she’s in NYC often, filming her role as Charlotte’s daughter, Rose Goldenblatt, in the *Sex and the City* reboot, *And Just Like That*.

Alexa also has a role in the M. Night Shyamalan thriller, *Old*. The family attended the screening of *Old* at the Center Theatre in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine, during their vacation. Alexa and



Inna performing stand-up at the Broadway Comedy Club in New York City. Photo courtesy of Inna Swinton

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Clockwise from top left: Infant Inna with her parents in the Soviet Union; a later photo of Inna as a child; and Inna, far left, in a traditional Russian head scarf, singing a traditional Russian song with her children's performing group in Riga, Latvia. Photos courtesy of Inna Swinton

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Inna took questions from the audience, and Alexa posed for photos with fans.

Maxim, 9, has great acting credits already, but was nursing a disappointment over the summer. An actor, singer, and stand-up comedian who can be seen on the Netflix series *Halston*, where he plays Young Roy Halston, Maxim was set to star in a new Jimmy Kimmel production, but the network only picked up two new fall series this year, and his was not one of them.

His role as a Russian orphan in the proposed comedy, *Adopted*, was not a huge stretch, as Inna immigrated from Riga, Latvia, when she was 8 years old, and the family speaks fluent Russian.

Inna also mentors Maxim in comedy and the two of them write together. Last year, Maxim, the only child to compete, won the Palm Springs International Comedy Festival.

INNA'S JOURNEY

Even as a young child in Riga, Inna wanted to be an actor. "One of my very first memories, I was 4 or 5, and one play was all about the vegetable garden, and probably, being in the Soviet Union, about collective farming. I was one of the narrators – there were two, a boy and a girl."

When Inna came to the U.S., she barely spoke English. She learned some words watching cartoons.

“And I would always read voraciously, so pretty soon I went from reading Russian to reading English.”

After only six months in this country, Inna went off to summer camp, performing in a show there despite language barriers. Another summer, she got the role of the wicked witch in the summer camp production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

As Inna grew up, acting seemed a less attainable goal. As hardworking immigrants, Inna’s parents could only see the financial pitfalls of such a career. Inna, now an American citizen, attended Yale University and NYU Law School. She got a job with a large law firm, “but I never really gave up my dream of acting, so while I was working at the law firm, I started acting again. I got an agent. I did pretty well.”

Inna has often played the role of a Chekovian heroine. She has appeared on the television series *Law & Order*, worked with the Barrow Group, and at Ensemble Studio Theater.

She writes and performs standup in NYC clubs [or did, before the pandemic] including *Dangerfield’s*, *Gotham Comedy*, *Eastville*, and *Broadway Company*.

Inna’s Off-Broadway festival play, *Kooky Spook*, is being turned into a short film. Her short play, *The Part*, won Best Play at the Strawberry One Act Festival. Inna has also written a novel, *The Many Loves of Mila*.

Inna practices with the kids before every audition, and there are many auditions, but she makes it fun. “We get hot chocolate after. It’s not just about the audition. It’s about spending time with my kids, as well,” she said. “I read to my kids every single night for the first ten years of their lives, and that’s acting, too.”

Inna must always keep balance in mind. Balance between her career and those of her children. Balance between three talented siblings with varied interests and levels of professional success. Balance between being actors and just being kids. The kids attend regular school and do lots of regular-kid activities.

“I always make sure they have so



Top: Maxim, Alexa, Ava, Inna, and Rolfe Swinton biking in Norway during a family vacation. Bottom: Alexa, Inna, and Inna’s father on the set of the ABC series *Emergence*, in which Alexa plays the role of Piper. Photos courtesy of Inna Swinton

much more in life than acting,” Inna said. “When we were in Maine, Maxim and Alexa built this massive Lego Ferris Wheel! Alexa does tennis and loves gaming design. Maxim does coding. Ava plays guitar and does rowing.”

The balancing act would not be possible without the support of her husband, and her parents, who help drive the kids to their various activities, she said.

Inna is currently working on a screenplay. “My character is a professional mom who realizes that she’s putting so much

energy into her children that she needs to ‘go for it’ herself, not necessarily just acting, but acting, writing – something – before it’s too late! It’s a comedy based on my life,” said Inna. “Well, maybe a dra-medey, because of those issues: what is your purpose, how to do it all or be okay with not doing it all. I think these issues are universal – and many Momagers, and Dadagers, and all people out there must wrestle with these questions. Who am I with and without my children, and how do I have agency and make my own way?” •



Mary with a beautiful whirligig she created.

Photo by Shelagh Talbot

LIVING WELL

Mary Hunter, the Volunteer Queen

BY SHELAGH TALBOT

Mary Hunter is closing in on her 100th birthday, but she has a soft voice most times, and appears almost shy as a child. In addition, she is gifted with a marvelous laugh and very sharp mind. She's not afraid of making a point when she tells a story. Her lifelong goal continues – that of understanding new things. She ties that in with volunteering her time to others.

“I always want to keep learning, and I like to help,” she said. Mary was born in 1923 at the family home in Athens, Georgia, where racism and difficulties for black folks were an everyday occurrence. Her own father was treated like a slave when he grew up – making the freedoms of everyday life all the more precious in his eyes. He never learned to read or write until much later in life. But he believed that his daughters were entitled to an education as much as his sons were. Not that education was an easy thing in those times.

Mary recalls taking her younger sister Catherine to school with her.

“She was only 4 or 5 years old, and my job was to watch her,” Mary said. “So, if I wanted to go to school, she came, too.” Catherine had a keen mind and because she was very young, Mary had to admonish her to be “grown up” and very quiet. Little Catherine absorbed learning like a sponge and was only 15 when she graduated from Athens High and Industrial School. Mary, always protective of her, was delighted and proud.

Catherine followed her dreams and went on to be a beautician despite her young age. Then, she unfortunately contracted tuberculosis and did not survive. Mary was devastated, as Catherine was more like her heart-twin than just a sister. She resolved to do right by her sibling and vowed to keep learning and volunteering always throughout her life.

Throughout her marriage she never forgot that determination. It may have been difficult for her rather old-fashioned husband, John, who was 15 years her senior and a widower when they met. He already had three young children, Charles, Mary, and Jeanette. Mary was a plucky sort, however, and she adored her instant family. After they married (on Christmas Day), they added to their brood with a son, Tillman. They fostered a child, Janet, as well. However, Mary and John were both concerned about living in a city (Bangor), so the young family moved to Winterport, Maine in 1955. They wanted to be free from city troubles and have their own home.

“We really wanted to give the kids a better option than just playing on city sidewalks,” Mary noted.

They found just the place, an old 1700s structure on a hilltop with acreage enough for gardens and animals, including a cow. Her children had plenty of room to romp and everyone had chores to do. Each child thoroughly absorbed Mary's inquisitiveness and love of learning on their farm. As an example, Jeanette, who had excelled and graduated from Husson College, was asked to be secretary to Margaret Chase Smith, Maine's first female senator.

During the family's years at Coles Corner in Winterport, Mary was always busy with projects. She made shutters for her home using old mattress slats. She was very fond of rocks

and decided to create a rock exterior on this first house. The work she put in was extraordinary and time-consuming, but you would never know that under all those rocks was old clapboard siding. Later on, her family donated some of the stones from that property to Hampden Academy high school for the base of the rearing mustang statue created by Forest Hart. Their names are imprinted on a bronze plaque attached to the base.

After their children were grown, Mary and John needed to downsize and moved back to Bangor, but she remembers that first home fondly.

“I have a lot of happy memories of our 38 years in Winterport,” she noted. “I could easily go back in time and start it all over again!”

Once in Bangor, Mary continued to learn new things. John tried, unsuccessfully, to put his foot down when Mary decided she would like to learn to play the trumpet. She had been able to borrow one from a couple of sources and took lessons. She had a friend named Bessie Shafer who, much to her husband’s disgust, gave Mary instruction on the trumpet and loaned her one to practice on.

“I love the sound of a trumpet!” Mary exclaimed. “But I wasn’t able to get one of my own at the time.” One of the trumpets she borrowed was covered in a beautiful silver filagree. She remembers polishing it up until it shone before she returned it. Finally, after carefully saving she was able to purchase one all for herself.

In addition, when in her 50s, she entered a pie-eating contest in Bangor and won! Mary is a tiny person, which makes this feat even greater! She won a ten-speed bicycle, and it made getting around much easier.

“I was always taking classes, so I was able to get to school with that nice new bike,” she grinned.

With her children grown, Mary decided it was time to volunteer her services. She worked with a couple of Bangor Groups initially—the Good Sam Boomba Band (which morphed into The Good Sam Club Band) and the entertainment group, Scalawags. The Scalawags traveled to many nursing homes through Maine.



Mary’s stone house in Winterport circa 1957. *Photo courtesy of Mary Hunter*



Family gathering in Athens, Georgia. Mary is in middle row at the far right. *Photo courtesy of Mary Hunter*

Mary remains a member of the Bangor Toastmaster’s club, which was chartered in 1951. Toastmaster’s is an international organization dedicated to helping members grow and develop leadership and public speaking skills. Mary holds memberships with several local chapters of the organization.

She even found time to write a book for children and published the delightful tale,

Woodchucks in the Peas. Incorporated in the book were word pronunciations and a good lesson—“When problems are present go to the person or persons face-to-face,” she wrote at the end.

“Making people happy just makes me happy,” Mary observed. It wasn’t long before she signed up for additional, more serious things, providing hospice and working in nursing homes as an

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Mary showing chicks at a nursing home. Photo courtesy of Mary Hunter



Mary playing cornet. Photo courtesy of Mary Hunter

activity director. She racked up thousands and thousands of hours as a volunteer and began to be recognized for it. She's traveled to Augusta to receive awards many times. Governors of Maine have saluted her service with certificates, and she's even received presents and written praise from former U.S. President Barak Obama.

Nowadays, Mary's daughter Janet, with whom she lives, works for a local elementary school in Maine. The rest of the family has scattered. Charles is in Toronto, Ontario, Tillman is in California, daughter Mary is in Connecticut, and Jeanette lives in Maryland. Mary, though, is still busy with volunteering. She lives close enough to dedicate her time to the Island Nursing Home on Deer Isle a few times a week. Besides checking in on the residents, her hands are always busy creating. She has taught craft work for years and her designs are amazing. Over the years, she has created hundreds of beautiful scarves, potholders, hats, and doilies to raise money for organizations and nursing homes. There's no sign of her slowing down, either. •



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Clockwise from top left: Gigi as a child with her mother, Mary; a recent photo of Mary and Gigi; and Gigi introducing her mother, Mary, to Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. Photos courtesy of Gigi Georges

Author Gigi Georges devotes five years of research to penning *Downeast: Five Maine Girls and the Unseen Story of Rural America*

BY MARY FRANCES BARSTOW

In her new book, *Downeast: Five Maine Girls and the Unseen Story of Rural America*, Gigi Georges follows five girls as they come of age in Washington County, one of the most isolated regions of New England. The daughter of a Greek immigrant, Gigi worked at the White House and later as Senator Hillary Clinton's chief of staff, before moving to Maine and spending nearly five years writing her uplifting book, which takes on the "downbeat message" about rural America being a place of "hopelessness and despair."

MARY: So, tell us about yourself, Gigi.

GIGI: Most recently I am the author of a non-fiction book called *Downeast: Five Maine Girls and the Unseen Story of Rural America*, and I have a long background in policy, politics, and academia.

MARY: Did you grow up in Maine?

GIGI: We have a home now in Maine, but I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, in a big Greek immigrant family. And much to their surprise, I landed a job in the White House and then came back to New York to continue my work.

MARY: Wait a minute. How did you land a job in the White House?

GIGI: I had worked for a number of years in politics and policy in New York, mostly around education issues and then earned my master's degree at Princeton at the School of Public and International Affairs.

MARY: You must have had great grades in school.

GIGI: I did. You know what I had most of all? I had parents and a family who really, really cared about education. My mom was an immigrant from Greece when she was 14. It's that kind of story, right?

MARY: I've always noticed that people who are immigrants make things happen. They understand the great opportunities in our culture.

GIGI: It's so true. And that was very much the case for me and my brother and sister growing up. And so, I earned my degree, and I had worked in politics, particularly around the Clinton presidential election in 1996. So, I had an opportunity to work for the National Economic Council's director in the White House during the second term of the Clinton administration.

It was a wonderful experience and I got to know First Lady Hillary Clinton, so when she ran for senate in 2000, she asked if I would come back up to New York to help with the campaign.

I ended up being her New York chief of staff when she was elected. So, I have this past in politics, but I honestly, Mary, I always wanted to write something. And it wasn't until I came upon communities in Washington County that I knew this was the book I was meant to write.

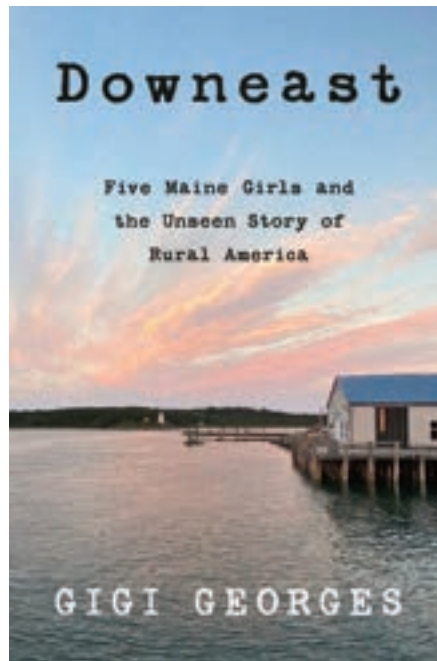
MARY: Let me ask you something first. I don't know how old you are, but I'm curious. You have one child, but you were not married at the time you worked for Hillary?

GIGI: I was not married and that's a very insightful question, and I think I know where you may be going. I married in 2007

at a relatively later age, so I had my daughter at a later age as well, and we could have a whole other conversation about that, about the demands on women in fields like politics, and the way in which we end up making choices, right?

MARY: Exactly. And you made those choices?

GIGI: I always wanted to get married and have a family. I think it was a matter of not meeting that person. When I did



meet my husband, Jeff, it was meant to be, because I found a wonderful man who is a fabulous father and my partner in every respect.

MARY: That's wonderful. You just forget about yourself somewhere along the line, right?

GIGI: True. Well said.

MARY: So, you met your husband, and you had a child. Now, how did you get to Maine?

GIGI: So, about 15 years ago, my husband and I were living in Manhattan, and we made the decision to leave the city and move to northern New England. Jeff had bought a place in Southwest Harbor, a small place, and had fallen in love with Maine.

MARY: I've got to back up a little bit. How did you meet your husband?

GIGI: We met through a mutual friend who thought we would hit it off and she was absolutely right. We met in Manhattan.

MARY: And you had jobs that accommodated a move north?

GIGI: Yes. I was completing my Ph.D. in New York and had an opportunity to do a fellowship at the Kennedy School, which enabled us to move north. My husband works for a firm that allows him to live anywhere.

MARY: How perfect.

GIGI: We were very fortunate.

MARY: Who comes into my mind is your mom. What a gift to her to come to this country and have her daughter be so successful. She must be so proud.

GIGI: My mom and I have always had such a close relationship and continue to, to this day, and it is wonderful that she had her own journey and then to be a part of mine.

MARY: Oh, it's so wonderful. What does a 14-year-old girl from Greece think about coming to this country and then having a daughter like you who is so successful. Her joy and her pride must be wonderful!

GIGI: Yeah, and I talk a little bit about that in the prologue to the book.

MARY: So, tell me what inspired this book?

GIGI: It goes back to my own personal history. I had spent so much time thinking about urban issues, working in urban places, and then the change of our family life to more rural places made me step back.

In the context of raising our daughter, I started to see things

in rural living that seemed different from what we keep hearing, which was the downbeat message about rural America being a place of hopelessness and despair.

I had this moment when I said, "I just want to dig deeper," so I reached out to a dear friend of ours, Reverend Scott Planting, who at that time ... now five years ago ... was running the Maine Seacoast Mission, which works with families and young people in Washington County, and on the remote islands.

MARY: So interesting.

GIGI: He said, "If you're interested in these issues, just get in the car, take an hour's drive north of Southwest Harbor and what you'll find may surprise you." And he was right, and that started me on the road. He introduced me to the school superintendent and the principal of a local high school in Washington County. And they, in turn, allowed me to sit down with a bunch of students there, and out of those conversations, I got this idea for the book that eventually became *Downeast*.

MARY: Wonderful. And then you sent your manuscript to publishers?

GIGI: We found strong interest from a number of publishers, and ultimately felt that there was a great fit with HarperCollins and their editor, Gail Winston.

MARY: What did you find when you met with the students?

GIGI: First of all, just for the context, Washington County is remote, geographically isolated, there is a lot of poverty, and there are unfortunately many challenges with opioid addiction and other aspects of life.

However, what I found was incredible love for 'Downeast,' where they were growing up, and optimism about their future. And in particular, what I found was that the girls were excellent and, in many ways, surpassing the boys in almost every respect ... academics, athletics, extracurricular pursuits, and in leadership at the school and in the community.

When I saw that, I knew that the story I needed to tell was the story of growing up in Downeast Washington County from the perspective of these young women.

MARY: It's so absolutely great. And you're so right.

GIGI: They're remarkable, really. I mean these young women are extraordinary.

MARY: Did you follow certain girls in the book?

GIGI: I did. Out of the conversations I had with a few dozen students, and I landed on five young women whose stories I saw as exemplifying life in rural Maine.

So, I spent four years hanging out with these five young women, and got to know their families, their friends, their



Gigi with her daughter, Margaux, in front of their Maine home. *Photo courtesy of Gigi Georges*

mentors, their teachers. Out of that experience, I was able to tell their story in an intimate way, but one that I also think is representative, of the young female experience in rural places.

MARY: Kudos to you for getting so real with your writing and talking to these girls. How many years has it been since you started interviewing them?

GIGI: I started in 2016, and it was a five-year endeavor. I finished up in the midst of COVID, essentially.

MARY: Now, how old were they when you started this?

GIGI: The youngest was 16, and the oldest was 19. Right now, they're in their early twenties, all of them.

MARY: How are they doing?

GIGI: They're doing great and I'm happy, too. If it's helpful to you, Mary, I can give you a thumbnail of each of the girls, or I can talk about a couple of the girls.

I gave all of them pseudonyms, and the reason we did that was to give them full control over whether or not they wanted to reveal who they are. One young woman who goes by Willow had a very tough childhood. There was substance abuse and

physical abuse in the house and she moved seven times before she was eight.

MARY: Oh, Lord.

GIGI: Yeah, very tough, but her story is a great story and it's an inspiring story because Willow is not a victim.

MARY: How is Willow today?

GIGI: She's great. I actually visited with her and her fiancé last week. She's getting her business degree. She's working on the wharf for a local lobster company where she's worked since high school, and she loves living Downeast and she's doing really well.

MARY: So, the book gets written, and it gets published. Now, tell me the story of that.

GIGI: So, I published the book in the end of May, after reporting and writing for those five years, and since then, I have been doing book talks and talking to media and talking to folks about the book and the thing that I'm most gratified by is that many folks in the community itself have reached out with such wonderful response. And that, to me, is so gratifying!

MARY: Are sales going well?

GIGI: They are. I'm very pleased. One of the things that is really nice to see is that there is strong interest in Maine, and also interest in other parts of the country. I have heard from readers from other rural places who appreciate the book, particularly female readers, who have said, "This book really resonated with me."

It's an optimistic and hopeful book that recognizes the challenges that women and others in rural America face. But it also says that there is something really special going on in rural America, and that the communities are incredibly strong. The social capital is tremendous and when someone needs help in the community, the rest of the community bands together.

MARY: You grew up in Brooklyn, in a Greek neighborhood, correct?

GIGI: Yes.

MARY: So, you almost had rural America in Brooklyn, with everybody depending on each other. How do you compare the two?

GIGI: Oh, you've just hit it perfectly, Mary. In fact, I write in the prologue about this very phenomenon. Even though the experience of the women I met in Washington County on its face seemed foreign to my own upbringing, in many ways that matter, they're very much alike. That strength of community that I had in Brooklyn was very much the same as what I saw in these towns of Milbridge and Harrington and Cherryfield and the surrounding towns in Washington County. It was such an 'aha' moment for me.

MARY: That connection. It's everything. It certainly molds one's whole existence.

GIGI: And I spent years living in Manhattan and I enjoyed that life,

but you could live in a high rise in Manhattan or Queens and not know your neighbors.

MARY: Community is everything.

GIGI: Yes, the broader message is about that, is about wherever you live that these elements are tremendously important. And when these kids who live in Washington County and other rural places see themselves reflected by a downbeat narrative that says that in order to succeed, they have to escape? That message is doing a disservice to them.

MARY: I can't agree with you more.

GIGI: Right. And there are so many young people who want to stay and build in these communities, and they are making a choice to do so.

MARY: Now, do you have a "next book" that you're working on?

GIGI: I'm just really, really happy to be able to tell the story of these five remarkable young women and their community. I must say, I have thought of going back and telling the story of the young men, because they have their own story to tell.

MARY: Well, that's interesting. Is there a difference?

GIGI: Yeah, I think there might be.

MARY: I'd love you to write a brief story about the culture you grew up in.

GIGI: The book's prologue is really the only part of the book that is personal. I come back round to a little bit of my personal story at the end, and it may actually hit on what you're looking for.

MARY: Thank you. I know I will love your book because I just love the whole idea of it and the time and dedication you put into it.

GIGI: Thank you so much.

MARY: You too, bye-bye.

GIGI: Bye. Bye. •



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Katarina Weslien in residence in 2019. Photo courtesy of SPEEDWELL projects

A LIFELONG COMMITMENT

Portland Art Gallery Aims to Create Lasting Legacy for Women Artists

BY ANNIKA EARLEY

Artist and Managing Director of SPEEDWELL projects in Portland, Maine

The art world has a major equity problem. Only 13 percent of represented artists in U.S. museums are women, and only 15 percent of represented artists in U.S. museums are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. I could share a litany of statistics pointing to gender and racial inequities in museums, galleries, art auctions, and every other aspect of the art world. Women have been and continue to be excluded from the art historical canon. We at SPEEDWELL Contemporary, a nonprofit, artist-run space in Portland, have had enough.

SPEEDWELL was founded in 2015 by Jocelyn Lee, a powerhouse photographer, educator, and arts advocate who calls Maine home. With her stellar guidance, we've mounted over 30 group and solo exhibitions including works by Katarina Weslien, Abby Shahn, Adriane Herman, Juliet

Karelsen, Alison Hildreth, Barbara Sullivan, Honour Mack, and Andrea Sulzer, among many others. The core curatorial framework of SPEEDWELL has always been to support artists who have made a lifelong commitment to their work. But in the spring of this year, we made it definitive: *we support women who have made a lifelong commitment to their creative work.*

Donna McNeil, Executive Director of the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation in Rockland, considers SPEEDWELL projects to be vital for several reasons, explaining that "SPEEDWELL is singular in its mission to support women, diversity, and excellence. Their adamant solidarity with all women, but particularly celebrating the mature practitioner, sets a standard which pushes back against the predominant patriarchal museum/gallery system."



We challenge the definition of the “mid-career” artist, a category defined by career achievements that are, for most artists, largely inaccessible. There are countless artists who have worked on their craft for decades but do not fall into the “mid-career” label, an important stepping stone in the current art world system. I remember reading an interview with Lee Bontecou in the *Chicago Reader* when I was in graduate school. Her attitude towards the art world, a world she is often described as having “suddenly vanished from” in the 1960s, was a revelation: “I just moved because I wanted to work, and also I was having a child and all kinds of things. My father was living with us at one point. A lot of things change in your life. And then I was teaching. I hadn’t backed away. You can’t be more involved in the arts than teaching. You’re working with other brains, you know. I was right smack in Brooklyn. People say, *you dodged the art world*. Well, heck, they were the art world. I was the art world. I didn’t dodge it.”

Bontecou’s notion of being in the art world *wherever she was* perfectly articulates the urgency of SPEEDWELL’s mission of celebrating, elevating, and creating a lasting legacy for women artists. We pursue this goal in three categories: exhibitions, residencies, and our archive.

This spring our gallery featured a stunning solo exhibition by Katarina Weslien, and it will be showcasing two exciting group exhibitions this fall. Weslien’s exhibition, titled *What did you smell when you were away?*, opened our public programming after a year of COVID closures and delays, in mid-April.

The three projects included in Weslien’s exhibition were a collaborative series of photographs titled *Walking Kailash: An Invitational Project* that featured photographs of microscopic images of water collected by 20 artists from around the world, eight dazzling, large-scale jacquard weavings depicting empty temporary dwellings at the Kumbh Mela festival in India, and the *Reciprocity Project*’s collage-like pieces of delicate water stains and protective silk fabrics.

Witchgrass, a group exhibition featuring the work of Josephine Chase, Karen Gelardi, Hilary Irons, and Juliet Karelsen, opened on September 10th and runs through October 30th. Each of the artists responds to the intricacies, resiliency, metaphor, fantasy, and spirituality they observe in a vast botanical ecosystem through colorful and richly textured embroidery, sculpture, drawing, and painting.

We will close our year with *tenera*, a group exhibition featuring Leeah Joo, Crystalle LaCouture, Cindy Rizza, Barbara Sullivan, and Andrea Sulzer. *Tenera* features work that centers around care, craft, and color. Each of the artists exhibits a quality of tenderness in their work: some work with tenderness as content while others express it through their delicate and precise handling of their media. The exhibition will be on view from November 12th to December 30th, 2021.

Top: Charlie Hewitt’s *Hopeful*. Center: Katarina Weslien’s *Night Tent*. 2020. Jacquard tapestry, woven with cotton, wool, silk, and viscose fibers. 108” x 72”. Bottom: Hilary Irons, *Teasel*. Photos courtesy of SPEEDWELL projects



Six pieces from Katarina Weslien's *The Reciprocity Project* series. 2017 - 2019. Ganges water, paper, cloth, cotton, embroidery. 16.5" x 20.5" each.
Photo courtesy of SPEEDWELL projects

We recognize that for an artist to make a lifelong commitment to creative work requires the precious resources of time and space. We established our residency program in 2019 to give artists room to make that commitment. The residencies, ranging from 4 to 8 weeks, are unrestricted: all we ask is that the artist make use of the space in the way that best serves them during their time at SPEEDWELL.

Our summer resident, the multitalented Rachel Gloria Adams, is a textile designer and painter living in Portland. She recently completed dynamic murals for the new Children's Museum & Theater in Portland and released the Summer 2021 collection for her clothing and home textile company, TACHEE, while in residence at SPEEDWELL. Our residency is nomination-based and selections for the following year are made each October.

Katarina Weslien, who was in residence at SPEEDWELL in 2019, feels that her experience at SPEEDWELL was an important part of the development of her recent work: "When I thought I reached the end of a body of work some years ago, Jocelyn Lee walked into my studio. She said, after observing photographs on my wall, 'I think these can be bigger, and why not try some different paper? And by the way, the gallery is empty over the summer, and the Bakery Photo Collective a sliding door away.' So started my two summer residencies at Speedwell. Without the invitation, imagination, and generosity, my recent work would not have ended in large jacquard weavings that eventually became a recent exhibition. Time and open space to bump into oneself are rare. SPEEDWELL's generous offer of space and time transformed and focused my work, and for that, I'm grateful."

Our newest path to our mission goals is the creation of an archive including exhibition catalogs and documentaries. We want to craft an enduring and tangible legacy for the artists we support, and documentation is critical for this endeavor.



Top: Josephine Chase, *Passengers*. 2019. Acrylic on metal. 4' x 4'.
Photo courtesy of the artist Bottom: Fiber art piece by Juliet Karelsen.
Photo courtesy of SPEEDWELL projects



Fiber art piece by Karen Gelardi.
Photo courtesy of SPEEDWELL projects

It is our goal to provide artists with as many opportunities for visibility and support as possible, and we hope that the publication of a documentary and catalog with a critical essay will meet this goal in the most meaningful way possible. Maine is home to an incredible number of historic and contemporary women who make art. We are thrilled to begin building an archive that articulates their significant contributions to the visual culture of Maine and beyond. Our first catalog, featuring the work of Katarina Weslien, will be published in November.

SPEEDWELL gets its name from well-wishes one would extend to a traveler before a long journey. The notion of moving forward with strength and hope feels especially important today. Charlie Hewitt's illuminated *Hopeful* sits atop of our gallery for a reason. This is the ethos we are fostering: we meet artists at their needs in as many ways as possible, we celebrate and elevate the work of incredible women, and we are hopeful that our efforts will move us towards a more equitable art world.

For more information, visit www.speedwellprojects.com or email info@speedwellprojects.com.

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Wild Woman

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LEW-ELLYN HUGHES

My four-year-old grandson called his dog a girl. I told him I call my dog “boy” all the time, but explained to him that in the animal kingdom there aren’t girls and boys, but rather male and female. I told him only humans are men and boys or women and girls. Then, I quizzed him.

“What is your dog?”

“Female!”

“That’s right. And what are you?”

“I’m a boy!” he grinned, pleased with his little manly self.

“And what am I?”

His six-year-old brother, who had been listening to our conversation, piped in and said, “You are a wild woman.”

He didn’t mean that I am out of control, he meant I am out in the wild. And I am, every chance I get. The Maine wilderness is

a place of beauty and peace and that is why I love it. Aside from sitting in a rocking chair with a grandbaby on my lap, it’s my favorite place to be.

For me, the woods are more beautiful than the art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Museum of Modern Art. I have been to those places and have sat before the masters, mesmerized by the beauty of Van Gogh, DaVinci, and Picasso until the museum lights faded and security guards made their rounds, forcing me off the bench where I had planted myself, like one would pluck a mushroom off a log. The wilderness one-ups those works because those pieces of art are created by man. The wilderness is not; therein lies the secret to its enchantment.

I have seen many things in my years in the woods. I watched a fisher chase a coyote.



From the top of Mount Kineo.



At first sight, my mind's eye saw a cat chasing a dog until I realized what I was truly seeing. Fishers only prey on small animals, so I wondered what caused the chase. I'll never know, of course.

I witnessed a baby moose, just a few hours old, nudge its mama awake to warn her of my presence. Mama moose rose and walked away slowly, baby followed on shaky legs. Baby moose looked back over its shoulder at me several times as if to ask, "What kind of animal is that, Mama?" I was obviously baby's first human.

One afternoon, the hairs on the back of my neck stood up and forced me to stop in my trek. I instinctively knew I was being watched. As slowly and quietly as possible, I turned in a circle. Nothing in sight, so I crouched down on my haunches and there, in the center of a stand of firs, I could see the gray-haired legs of an old bull moose, his legs looking very much like the trunks of the young trees that surrounded him. He was as still as a statue, not moving as he waited for me to make the next move. I know when to back off, and I did, slowly and with respect.

Another backing off experience I enjoyed was the day I was mountain biking on a logging road. I rounded a corner and surprised a mama and young moose. The baby moose jumped at being startled and when it landed, its leg went through the space between the wood planks of the bridge they were standing upon. Immediately, the air became charged with Mama moose's energy and the charge was going to be toward me! I backed off, peddling faster than I ever have. (I returned later to peek cautiously around that corner to make sure baby had been freed—it had.)

I have seen a chipmunk bite the head off a grasshopper and eat it for lunch. I have watched a squirrel, perched atop a dead birch tree, eat a mushroom. (That's something I have never dared to do: harvest and eat wild mushrooms, even though I once hiked Kathadin with a wild mushroom expert and was schooled all the way up.)

I watched a hawk drown a pigeon.

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A wild woman's footprint.

I watched mama bear and her young'un rake autumn's fallen leaves with their claws to find the prized beech nuts beneath.

During one of my wilderness wanderings, a bobcat magically appeared on the trail in front of me. He gracefully sauntered along for a few moments and then, in a blink of my eye, he was gone—back into the trees. Another time, a coyote trotted past me, never even glancing in my direction. I guess I didn't look appetizing—thank goodness.

I watched a hummingbird hover behind a woodpecker, occasionally able to sneak in and steal a drink of the sap released from the holes pounded in the spruce by the grub-seeking, pileated bird.

I've seen hawks perform their beautiful, air-ballet mating dance.

I followed large cat tracks up a mountain path, but because the cat tracks were following deer tracks, and both eventually veered off, I didn't feel the need to retreat.

I've held a hawk. I gently picked it up, saw that it was not mortally injured, only stunned (probably from an encounter with a log truck). I placed it on the side of the road so it could recover in a safe place. I gave it some time, and when it revived it circled over my head twice, then flew away. It is during a moment like that, that I stop, close my eyes, and love.

Attempting to figure out which critter lives in that fallen tree or which little sprite made those prints is a worthwhile, rewarding, educational way to spend

I gave [the hawk] some time, and when it revived it circled over my head twice, then flew away. It is during a moment like that, that I stop, close my eyes, and love.

my time. Watching television is not. To watch a bird of prey swoop down and capture his meal is the only reality show I am interested in and it's more exciting than any adventure park—because the Maine wilderness is life without vague edges or pretenses. It is life wide open. (And besides, the woods of Maine are prettier than anything in Hollywood.)

I want my feet on the messy forest floor of cones, twigs, bear scat and deer poop, leaves and needles, and paths of autumn gold, not on the tiled floors of city halls or malls.

The deep Maine forest is a place where there is hunger, but no greed, survival of the fittest, minus the egos. There is beauty without vanity. Although the forest is full of wild, frightening, oft times brutal wildlife, it holds more peace than the world will ever know. •

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Corporation

For Gretchen Evans, the mission to help fellow vets goes on

BY AVERY HUNT

For Gretchen Evans, Command Sergeant Major (CSM), Retired, the U.S. Army has been her career, her passion, and her lifelong commitment. In command of all 30,000 ground troops in Afghanistan, she was the highest-ranking enlisted army soldier in the battle, until she and her men were slammed with a surprise mortar attack in 2006, which killed the two soldiers next to her. Gretchen suffered grievous wounds, including numerous shrapnel hits, internal injuries, traumatic brain injury, and was stricken stone deaf from the blast. Later, she was also diagnosed with serious PTSD. In an instant her 27-year highly decorated military career came to an end.

“I felt I had lost everything,” she said. “I was immobilized, helpless, and helpless to help myself.”

Her long recovery was not just physical. She learned lip reading skills as part of her rehabilitation after the blast, but she realized she had to put herself back together mentally. Much of her support came from the counseling of Chief of Mental Health Services Bekh Bradley, a psychologist at the VA in Atlanta, who had read her military records prior to her first session. His immediate words to her were abrupt and candid, “I cannot un-XXXX 27 years of trauma, Sergeant Major, in six weeks [the prescribed protocol]. You are going to be with me for a while.”

And so began her healing. He listened. He asked, “Can you tell me what it feels like?” And he suggested she write down her experiences, because writing comes from a differ-



Gretchen and Aura. Photo courtesy of Gretchen Evans

ent part of the brain. “He was the first to open the box. I had to do it or I would have killed myself.” Therapy typically lasts 12 weeks or less, but Gretchen saw Dr. Bradley off and on for nearly two years.

Her most important support after therapy came from her “hearing dog,” Aura, intensely trained by America’s VETDOGS, who gave Gretchen back her independence, and her hope. “She gave me meaning and drive. At my lowest point, her unequivocal love, devotion, and sense of duty saved my life in moments of ultimate despair. Aura literally saved my life.”

A third support leg on her journey of healing came from her participation in the No Barriers program, serving veterans with disabilities, where she re-honed her skills and sense of teamwork. It was through No Barriers that she established her renewed passion.

“I embraced their mantra: What is within me is stronger than anything in my way.” Today, CSM Evans is a vital, energetic woman – still a soldier in her heart – who spends much of her time involved in a number of efforts, mostly focused on educating the public and helping her fellow vets. She speaks extensively about leadership, grit, and resilience to audiences, both military and business groups. She runs marathons with disabled vets. She raises funds for many veteran groups, including Vet2Vet Maine, which helps men and women connect with others who’ve served in combat as “battle buddies.” She serves on Governor Mills’ military advisory committee. Gretchen has also taught a Zoom class



Top: Gretchen, bottom, second from the left, with her troops on the tank in Afghanistan. Above left: Command Sergeant Major Gretchen Evans receiving the Bronze Star from Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, Commander, Afghanistan, 2005–2007. Above right: Visiting with children in Afghanistan. Photos courtesy of Gretchen Evans

at Bowdoin and would like to become more involved locally and in her adopted state of Maine. The list goes on. At 61, she is feisty, funny, resilient, and in top shape.

Two of her recent efforts are unique. First, Gretchen has written a book, *Leading from the Front*, which draws from the many combat and life experiences that she wrote at Dr. Bradley’s gentle insistence. It is candid, and often graphically intense. She calls it “gritty and raw.” Others might describe it as a cross between *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Catch-22*. While she thought these writings were private and

just to help herself, her husband Bob, a Navy chaplain who had served alongside Gretchen in Afghanistan, strongly encouraged her to put some of them together for publication.

“It was never intended to be a book, it was therapy.” But Bob thought it was powerful and advised her, that “...if I was ever comfortable releasing any of my writings, I should do it.” In 2018, she self-published her book, now available on Amazon, and hopes it may get wider distribution.

Another unique project is her participation in a live theater piece, *She Went to War*, which has played in several venues,

including the Library of Congress. It was created by The Telling Project, a national nonprofit performing arts effort that uses theater to deepen civilian and community understanding of military veterans' experiences. In the play, which is virtually unscripted, four women vets, including Gretchen, tell their stories on stage with only minimum structure. None are professional actors.

"Gretchen is a natural. A compelling performer, who is emotionally present on stage," says founder and director Jonathan Wei, who adds that it was an honor to work with all four women.

"It's one thing to go to a play and see a bunch of actors tell a story. It's another to see a bunch of non-actors tell their own stories. Especially when those stories are so powerful and authentic," said one reviewer. "[It] made me painfully aware of the extent to which my ideas about soldiers and military life are dominated by simplistic (and often extremely masculinized) stereotypes drawn from popular culture. But what struck me most sharply was realizing just how little thought many of us devote to the individuals who make up our armed services," said another theater critic, commenting on their successful run at the famed Guthrie Theater in Milwaukee. Plans are to run a sequel, *She Came Home*, in the near future, COVID-dependent, with the same four women.

As if Gretchen was not busy enough, her scheduled events extend well into the future. For one, she and Bob will be

honored guests at the Army-Navy game in December. But perhaps her biggest honor was to be installed in the US Veterans Hall of Fame on October 30.

Sitting in the cozy living room of her Brunswick home last month, perched on the fireplace hearth with her two hearing dogs sprawled on the carpet beside her, she modestly talked about all this. (Aura is now older and helps Bob with his PTSD. Rusty, a hefty young black lab, is Gretchen's new service dog.) Her enthusiasm and energy are compelling. Nothing seems to slow her down. But she admits to loving where she and Bob are living now.

"This is my first permanent home, our forever home, after more than 27 moves. We've 'stacked arms' here," she said, referencing a military term for ending a mission and literally putting down battle rifles in a stacked formation, and also slang for coming home.

For more of Gretchen's story, see the September, 2021, issue of *Maine Women*. •



A History of MAINE WOMEN and War

This article is reprinted with much appreciation to the Maine Historical Society. The segment originally appeared as part of a larger article, Mainers Go to War, on the Maine Historical Society's website, www.mainememory.net.

Because the military did not accept women until World War I, and then on a very limited basis, Maine women had other roles during wartime. Maine soldiers and their officers were the farmers, shopkeepers, laborers, and civic leaders of their communities, ordinary folks whose sisters, wives, and mothers knit stockings, rolled bandages, and raised money for the war effort and support services for soldiers.

They gathered food and clothing for soldiers. They kept farms and homesteads operating while soldiers were gone. By the 20th century, they worked in war industries, taking the place of absent men. They wound bandages, wrote letters, raised children, and operated businesses.

The Machias chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution calls itself the Hannah Weston Chapter in honor of the young wife, then a pregnant 17-year-old, who struggled, along with her sister-in-law, Rebecca, 16 miles through the woods to take much needed lead and powder to the fledgling local militia in Machias. The town was being threatened with attack from the English Captain Moore and his ship, the *Margaretta*.

Women throughout the area had spent hours melting lead and casting musket balls while their men harassed the British. Hannah Weston's resourcefulness, in tandem with Machias' belligerence, indicates in microcosm just how enmeshed were civilian and military affairs, and men's and women's contributions, within the colonial resistance of the period.

In the Civil War, Dorothea Dix, a native of Hampden who grew up largely in Vermont and Massachusetts, was perhaps the most famous of a well-organized brigade of women who contributed needed supplies, and nursed the Union's wounded soldiers. Most distressing for these women, the men they tended were more likely to die from infection and disease than from their wounds.

On April 10, 1863, the exact midpoint of the war, four Mainers from four different units died in Union hospitals. Each succumbed to a different illness: small pox, diphtheria, typhoid, and diarrhea.

Some women's actions took a different form. For example, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; or, *Life Among the Lowly* in 1852 while living in Brunswick. Her husband, Calvin, taught at Bowdoin College and the couple only spent a few years in Maine. The book is the most famous abolitionist book of its day and has left a legacy of archetypes – Uncle Tom, Little Eva, Simon Legree – that demonized southern slaveholders and humanized the millions of people held captive by the nation's most egregious institution.



Dorothea L. Dix, ca. 1870. Collections of Maine Historical Society



Jane Jeffrey, 1919. Collections of Maine Historical Society.



Women employees, Portland Company, 1917. *Collections of Maine Historical Society*

After the Civil War, Sara Sampson, a returned nurse, responded to the needs of the many orphans and began the Bath Military and Naval Orphan Asylum in 1864. In 1866, the facility was incorporated and became a state institution to serve orphans and “half orphans.”

In World War II, the direct involvement of women increased. For instance, Martha Phillips of Southwest Harbor ferried bombers, freeing male pilots for combat. Ruth and Virginia Morin of East Millinocket joined SPARS, the special Coast Guard reserves unit for women that the U.S. Congress created in 1942. Their stories, like dozens of others, are archived in the Maine Folklife Center at the University of Maine.

Many women served in the Women’s Army Corps, which had a presence at Dow Field in Bangor and at Fort Williams in Cape Elizabeth. In addition, WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services), a branch of the Naval Reserves, were stationed at Brunswick Naval Air Station.

Edna Dickey worked as a “farmerette” with the Women’s Land Army, a federally sponsored civilian organization that recruited American women for agricultural labor beginning in 1943. Similar organizations had been used in Britain in World War I and were quickly mobilized throughout Allied nations for the Second World War.

Ethel Linscott and Jackie McCarthy worked in war industries at the Saco-Lowell Foundry and South Portland Shipyard respectively. Nearly everyone donated dimes, dollars, and time to the myriad civilian activities of war.

Women’s direct involvement in the military has increased since World War II and, with the most recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, many women are on the front lines.

Reprinted from Maine Memory Network’s Maine History Online www.mainememory.net/mho. To read Mainers Go to War in its entirety, visit <https://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/887/page/1298/display?page=6>.

MAINE'S FALLEN WOMEN VETERANS



ARMY SPC CASSANDRA LEE CASSAVANT

SPC Cassavant, 21, of Cornish, died August 3, 2007, while serving in the U.S. Army. Cassandra was born January 1, 1986, daughter of Christine A. Peabody Hensley and Michael J. Cassavant. Cassandra was assigned to Satellite Communications Specialist at Fort Hood, Texas.

To honor Cassandra, her daughter, Chyann, retrieved this stone from Fort Williams, near the Portland Headlight. This is what this stone says about SPC Cassavant:

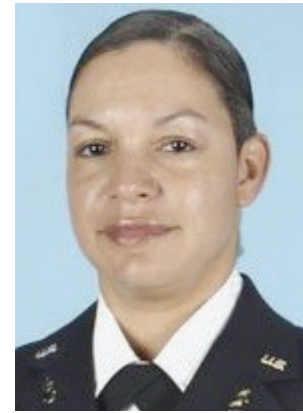
“Cassandra wanted to be an astronaut. She was fun loving and inclusive. She helped others and her constant smile and positive attitude was contagious. She emulated the example of Christ in all she did and was very influential in the lives of others. She helped guide others to make good decisions.”



ARMY STAFF SGT. JESSICA WING

Staff Sgt. Jessica Wing, 42, born in Alexandria, Virginia, died on August 27, 2012, in Kuwait City, Kuwait. She was a resident of Glenburn, and on her third deployment, assigned to 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, Maine National Guard, Bangor at the time of her passing. She served in the guard for eight years, and was on active duty in the U.S. Army for eleven years before that.

Jessica was a helicopter crew chief. Her unit provided medical evacuation to patients and military personnel using medically equipped UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. She was deployed to Haiti and Bosnia while in the army, prior to three tours in the Middle East with the Maine National Guard.



ARMY CWO3 TANIA N. DUNBAR

CWO3 Tania N. Dunbar, 40, of Santa Barbara, California, died July 19, 2015, while actively serving in the Army.

She was an Electronic Missile Systems Maintenance Warrant Officer with 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade at Fort Bragg.

Tania went to the grocery store in 1998 for some soup. She ended up joining the Army at the recruiting office next to the store. She was so excited that she forgot all about the soup. She was still in the Army – and still loving being in the Army – 17 years later when she died.

Tania's mother is from Millinocket, Maine. Her Summit stone is from the family's garden, close to the peonies. It is small and doesn't weigh a lot, her mother writes, just like Tania.

THE SUMMIT PROJECT

The mission of The Summit Project is to honor our state's post-9/11 fallen service members, and through education, fellowship, and physical activity, provide assurance to their families that these sacrifices will never be forgotten.

TSP stones and stories have been shared on Mt. Katahdin, Mt. Cadillac, Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mt. Everest, and Mt. Denali, and have been carried through parades, marathons, and marches.

Each trekker must learn about the fallen hero they choose to honor, carry his/her tribute stone through a physical challenge, and compose a post-event reflection letter addressed to the soldier's surviving family. One lovely example of these letters, written to the mother of Army SPC Cassandra Lee Cassavant, by the mother of fallen Marine Sgt. James Zimmerman, reads, in part, “Christine, I thank God for the opportunity to carry the “Honor Stone” for your daughter, SPC Cassandra Cassavant. I

thank Him also that you were on our climbing team and at the base camp all weekend. You and I were drawn to each other. We Gold Star Mothers know and feel what the other carries in her heart.

You shared *a lot* about Cassie and I listened intently. I shared a lot about my son James and you listened with compassion. We shared about our “mother journey” *a lot*. When I was assigned Cassandra's stone to carry, I read her bio and cried a lot. I pondered and carried Cassandra and you, her mother, and young daughter Chyann, every day.

Gratefully, Jane Zimmerman

Important information in this salute is reprinted with much appreciation to the The Summit Project. To read more about these soldiers, and many others who made the ultimate sacrifice, visit www.thesummitproject.org.

Women are an important part of the Travis Mills Foundation community

BY MARY FRANCES BARSTOW

On April 10, 2012, US Army Staff Sergeant Travis Mills of the 82nd Airborne was critically injured on his third tour of duty in Afghanistan by an IED (improvised explosive device) while on patrol, losing portions of both legs and both arms. He is one of only five quadruple amputees from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to survive his injuries.

In 2013, Travis and his wife, Kelsey, founded the Travis Mills Foundation, a nonprofit organization formed to benefit and assist post-9/11 veterans who have been injured in active duty or as a result of their service. The veterans and their families receive an all-expenses paid, barrier-free vacation in Maine where they

participate in adaptive activities, and bond with other veteran families in Maine's great outdoors.

Travis is quick to point out that he doesn't make this happen all on his own.

"I'm pretty mediocre at the end of the day, but I have a wonderful staff and team around me," he said. "They really work hard and we have over 1,000 volunteers who come out and do everything. I'm so grateful for that. It's really a community."

Recently, Mary Barstow caught up with four of the women who help make the Travis Mills Foundation a force for good.

For more details, please visit travismillsfoundation.org.



Molly Lovell-Keeley

MOLLY LOVELL-KEELEY, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING MANAGER

MARY BARSTOW:

Thank you so much for all the help you've been giving us to make this story about the foundation happen.

MOLLY LOVELL-KEELEY:

It's funny. When you sent that email, I was like, "Oh my God. Yes. He does have mostly women running his organization."

MARY:

So, tell me, where were you originally from?

MOLLY:

I'm originally from Biddeford. I grew up in Biddeford and I still live here in Biddeford.

MARY:

And how did you come to work here?

MOLLY:

Before this, I was working for Maine Veterans' Homes, and I really liked the idea of helping veterans. And then I saw this position open up and it just seemed more in my wheelhouse because it was geared toward post-9/11 veterans. And when I think of veterans, I think all my friends who went to the war in 2001 after 9/11. And that's what inspired me, so I just jumped at the chance. Everything felt right about it.

MARY:

It was a well-established place when you got there. How did you find it? What was your impression?

MOLLY:

It's funny. There was a big gala last month for the foundation that raised a lot of money, and we were all there during the day,

preparing for it. And one of the girls drives up on the golf cart and she said, “What’s up, fam?”—as in family, and I’m thinking, “Oh my God, I love this. I love this so much.”

MARY:

You bring in families from all over the country. What do you notice?

MOLLY:

I noticed a togetherness. We’re welcome to go have lunch at that retreat when we want, even when families are there. And so, we come in and everybody’s sitting at the table, and I was just sitting there eating, looking around and I’m like, “Everybody’s just together.”

MARY:

Do you have many women veterans who come?

MOLLY:

There was a woman earlier this summer who caught my eye. Her name is Amanda. She had come straight from Walter Reed, and she just stood out to me for being a woman veteran, and for also still being able to come and have a wonderful time and be catered to as just a single person.

MARY:

You host families. How often?

MOLLY:

Yeah, so this summer, we hosted families for eight weeks and we host eight families per week. The families range from being a single person to husband, wife, and however big their family is. Then after that summer program is done, we host the caregivers of veterans. A lot of times it’s the wives, sometimes it’s the parents.

MARY:

How do you gather your funding for this?

MOLLY:

It is just pure fundraising. We recently had a golf tournament that raised \$40,000 for the foundation. You know, people are willing to go above and beyond for Travis and the foundation. And I should mention our volunteers, too. We have a base of about 500 volunteers and they are the heart and soul of the organization.

MARY:

Now, do these volunteers all live in Maine?

MOLLY:

No, some of them live out of state and they take their own personal vacations to come up here. They pay for their own travel to come up here and volunteer.

MARY:

And, honestly from the bottom of my heart, thank you for standing by all these people that just really need it so badly, and it’s wonderful.

MOLLY:

They do. Again, I just feel so fortunate to be serving them. Thank you for this opportunity.



Brandy Dupper-Macy

BRANDY DUPPER-MACY, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

MARY BARSTOW:

So, Brandy, are you originally from Maine?

BRANDY DUPPER-MACY:

I’m originally from California. I met my husband in the air force and he was from Maine, so that is how I got here.

MARY:

So, tell me about what you do here and how you got involved.

BRANDY:

Sure. I’ve been here since November, 2018, and I’m the director of development. I do the fundraising events and the donor work.

MARY:

Are you a veteran?

BRANDY:

I’m an air force veteran. I served from 2000 to 2006. I joined a week and a day after my 18th birthday ... got on the bus for basic and did my six years.



MARY:

And where were you stationed?

BRANDY:

I was an air traffic controller, so I went to Alamogordo, New Mexico, and then I cross trained into public affairs. So, I was public affairs specialist and eventually chief of marketing at Davis-Monthan Air Force base in Tucson, Arizona.

MARY:

Thank you for your service! Did you know Travis before you got involved here?

BRANDY:

Nope. It was something that my husband and I had talked about before I saw the job listing. I knew that I would love to work for a veterans' organization. When this opportunity came up, I was so excited!

MARY:

And what has it done for you?

BRANDY:

Oh gosh. It's incredible to be able to give back to my fellow brothers and sisters who sacrificed a lot more than I did. I'm married to a service member. My brother was in the army, so for me, I'm very aware of how lucky we were to have all made it home safely.

MARY:

Was it frightening to you when 9/11 happened?

BRANDY:

Oh my, yes. I was an air traffic controller then. I went to sleep one night and then I woke up and it went from like a normal base to tankers and barriers and all sorts of crazy procedures. There was

no doubt that our world had changed overnight, for sure.

MARY:

And the one good thing that I can remember coming from it was the country seemed to be really together.

BRANDY:

Yes. I think that was the most beautiful part of being in the service prior to 9/11. I remember it was beautiful to leave the base. There were flags waving and cars honking.

MARY:

People love veterans and love that you served all of us. I have such admiration for you and anybody that has done that.

BRANDY:

I really do think, especially here, I've definitely seen the love, and it's really awesome.

MARY:

Now, what do you think of Travis? He has to be inspiring every day.

BRANDY:

Yes, absolutely. I think we all have our invisible wounds, right? But for him to have such visible wounds and to have such an optimistic outlook about it? He's the most energetic, loud person ... so lively. It's very motivating and inspiring. You want to be better and not feel so sorry for yourself. It's definitely a perspective check. It definitely is humbling in that way.

MARY:

Do you plan on staying here now? You came from California to Maine. How was that adjustment?

BRANDY:

Oh, gosh. Well, when we moved here, I went from California to Tucson, to 300 people. Very jarring. I've been here since 2006, so I've adjusted. I do love Maine. And I feel like giving back to this beautiful state has been humbling, and I'm so glad to be here.

MARY:

Do you have children?

BRANDY :

We have two boys. My oldest is a

senior this year and we have a 13-year-old son, as well.

MARY:

Wow. And you work full time and it's not exactly in your back yard, so you are quite devoted to this organization.

BRANDY:

I am. Yeah.

MARY:

Now, I have one last question. Air traffic control is a stressful job. Do you ever miss that intensity?

BRANDY:

Yeah. I loved that job. When I joined, there was a high washout rate. And for whatever reason, you had to pass both tower and radar, so people washed out a lot. To make it through as the only female in my class was incredible.

MARY:

The only female in your class?

BRANDY :

I was. And we had a sister class and there was one female in that class, and we had started out with several. And so, to be 18 and doing this incredibly hard job where it's notoriously stressful and high intensity was incredible. I loved it.

MARY:

Do you fly planes?

BRANDY:

I do not.

MARY:

Not yet, right?

BRANDY:

Not yet. Maybe in my free time, one day when I'm not commuting so far away.

MARY:

You are really committed.

BRANDY:

Yes, and thank you so much, Mary, for sharing your time today. When Molly said you wanted to interview me, I was like, "I'm just a girl just trying to help my fellow veterans."

MARY:

Yes, that and a lot more! Thank you, so very much.



Kelly Roseberry

**KELLY ROSEBERRY,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

MARY BARSTOW:

Please introduce yourself to our readers. Are you originally from Maine?

KELLY ROSEBERRY:

I am not. My dad was in the army, so we moved quite a bit. And my husband's a retired soldier, as well.

MARY:

So how did you come to work with Travis Mills?

KELLY:

I am a physical therapist, and I was working in the amputee clinic at Walter Reed Hospital when Travis was injured. So, I met him and Kelsey at work. I had always been involved in adaptive sports with other organizations, so when he decided to start the foundation, he just sort of kept being there as I was looking for what my next step was, and I realized that this was one of those rare opportunities.

MARY:

You worked with him as a patient?

KELLY:

I wasn't his primary therapist, but I worked with him often.

MARY:

So, you were there from the beginning, obviously.

KELLY:

Travis said it was going to be a summer retreat and he wanted me to run it, basically, to find the people, to organize the activities. I had run a camp for kids with amputations, and I knew the logistics. And it went from being summer to year-round, very quickly.

MARY:

How has it changed you?

KELLY:

It's very rewarding. It just makes me very grateful. I'm very grateful that I get to do something that I really love, something that gives back. My husband also works for the foundation, and we can bring our daughter to work on the weekends.

MARY:

You moved your whole family for this position?

KELLY:

This offered us a quality of life DC could never have, and we're able to raise our family in a place where we have the time to do it.

MARY:

Had you ever visited Maine?

KELLY:

Yes. We had been here a couple of times. Actually, the first time we came up, my husband and I were just dating. And I was afraid he wasn't going to come back home, he loved Maine so much. We both loved the snow. I've been an adaptive ski instructor, and he snowboards.

MARY:

Tell me how you've seen the foundation grow since you've been here.

KELLY:

All the funds are from private citizens and organizations. We don't take any federal funding. So, it's all a grassroots, massive effort from our whole team working with a lot of caring Americans who believe in our mission. And it was a matter of recognizing that the need is greater than anyone realized.

MARY:

I interviewed Travis, and I'll be honest with you. He brought me to tears.

KELLY:

He does that sometimes.

MARY:

How has he affected your life?

KELLY:

His enthusiasm is contagious. He comes in with guns blazing. Whether it's to the hospital during rehab, or into a meeting, or into a very somber moment at the retreat, he just comes in and brings this level of energy and excitement.

MARY:

So, what are the plans for the future?

KELLY:

For example, we just broke ground on, we're building a nearly 10,000-square-foot health and wellness center at the retreat that will offer an indoor pool, gym, massage rooms, and a commercial grade laundry, which will allow us to do so much, including being able to operate regardless of season or the weather.

MARY:

Everyone is so proud of what you do.

KELLY:

In four years, we've been able to assist over 2,000 people. We're excited about that.

MARY:

And I'm sure the families and the children, just being with others must be so helpful.

KELLY:

Absolutely. It's probably the one place that they're able to spend time in their year where being different is normal. And if your dad has to put legs on, or your mom has to get in a wheelchair, it doesn't matter here.

MARY:

And I would also like to know, how did you find a husband who is so involved with all of this?

KELLY:

My husband is also an amputee. I met him at the hospital. And he was getting ready to retire, so he was also trying to figure out what his next step was going to be. And he has a servant's heart, just like the rest of us. And so, to come to a place where we are able to work together and do something that we love for a greater purpose, was just was a no brainer.

MARY:

So, let's back up that story a little bit. Your husband was a patient?

KELLY:

Yeah. So, he became an amputee in 2005, and continued his active-duty service, and was injured again in 2015. So, he was spending some time at Walter Reed. That's where I met him.

He was not a patient of mine, but my family lives close by and I always brought stragglers home for the holidays. And so, I had three or four people coming for 4th of July one year. He came, and that's where I met him a little bit more. And just through various trips to Fort Bragg and a little bit of fate, the rest is history.

MARY:

That's the best love story ever. And you have children?

KELLY:

We have a one-year-old daughter. She just turned one on 9/11.

MARY:

Amazing again. You're amazing!



Hannah Flannery

HANNAH FLANNERY, HEAD CHEF

MARY BARSTOW:

What do you do for the Travis Mills Foundation?

HANNAH FLANNERY:

I'm the head chef.

MARY:

Oh, my favorite girl. You get to do all the good stuff.

HANNAH:

That's right.

MARY:

Are you originally from Maine?

HANNAH:

I am.

MARY:

And may I ask where in Maine you grew up?

HANNAH:

West Sumner on 219 on your way between somewhere and nowhere? No, I'm just kidding. In Western Maine towards West Paris, Bethel area.

MARY:

How long have you been at the foundation?

HANNAH:

I started volunteering here in 2017, and then I got hired as a chef in 2019.

MARY:

And did you go to school to be a chef or are you just a natural chef?

HANNAH:

I am, I was accepted at culinary school, but I never went. I've cooked in many different restaurants since I was 16.

MARY:

I believe you're almost born with this ability sometimes. You just really get it. And a lot of people go to culinary schools and they can learn the techniques, but they don't sometimes get it.

HANNAH:

I grew up with a mom that cooked everything from scratch and learned everything from her.

MARY:

So, you grew up and it's just in your DNA.

HANNAH:

You could say that.

MARY:

And how long have you been there now?

HANNAH:

Since 2019. I was hired in late summer and then of course, March of 2020, everything shut down. And we went to virtual programming because we couldn't bring people in. I did some virtual cooking classes with the veterans and their families for that. Then we started another program for post-traumatic stress. That's all we could run for a few months until we could bring veterans and families back in.

MARY:

You just knew of the foundation, and you wanted to volunteer, that's how you started?

HANNAH:

I live close by and my cousin tipped me off to it because she's a big fan of Travis. She said, "They're opening this and they need help in the kitchen. You're perfect for that."

MARY:

It has turned into a wonderful career for you.

HANNAH:

It has.

MARY:

How has it affected you, working with all these families and seeing what the foundation does?

HANNAH:

I think it's just amazing to see the families. These are all

MEXICAN STREET CORN DIP/SALSA



INGREDIENTS

- 6-8 ears of corn (or 2-3 cups fresh or frozen, thawed)
- teaspoon Chili Lime Rub (Weber brand is a good one)
- Oil for coating
- 1 medium-size fresh jalapeno or poblano pepper
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro, optional
- 12 oz Queso Fresco cheese or 1-1 1/2 cups, coarsely crumbled
- 2-3 Tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 cup ranch dressing
- 1-2 fresh limes
- 2-3 Tablespoons Chili Lime Rub

DIRECTIONS

Step 1— Heat your grill to medium high. On a sheet pan, lightly oil ears of corn. Sprinkle with the chili lime rub to cover lightly all over. Place corn and jalapeno pepper on the grill. Char corn and pepper lightly on all sides, 2-3 minutes a side depending on heat of the grill. Remove and set aside to cool. Wrap pepper with foil until it cools.

Step 2— Chop cilantro and set aside. Crumble cheese into bigger pieces and set aside.

Step 3— In a small dish, add ranch dressing, zest and juice of one lime (approx. 2-4 Tablespoons juice), and chili lime rub. Whisk until well blended. Add mayo and blend.

Step 4— Slice corn off cobs into a large bowl. Peel outer layer of pepper, de-seed and remove stem. Dice the rest. Add pepper, cilantro, cheese, and dressing to corn. Mix until well blended. Enjoy!!

recalibrated, injured vets and their families and to see them all come together in our environment, and just to see how normal life can be for them. I mean, some people are like Travis, they have lost their limbs. They're in wheelchairs. But they get around and they chase after their little kids and it's just amazing to watch the whole experience.

MARY:

That's just wonderful. I hope that you don't mind sharing a recipe or two in the magazine. I'd love to put a recipe of yours in.

HANNAH:

That sounds good, thank you! •

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

honors women veterans

BY LEW-ELLYN HUGHES



One wreath for each fallen soldier. A simple gesture that holds the weight of sincerest gratitude. *Photo by Kathy Byrne*

It's a simple thing to lay a Christmas wreath on a grave. A simple thing, especially if you own a wreath company. How about placing five thousand wreaths on the five thousand graves of fallen soldiers, in a cemetery located over seven hundred miles away from your home? That is exactly what Morrill Worcester of Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, Maine did in 1992. Morrill took the excess wreaths his company had that season and placed them on the graves of fallen soldiers in Arlington National Cemetery, to honor them.

Granted, he had help. Maine Senator Olympia Snow acquired governmental permission to lay the wreaths, and organizations such as Blue Bird Ranch, a trucking company, transported those wreaths on a seven-hundred-sixty-mile journey from Washington County to Washington, DC to Virginia. Include a few hundred volunteers and it's a simply beautiful thing: honor an American veteran by placing a Christmas wreath on their grave, while speaking their name.

As all worthwhile activities tend to do, Wreaths across America grew and now involves more than two thousand locations across the United States, at sea, and abroad with a myriad of volunteers and organizations that partner with WAA to fulfill their mission to remember, honor, and teach—*remember* our fallen US veterans, *honor* those who serve, and *teach* our children the value of freedom.

The growth of Wreaths Across America has been phenomenal. In 1992 those first wreaths were placed on graves in an older section of Arlington National Cemetery by a few dozen volunteers—a section that was not often visited. A photo of the wreaths hit the media and by December 14, 2019, more than 38,000 volunteers placed 254,000 wreaths at Arlington and 2.2 million veterans' wreaths were placed in total across the country by nearly two million volunteers—a testament to how this country feels about its veterans. The story of Wreaths Across America is as vast as the acres it takes to produce the wreaths and as varied as the people who make it happen. Dozens upon dozens of organizations partner with WAA each season to make the wreath ceremonies a success.

This is a year to especially honor female veterans. In September, Wreaths Across America, as part of its Veterans Remembrance Tree Program and in partnership with the Military Women's Memorial Foundation, dedicated the Military Women's Grove on the balsam tip lands where balsam is harvested for the veterans' wreaths, at the Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, Maine. The balsam fir trees in the grove will now hold the replica dog tags of thousands of America's military women. Although women were admitted into military academies in 1976, it wasn't until 2013 that the military ban on women in combat was lifted. Prior to 1973, women were only allowed to serve as nurses or support staff. The Military Women's Grove is to honor those brave souls who fought not only in wars, but also fought the powers that be who said women could not join the military forces.

Like Deborah Sampson—most historians say Deborah was the first woman in the army. She was a determined soul with a secret. Women were not allowed to fight when she enlisted in the Continental Army in 1781, so Deborah disguised herself as a man, gave herself the name Robert Shurtleff and marched off to the Revolutionary War with the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment. She was wounded several times and in order to keep her gender a secret, often had to tend to her own injuries, including removing a musket ball from her thigh. After more than two years of service, she fell ill during an epidemic and while being treated in a hospital, her secret was exposed. The truth was out and so was she, but her discharge was honorable and she received a military pension from the state of Massachusetts.

"The wrinkles on my lips when I smile represent all the people who have helped me through the tough part of my journey. These experiences have made me the strong, optimistic, independent young woman that I am today. It has made me the light within myself that I can now show to people and make their cloudy, gray skies brighter." Those are the words in an essay written by Johanny Rosario when she was a senior in high school in 2013, the very year women were allowed in combat. Before she was killed by a suicide bomber at the Kabul Airport on

August 26, 2021, she helped thousands of people escape to a brighter future.

Marine Sgt. Nicole Gee sent a photo of herself to her family. She was in full military gear and body armor with rifle at hand. She was cradling and comforting an Afghan baby as the family frantically tried to escape the country and Taliban. Sgt. Gee was also killed that day at Kabul Airport when a suicide bomber tore through the gate and killed over 200 people. Her text on the photo, possibly her final ones to her family, were, "I love my job."

The Women's Military Memorial and Wreaths Across America honor these—all—veterans who have given full measure.

The Women's Military Memorial opened to the public in 1997 and is dedicated to the more than 3 million women who have served our country. It is the only major national memorial dedicated to honoring women from the Revolutionary War to present. It is a historical repository that documents all military women's service, as well as the world's largest collection of servicewomen's individual testaments. The heart of the memorial is the database of 300,000 women's stories, but knowing that 3 million women have served, means there are still 2.7 million stories that need to be heard. MWM continues to collect the stories of the "SHEroes" and encourages all female veterans to register their military story.

The WMM memorial educates and inspires through innovative and interactive exhibitions, with world-class collections, and engaging programs and events for all ages. The MWM honors

the commitment, contributions and experiences of every woman who serves in, or with, the armed forces. It is a one-story-at-a-time recording of history. The stories of the women who served in the military—from Deborah Sampson to Nicole Gee—from the first to the last—are preserved to insure we will never forget.

This year, Wreaths across America and the Women's Military Memorial joined forces through the Group Sponsorship Program—a program of like-minded organizations working together to raise money for their shared mission to honor veterans through the Giving in July Campaign. For every fifteen dollars the Women's Military Memorial raises for a wreath, Wreaths Across America will give back five dollars. Through this national program, WAA has given back nearly fifteen million dollars in local contributions over the last 13 years.

On December 18th, 2021, Military Women's Memorial will be helping Arlington National Cemetery to remember and honor our veterans by laying remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes, especially our "SHEroes" who have fought for our freedom.

There is a quote attributed to Binsky that reads, "They say you die twice. One time when you stop breathing and a second time, a bit later on, when somebody says your name for the last time." Morrill Worcester has a vision for all, to remember the fallen. As his wreaths are placed on their graves, their names are spoken—each and every veteran's name will be spoken aloud. They will never be forgotten. They will not die twice. •



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Nichole Jordan with her son, SSgt Daniel Jordan, US Air Force.

2019 Women Veteran's Glamping, in no particular order, are Barbara Perkins, Sheryl Moore, Dawn Ogles, Anne Bachman, Nichole Jordan, Vicky Brissette, Megan McGillicuddy, and Deb Lyons.

Women Veteran's Glamping started as a gathering of women veterans going to Maine Forest Yurts to camp together. After finding that such a high number of women veterans want to be able to meet other women vets in a safe environment, Nichole Jordan, founder and president of Women Veteran's Glamping, went through the process of applying for the 501c3 paperwork to become a nonprofit organization.

The women veterans who attend this year have had to pay for their spot for the glamping weekend. Nichole is hoping that next year no woman veteran attending a scheduled glamping weekend will have to pay to attend. Several people have come

forward with donations to cover costs for women veterans who want to attend but cannot pay. This drives Nichole to want to do more for our women veterans. Now, sixteen months after surviving lung and skin cancer, she wanted to do something to give back to the women veterans that have seen so much sacrifice and hardship.

At the first Women Veteran's Glamping event, Nichole heard how many of the veterans knew of only one other woman veteran in the state. Being a woman veteran as well, that really hurt to hear. She only knew the women veterans from her American Legion by volunteering at meetings. She knew if you don't go to the legion, you don't get involved

to meet others who have served. But, because the American Legion and other veteran's organizations have traditionally been male-centric, and many women vets feel more comfortable opening up around other women, opportunities to meet have been limited.

With 300,000 women veterans in the world, Nichole says, "it's nice to be able to know you have a sister from service, no matter if you never served together. You tied your boots just like the men and served your country." Women veterans are assets to our communities. They are sisters, aunts, mothers, grandmothers, friends, and neighbors. They served, sacrificing just like the men, she says.

"Women in uniform are noticed, but a veteran feels invisible," states Nichole. "So many women who had things happen that are horrific do not self-identify as a veteran. Some women choose not to participate in organizations because they are treated as if their service didn't matter, and their contributions didn't count. Women veterans need to build mutual support over shared experiences of their military service."

Women who opt out of veteran's organizations also present a challenge because they can miss out on the resources that are available to them, she says.

Nichole's vision is that any woman veteran who needs support and/or wants to attend the Women Veteran's Glamping can do so. The organization's mission is to offer women veterans opportunities to recreate the camaraderie of shared experiences in a safe environment, and to honor every woman vet as they are, and for their experiences. Women Veteran's Glamping seeks to empower emotional health and honor "the courage, love, devotion, dedication, respect, integrity, confidence, and loyalty each woman has in them for raising their right hand to defend their country," she says.

For more information, please contact Nichole Jordan at: womenveteransglamping@gmail.com or 207-456-6114.

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ALEX SERRA:

spinning experience into public affairs leadership

On her first day of college, Alex Serra was asked to write down what she wanted to do after graduation. The American history major wrote ‘campaign manager’ and ‘speech writer.’

Fast forward three decades and that prophecy has come true, just in a different capacity.

Alex is the founder of Serra Public Affairs. Based in downtown Augusta, the firm specializes in matters of public policy rather than public relations.

“It’s not advertising,” explains Alex. “We do public affairs so that can be anything from helping to drive charitable giving priorities for companies, to dealing with media on behalf of companies.”

Their client list includes Central Maine Power, New England Clean Energy Connect, and Poland Springs.

“We are really lucky to have a dynamic client portfolio,” says Alex. “And our clients are long term, that’s something I am really, really proud of.”

Her staff of six is mostly from Maine. “There are Democrats, Republicans, and Independents on our team,” notes Alex. “And regardless of that, we hold shared values and are therefore able to find unison with our client’s missions.”

A personal mission to bridge the gap between the political and media worlds is what led Alex to start Serra Public Affairs in 2014. “I just really saw an opportunity in Maine for the kind of work that we’re doing,” she explains. “There are tremendous public relations firms, advertising companies and legendary lobbyists, yet there was this little gray space of consulting firms that hadn’t been fully filled in our state.”

Alex’s journey started in New York City. “I grew up in Greenwich Village,” she says. With Broadway right around the corner, it’s no surprise that both of Alex’s parents have a background in live theater, as does her favorite and famous uncle, Raymond Serra. His movie credits include *Prizzi’s Honor* and *Gotti* as well as the television shows *Kojak*, *Murder She Wrote* and *Knots Landing*.

“He was one of those Italian actors that you see all the time,” Alex says. She smiles, adding, “most people recognize him from being the police chief in the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle* movies.”

Alex herself worked as a child actor from the age of 12 until 17. She did television commercials including one for Purdue chicken as well as television shows like *Law and Order*. She also played a role in Francis Ford Coppola’s movie, *New York Stories*.

“The most important thing I took away as a child actor was just being totally immune to rejection,” says Alex. “Because for every gig that you get, you go on 35 auditions up against the most beautiful and talented children in the world.”

After graduating from Smith College in Massachusetts, Alex decided to pursue her passion for reporting by enrolling at the University of Maine School of Law. “One of my mother’s best friends was an anchorwoman out in Los Angeles,” explains Alex. “She had a huge impact on my life. She told me, ‘Alex, no one will take you seriously unless you go to law school.’”

Initially, Maine was quite a culture shock for this New Yorker. “I didn’t have a driver’s license or a car when I got here,” she chuckles.

Alex recalls her first bout with Maine winters. “I was walking down the cobblestone streets of Hallowell at the time, and I was wearing heels,” she says, laughing. “There was ice everywhere. I looked over at my friend and said, ‘I know, who do I think I am.’ She looked back at me and answered, ‘Darling, I think you know who you are, I just don’t think you know *where* you are.’”

Alex secured a full-time position at Channel Six in Portland while attending USM, giving her hands-on experience in her field of choice while also helping to pay for law school.

“I started as an associate producer on overnights,” she says. “I would show up at midnight, work both the morning and noon newscasts and then head to law classes in the afternoon followed by studying for school at night.”

After graduating in 2002, Alex went to work at a local marketing firm. But just a few months later came a phone call. “It was the news director for Channel Six,” she recalls. “He told me there was an opening for a television news reporter in Bangor. I told him, ‘I’m in.’”

But Alex soon realized television reporting wasn’t what she wanted to do. “You know, when you’re in your 20s, you kind



Photo by Jason Paige Smith



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of take little deviations in life and I was really starting to get more interested in what was going on in Augusta and at the Statehouse.”

When a lobbyist associate job opened up at Preti Flaherty Beliveau in Augusta, she decided to go for it. “And I’m glad I did because it helped round out my experiences,” Alex says. “I wouldn’t be doing what I am today if I hadn’t taken that job. I’m so grateful to Ann Robinson, who is a partner there, for hiring me. She is one of the unsung legends of Augusta.”

Alex remained at Preti Flaherty Beliveau for several years, then decided to pursue another path, working on a political campaign in 2008. Just one year later, she found herself in yet another role, working as Walmart’s Director of Government Relations and Public Affairs for Northern New England.

She spent eight years in that position, but in 2014, Alex decided she needed to take a break from it all.

“At that point, I was exhausted,” she admits. “And that’s a really important part of my story because especially for women, we will drive ourselves into the ground until there’s just bare bones and nothing left. I needed to take some time for myself.”

Refocusing her life included a silent retreat and becoming a certified yoga instructor. Alex says the mind, body, and soul cleansing was what she needed to take the next step in her life, and no doubt the most risky- starting her own company.

She started with just one office. “And now, four years later, we have room enough for all of us, plus utilities and storage.” Alex is also now a member of the Augusta Board of Trades.

As for being a female entrepreneur, Alex has her own take on the title. “I don’t think of myself as a woman in business,” she says. “As I’m sure other women will say also, we all just get up and do our work. This is a 16-hour day, minimum, 7 days a week. Even if you’re not technically responding to an email, you’re thinking about it, making sure your team dynamics are good or asking yourself- did this come across the right way? Did I congratulate the team as a whole and individually enough this week? These things are constantly on my mind.”

She credits strong women as being a major influence in her life. Some of her best friends are those Alex attended the women-only Smith College with. And then there’s her 88-year-old mother. “She’s Sicilian,” Alex says, grinning. “On her 86th birthday, I asked what advice she would give people who’ve reached that age. She answered, ‘Be kind, but not stupid.’ I’ve carried that advice with me ever since.”

She’s passionate about a new podcast called Serra Speaks. “It’s all about women in business,” Alex explains. “There’s so much talk about women in business, but no one really talks with women about business.”

Her guests have included Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, Cumberland County Deputy District Attorney Jen Ackerman, and former Maine gubernatorial candidate Betsy Sweet.

Does Alex consider herself successful? She pauses before answering. “My firm, my friends, and my family that I surround myself with are a good indicator of where I am at in this life,” she says. “I am successful in love and friendship and depth of experience. But you know, I think we’re all a work in progress and we’re all on a journey. So even if I’m at the midway point of my life, it’s going alright.” •

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Patricia Schimph:

Tomboy, lobsterman, beauty queen, entrepreneur

BY MARY FRANCES BARSTOW

Patricia Schimph is starring in her own seafaring *Cinderella* story. The self-professed tomboy works on a lobster boat and does landscaping work, rarely wears makeup, and has been fiercely independent since childhood. Yet, last winter, encouraged by a friend, Patricia entered a beauty pageant. She now bears the crown and title, Miss Maine for America 2021. Not one to rest on her laurels, this entrepreneur is leveraging the success to draw attention to other Maine businesses and to her own professional photography endeavor, Eye Tide Images.

Patricia, 33, owns a home in Town Hill, a neighborhood of Bar Harbor. After graduating from Ellsworth High School, Patricia started her own landscaping business.

“Just me, my truck, and my hand tools,” she said. “That was my income for a few years. I started lobstering when I was 23. This will be my eleventh year working on a boat. It’s extremely strenuous. I’ve always been pretty athletic. I was always like the dirty little tomboy with knots in her hair and untied shoelaces.”

Entering a beauty pageant was the furthest thing from Patricia’s mind until a friend involved in pageants convinced her to give it a try. She called the director for a chat and to get some information, filed the application and entry fee, and answered questions for use in her biography for the judges, “so they can kind of get an idea of what you’re all about before the actual show,” she explained.

“It was very time consuming, all of this stuff. Because I joined so late, a lot of the other girls had like six months to a year to get ready.” Patricia had two months to put together four different outfits, practice interviewing with the judges, and practice walking in heels, “which is not something that I’d ever done before.”



Photos by Patricia Schimph, Eye Tide Images.

Getting a makeover and head shot was new, too. “Just basically everything involved in the preparation was something that was new to me,” she said. She needed an evening gown, and to get that garment tailored. She also needed a cocktail dress and a swimsuit.

“It was hard to find a swimsuit in March in Maine,” she observed. “There wasn’t a whole lot to pick from. I’d ordered some online and just nothing was quite what I liked or wanted. So, I ended up going into Walmart the day before I headed down to Portland for the pageant, ended up getting

a swimsuit there, and ended up winning the swimsuit award for the whole event!”

Patricia, whose parents are divorced and who is younger than her two sisters, is close with her mother, who was thrilled with her daughter’s pageant success.

“My mom and I are very, very close. She’s loved every second of the process of this because she gets to kind of live vicariously through the whole thing. And she was just so proud and so excited,” said Patricia. While guests were limited at the pageant due to COVID-19, Patricia’s mom was there.

“She bought a whole new outfit. She was just so excited. She’s been one of my biggest supporters in everything—not like a blind supporter. She wouldn’t encourage me to do something if she didn’t actually think I was good at it.”

For example, Patricia said, it was her mother’s encouragement that led to her singing with bands. “She’s just one of the most special people. Everything that I do, I do pretty much for her.”

Being raised by a hard-working single mother inspired Patricia to “dig the well before I need the water, and establish these things so that life will be easier sooner rather than later.”

In addition to lobstering and landscaping, Patricia launched a photography business. She has a website [eyetideimages.com] and her prints hang in one gallery, soon to be two galleries. “I’m trying to set myself up for a future where I don’t have to work so hard,” she said.

These days, her time is also spent representing the Mrs. [and Miss] Maine America Pageant at various businesses and even at children’s birthday parties, if young fans invite her, as some recently did. The girls, six and eight, dressed in their own pageant finery and attended a Mother’s Day event at which guests got to meet Miss Maine and her mom.



Patricia Schimph, Miss Maine for America 2021, rocking her muck boots and tiara.

Photo by Boat Captain Richard Howland

“They’re 6 and 8. They were adorable! It was my favorite part of the whole day — they brought me an invitation to their birthday party. So, I did get dolled up, put on a dress and makeup and went to their cute little birthday party,” Patricia said. She is also slated to be a guest bartender, a guest food server, and other promotional appearances for the rest of the year.

The national competition is in Las Vegas this month. While only five wom-

en competed for Miss Maine America 2021, there will be 50 vying for the crown in Vegas. Still, Patricia said she never expected to win, and in addition to the crown, she came away with the evening gown award, swimsuit award, most photogenic, and most inspirational woman award.

“It was a totally surreal feeling. I had no expectations,” she said. “I was kind of like, ‘Well, when this is over, I’m go-

ing to be kind of relieved because this is a lot.’ It was like a full-time job. But now here we are.”

Maine fashion designer Ashley Lauren is sponsoring the state’s national Miss Maine for America and Mrs. Maine America contestants by providing outfits, Patricia said. And professional photo shoots by Susan Costa have also been done.

“I don’t know what the prize package is,” she explained. “There’s a lot of sponsorships. With this particular one, one of the sponsors gave us all modeling talent contracts, and we get different services.”

Patricia is enjoying these new opportunities because, “quite frankly, I’m getting too freaking old to work on the boat! I’ve known that lobstering was only ever just going to be a means to an end for me. I never wanted to get my license, become a captain, and get my own boat or anything. I just wanted to — I enjoy getting paid to work out, basically, because it is such a strenuous job.”

She’d still love to spend time on a boat, but as a photographer rather than crew.

“I love that aspect of it,” said Patricia. In addition to sunrises, sunsets, and creatures of the sea, she said, “I get such joy out of giving people good photos of themselves.” She’s done several portrait sessions for friends and family as gifts, as well as capturing other crew on the working waterfront.

Having to be glammed up all the time is stressful for this tomboy, but she’s eager to maximize her opportunities.

“I still had makeup from high school,” said Patricia. “I had not added to my makeup for years. Now, every time I go out anywhere, people are like, ‘Oh, Miss Maine,’ and they want pictures. I feel like I always have to be ready to be photographed, and was told by the pageant director that, ‘You’re representing at all times. So, when you do interviews, when you do appearances, look the part of a princess,’ basically. This isn’t my thing, but this year is going to be over so fast.”

For more information on the Miss Maine America Pageant, visit www.mrsmaine.net/page1, or search for “Mrs. Maine America Pageant” on Facebook. •

HOME ORGANIZING IN 2021

BY KIM COREY

On the heels of Marie Kondo's blockbuster book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* and the Netflix series *The Home Edit*, COVID-19 thrust homeowners into new work-from-home situations and left many in need of new space. With a quick Google search one can find professional home organizers to revamp systems, make room for a new office, unpack and set-up from cross-country moves, or downsize and declutter for that move to a smaller footprint. If you are worried about someone coming into your home, you can opt for virtual organizing.

Since beginning *Finely Sorted Organizing* in 2000, I have been organizing virtually and find it a natural extension of on-site work. Using a cooperative process, the client and I talk through their target possessions until the area of focus is as desired in function and appearance. I ask questions, offer tips along the way like good storage ideas, and give lots of encouragement!

Within about 15 minutes, after they start making decisions about the things that clutter up their homes, clients begin to feel relief. Once they see the quick progress they are making, I see them suddenly become focused on the process.

General organizing principles include reviewing contents/files annually, organizing when rested and fed, possessing only what you use and/or love, giving homes to everything nearest to where it's used, using dividers or boxes to separate categories, put similar things together, label, and do not overstuff an area, so that everything is easily accessible. Each situation is unique, so the rules bend and change according to the art of the organizer's experience and the client's needs.

Clients often report feeling overwhelmed. They start an organizing project only to get interrupted and sidetracked. With a home organizer, or an organized, patient friend, you will stay focused and have an easier time letting go of things than you would alone. Being overwhelmed is largely due to not being methodical while going through the contents.

Closets are a haven for chaos. I like to start there because an average-sized closet can usually be organized in a couple hours, which is about all the average overwhelmed, busy person can handle.

Larger walk-in closets are another story and take a bigger time commitment. Elfa offers built-in closet systems that are fairly easy to adjust. Before you buy, clean out your closet so you know exactly what space you need for your categories of clothes. You may want to include drawers for belts and a special hanger for scarves.

First, Google your project to research. Then schedule a two-to-three-hour block of time with an organizer or an organized friend around a change of seasons. Gather trash bags, cleaning supplies, one or two

types of hangers that suit you, and pen and paper for to-dos which will come up as you go through your things. Be sure to include off-season clothes in the big revamp, which hopefully are in a sealed, clear plastic bin or at least well labeled.

Thin, velvet-covered hangers grip the clothing well but can leave a crease on the shoulders because they are so thin. Plastic hangers can break easily but clothes slide on and off easily—sometimes that is good and sometimes not. Wider, padded hangers leave no creases but allow less room for the collection. I like



Kim Corey of Finely Sorted Organizing.



It's a good idea to presort your clothes before reorganizing.



A couple different types of hangers are important for a successful closet overhaul.

wooden clamping hangers for pants because they leave no crease halfway down the leg. When you decide on your chosen hanger try to remain consistent and have only one or two types, facing all the same direction. Uniformity is important in organizing. If the hangers are the same, then you can better focus on the piece of clothing.

Prepare your workspace. Be sure the furniture is clear to provide a surface for sorting articles as you take them out of the closet. Start at the left end of the closet and work your way right. As you take out a piece, name it a category: pants, tank, T-shirt, sweater, dress shirt, shoes, etc. and place it in its own space. Be sure not to intermingle categories! Space between categories is what gives them their value. Why? Because you can identify them easily and quickly.

For each item, ask yourself if you have worn it in the last year. If not, why? This further inquiry is what will keep you from getting stuck. Is it too big or too small? Uncomfortable fabric? Poor design or color on you? Lack of drape or opaqueness? Stain, hole, snag, misshapen, or in need of repair or hemming? Out of style or simply bored of it? You don't have to have a reason, but it usually makes it easier to toss it in the donation pile if you can figure it out.

If an item is purely sentimental, but you don't like it on, maybe you could display it somehow or wrap it up for storage elsewhere. If you need it for work or a special occasion, but you don't like it, could you find another that suits you better? Note that on your to-do list.

If it was expensive but you never wear it, you could try to resell it. Donation is also a good idea. Be mindful, however, about making conditions about where the donation goes. Added deliveries and longer storage time hampers the cleanout process. Place donations in a trash bag as you go so there is no picking through a second- or third-time reconsidering. As a bag gets full, take it out to the hall so you don't get bogged down in volume.

After everything is sorted, give the closet a good cleaning. Replace items by color or category. I prefer categories of use, such as all pants together rather than in a color group as some current trends suggest. Store off-season things elsewhere if you have no deep pockets in your closet where they could go, but try not to store them in the attic, basement, or garage because of conditions and difficulty accessing. Use a guest room closet, if available. I'm not a fan of under the bed as it makes it harder to clean. I like shoes around my wall on the floor so I can step into them easily. Less-used pairs, I put above my hanging clothes, making sure first they are clean. Sweaters are always a challenge to keep from being stretched out and wrinkled. Here's a hack you might like to try—fold the sweater down the center, place a hanger upside down under the armpit. Fold arms and torso over the hanger and hang with others.

The goal is to have only what you use easily accessible. A visually appealing closet allows you effortless dressing in the style and look you are seeking. Ideally, it feels as though you are in a shop selecting off the rack to start your day! With the same methodical process, you can do any room, any content. I have assisted clients with organizing tools, boxes of paper, "junk drawers," men's closets, kids' rooms, refrigerators, attics, and more in the same general way as the closet. Your home should be a sanctuary where you store belongings that you need and love, while reserving plenty of space for you to just be. •

ABOUT MAINE

Events around Maine this month

BY SHEILA D. GRANT

November brings with it the sparkle, excitement, and unique shopping opportunities of the upcoming holiday season. With COVID-19 numbers once again on the rise, it's best to check ahead, but with any luck, more festivals, craft fairs, light parades, and other events will remain ours to enjoy. Unless otherwise noted, all events follow CDC masking recommendations. Here are a few excellent ways to enjoy Maine this month:

A NIGHT TO SHINE: BEER & WINE TASTING NOVEMBER 5

The Enchanted Gables Wedding Venue in Oakland hosts this fundraiser for the ShineOnCass Foundation, which "provides financial and volunteer support to ... build stronger communities led by future generations who make community service and kindness part of everyday life." The event includes beer and wine, hors d'oeuvres, Ring a Bottle game, basket raffle, and live auction. First 100 tickets sold entered into a special drawing. For information or to purchase tickets, visit shineoncass.org or email shineoncass@gmail.com.

COMEDY NIGHT WITH JODY SLOANE NOVEMBER 12

The 49 Franklin Reception Hall and Mystic Theater brings Best of Boston headliner Jody Soane, with Greg Boggis, to the area. Doors open 6 p.m. Show begins at 8 p.m. Pub food menu available. Follow Comedy Night with Jody Sloane on Facebook for more information.

EARLY BIRD PAJAMA SALE & BED RACES

NOVEMBER 13 >>>

During this annual Early Bird Pajama Sale in Bar Harbor (beginning at 6 a.m.), extra discounts are offered if you wear your jammies! Bed Races start at 10 a.m., with teams from area businesses and organizations running their decorated beds down Cottage Street. For more information, go to visitbarharbor.com.

EIGHTH ANNUAL VETERANS DAY 5K ROAD RACE NOVEMBER 13

Held virtually last year, this road race is live in 2021, kicking off at 10 a.m. at the Wells Elks Lodge. Sponsored by the Wells Chamber of Commerce, the event sees between 120 and 150 runners annually. Proceeds benefit Honor Flight Maine, a nonprofit that transports veterans to Washington D.C. to tour the memorials. For more information or to register, visit www.wellschamber.org.

NINTH ANNUAL MAINE HARVEST FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITION NOVEMBER 20-21

Experience and enjoy the fall harvest of over 200 Maine famers and festival food producers at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor. Sample sips from Maine vintners, brewers, and distillers. Fiber artisans, Maine chefs, and home cooks will be showcasing their products. Guests are strongly encouraged to wear masks at all times inside. For more about this award-winning event, visit the maineharvestfestival.com website and follow on Facebook.

MASTERWORKS II—BEETHOVEN'S 8TH NOVEMBER 21

The rich sounds of Mendelssohn, Saint-Saëns, and Beethoven will move and inspire during this Bangor Symphony Orchestra performance at the Collins Center for the Arts in Orono. Lucas Richman is the conductor, with Mark Kosower, principal cellist of the renowned Cleveland Orchestra and a celebrated soloist, performing. In-person ticket holders receive digital access. Digital-only tickets are also available. Visit bangorsymphony.org for more information.



THE POLAR EXPRESS NOVEMBER 26-DECEMBER 23

Each year, the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Company & Museum hosts THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride. For 2021, the fun begins at the outdoor boarding platform. The conductor boards passengers onto 10 coach cars decked out for the holidays. Christmas music entertains on the way to the "North Pole" for a peek at Santa waving as he prepares his sleigh for departure. On the return trip, there's hot chocolate and cookies waiting back at the station. All passengers are required to wear masks. Call (207) 828-0814 or visit mainenarrowgauge.org/holidayexpress for more information.

HOULTON HOLIDAY LIGHT PARADE NOVEMBER 27

This annual event, beginning at 6 p.m. on the Saturday following Thanksgiving, ushers in the Christmas season, including the arrival of St. Nick himself! The parade features about 30 decorated units, and costumed singers and dancers. Typically, Santa and Mrs. Claus light the town Christmas tree and then go inside, but visits with children may take place outside this year. For more information, call (207) 532-4216 or visit greaterhoulton.com.

GREATER FORT KENT CHAMBER ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR NOVEMBER 27-28

The University of Maine at Fort Kent is home to one of the longest-running craft shows in Northern Maine. With about 125 exhibitors and fun door prizes, this juried show draws around 250 people annually. Call the Greater Fort Kent Area Chamber of Commerce, (207) 834-5354, for more information. •

LOW STRESS THANKSGIVING DECOR

Setting a festive table doesn't have to be expensive or overwhelming!

BY SARAH HOLMAN

This year, Thanksgiving feels like a bigger deal than usual. Most gatherings were severely limited, if not canceled, in 2020. While caution is still the recommendation of the CDC, many of us are looking forward to a turkey day that feels a bit more normal this fall.

Thanksgiving 2021 may be the first time you're setting a holiday table to accommodate more than immediate family in over a year. It's exciting, but after a long stretch of limited hosting, it can also be overwhelming. And with talk of a national shortage of turkey (specifically smaller turkeys) and canned goods, it's easy to feel the creep of holiday prep anxiety. The good news is, of all the seasons and holidays to decorate for, Thanksgiving and autumn in general are arguably the easiest. There are so many low-and-no cost objects that can be used in decorative ways throughout the home. In fact, gathering the supplies you need for a festive Thanksgiving may be as simple as walking out your back door!

Centerpieces are traditionally used to bring a special visual to your holiday table, but you can also decorate sideboards, mantles, shelves, or even windowsills, depending on your space. Consider investing in an assortment of clear glass (not patterned glass) vases or jars. This investment could be less than a dollar a piece if you look at thrift shops, garage sales, or bargain stores. Fill these vessels with autumnal items like unshelled mixed nuts, acorns, pinecones, pears, apples, cranberries, or small gourds. One item per jar makes for the best presentation.

You can also use wider jars or vases to house candles. Fill the bottom with sand or small, natural colored stones, then nestle a pillar candle into the base. Other pretty, inexpensive vase fillers are dried corn, beans, peas, or wild rice. If you're using a faux candle, you could use a bird's nest (from a craft store) for the base to rest the candle on, then surround it with acorns or small pine cones for a layered effect.

Group the vases at the center of your table with more natural objects scattered around for a warm, simple centerpiece. Take advantage of the decorative gourds, squashes, and small pump-



Photo by Libby Penner | unsplash.com

kins available everywhere from farm stands to mainstream grocery stores. These colorful, festive pieces are great on their own, or carve the tops out to fit a tealight for a natural candle holder. Remember to keep the decor low enough that guests can see each other across the table!

If you're decorating a mantle or other surface where height isn't an issue, you can arrange tall, dried grasses or flowers, corn husks, or cut twigs (with or without leaves still attached) in taller vases. This is a nice way to create layers and levels without the expense of fresh floral arrangements. Dried Japanese lanterns, bittersweet, and hydrangea are wonderful fall foliage options, as well.

Another beautiful (and delicious) centerpiece option for your Thanksgiving table is a monochromatic, edible arrangement. Fill a shallow wooden bowl with food items in the same color family. For example, a purple centerpiece might include figs, red grapes, pears, plums, pomegranates, dark-shelled nuts, and blackberries. You could arrange the same assortment in the classic emblem of Thanksgiving: the cornucopia. This symbol of plenty is designed to look like a goat's horn and is usually overflowing with flowers, fruit, and corn.

Another option, of course, is to let the meal be your centerpiece. If your table is large enough to hold all the serving dishes, arrange them in the middle of the table and simply add candles for ambiance. If you still want to add a decorative flare, consider something at each place setting, like a small pumpkin, a fun napkin ring, or an individual treat like a turkey-shaped chocolate.

Whatever your Thanksgiving table looks like this year, it will be the people with you, either in person or via screen, that truly complete the holiday. •



Shannon Butler

ALL IS CALM: A Maine Christmas Reader

Edited by Shannon Butler

\$16.95
softcover,
nonfiction
anthology

Published by
Maine's
Islandport Press.

There are not very many Christmas books out there for adults. Of course, adults can, and do, love the same holiday stories from their youth, as well as the new ones enjoyed by the children in their lives. But what if someone wants to explore Christmas from a more mature and nuanced perspective? The answer to that question is 2019 Maine Literary Awards Finalist *All Is Calm*, a Christmas-themed anthology edited by born-and-raised Mainer Shannon Butler.

All Is Calm is a collection of stories, essays, and poetry that gives readers

a window into life during the holidays for Mainers from throughout the state and throughout history. This anthology spans nearly 200 years of Maine history, 200 years of white Christmases and gifts of all kinds, 200 years of Mainers reflecting on the world around them and embracing the holidays despite the setbacks they faced in their daily lives, 200 years of verses and laughs and thoughts from understated and wise Maine writers.

Christmas has always held a special place in Maine's past and present, and that is no less true for Butler.

“My ancestors clearly saw the advantages and value of being in Maine long before I was born. Perhaps long enough ago that Maine is now woven into our shared DNA. This may be why I have no doubts that I will continue spending every Christmas here, surrounded by piles of snow and endless evergreens,” said Butler. From title to cover art to content, *All Is Calm* evokes a sense of tranquility and wonder in any reader and makes the perfect holiday gift for any Christmas-loving Mainer in your life.

Some standouts from the collection include the prelude, *The Glory of Maine at Yuletide* by John N. Cole—a lyrical, sweeping essay that sets the tone for the entire anthology, and *Christmas on Naskeag Point* by Roy Barrette. *Christmas on Naskeag Point* is a gruff-but-tender piece about Maine’s resistance to much of the commercialization of the holidays, and serves as a beautiful example of the Maine way of life. *All Is Calm* provides a chance to embrace the nostalgia and majesty of the past, to appreciate life in Maine as we know it today, and to find and revive new-old traditions for many Christmases to come.

As Mainers enter the darker days of November and the whiter landscapes of December, it is a perfect time to reflect on the uniqueness of the state of Maine and to find delight and joy in stories from all over that feel both far away and completely familiar. Is there anything more charming than Christmas in Maine? •

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE

ISLANDPORT PRESS



THE SCALLOP CHRISTMAS

By Jane Freeberg

Illustrated by Astrid Sheckels

\$17.95, hardcover, children’s picture book

Times were tough in the small New England fishing village where Marcie lived. No one had any money, and work was hard to find. So the villagers rejoiced one glorious fall when an unexpected bounty of scallops filled their little bay. For young Marcie, a week of harvesting scallops also brought an unexpected adventure and a lesson about love that she would never forget. *The Scallop Christmas* is a 2010 Maine Lupine Honor Award Winner.



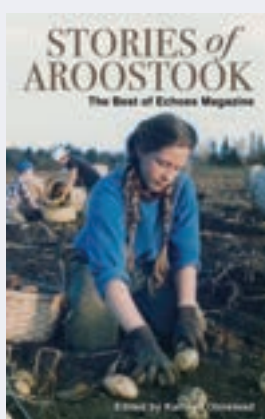
STORIES OF AROOSTOOK:

THE BEST OF ECHOES MAGAZINE

Edited by Kathryn Olmstead

\$17.95, softcover, nonfiction anthology

For nearly thirty years, *Echoes* magazine brought the culture, heritage, landscape, and people of Aroostook County to readers in Maine and across the United States. What started as a portrait of a place quickly evolved into a magazine with a mission—affirming the value of living simply with respect for nature, not as an escape, but as a way of life. *Stories of Aroostook* is a curated collection of articles and essays from the pages of the beloved quarterly magazine, all capturing the spirit and sense of place that makes Aroostook County unforgettable.

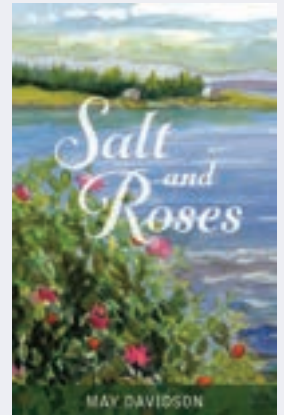


SALT AND ROSES

By May Davidson

\$17.95, softcover, nonfiction essays

Salt and Roses is a charming collection of essays for those who appreciate simple pleasures, like the beauty of human relationships, the playfulness of animals, and the charm of boating along the coast of Maine—combined with some heartfelt laughter along the way. Author May Davidson writes about her life experiences and encourages readers to appreciate life and find value in the people and places around them. She feels the state’s landscape can seem as alive as any person.

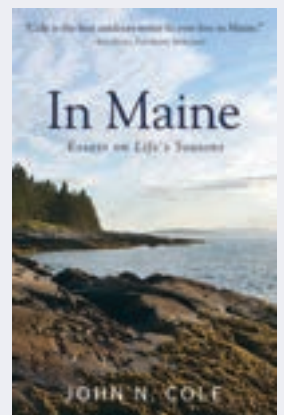


IN MAINE

By John N. Cole

\$16.95, softcover, nonfiction essays

John Cole’s classic *In Maine* is a sometimes moving, sometimes lyrical, but always a personal book that reveals a man examining the progress of his life and a man reveling in a natural world that not only unfolds around him, but also engages him as an active participant. This Islandport Press edition features selected essays that first appeared as “John’s Column” in the *Maine Times*, the influential newspaper he co-founded in 1968 and guided during its glory days in the 1970s, as well as additional essays that speak to the wondrous rhythms of life in Cole’s signature style and his enduring passion for the outdoors.



Look to the outdoors for **HOLIDAY DECORATING**

BY LYNETTE L. WALTHER

With the holidays just weeks away, we are scouting home and garden for seasonal decorating inspirations and materials. Although, getting into the holiday spirit is easy when you look to nature. Whether you are on a strict budget or not, holiday decorations don't have to cost a fortune when you decorate naturally. Keep in mind that if you don't have ready access to greenery on your own property, gathering it requires permission from the landowner. But a little goes a long way, and evergreen foliage can even be recycled after the holidays to mulch perennials or young shrubs for winter protection.

- **LIGHT UP AN URN** - Fill an urn with pine, spruce, fir, cedar, and holly and wind a string of outdoor lights through. Try a pair to flank an entry door for a holiday welcome. Add color with a big red bow or go slightly nontraditional with silver or gold accents. A word of caution on using strings of lights on evergreens — be sure to use LED lights that do not produce heat which can cause “burn” marks on living trees and shrubs.

- **HOLIDAY WREATH** - Use a wreath form or repurpose a wire coat hanger to tie on small bundles of greenery. Add pine or fir cones and holly berries for accent. Dried flowers and seed pods are also nice enhancements. You can also go simple by fashioning a wreath with birch branch tips. Remember to add a generous bow for good measure. There are more places to hang a wreath than on a door. Try a single wreath or a series of small wreaths suspended from an opulent length of ribbon and hung in windows.

- **MAKE A SWAG** - Don't have the time or desire to fashion a wreath? Make a swag instead. Collect a variety of greenery or gaggle of cones. Simply tie them together and add a bow or a bunch of colorful berries. If you have a decorative shovel, a piece of driftwood, for example, or other item that would make a good starting point, use that to attach your swag ingredients.

- **FRESH GARLAND** - More evergreen foliage can be fashioned into a garland to drape a doorway, windows, a porch, a stair rail or mantel for fragrance and holiday sparkle when you add a string of tiny white or multi-colored lights to the garland. Accent with red berries, pine or fir cones, dried flowers, or seed pods, feathers, whatever your imagination dictates.



Top: Welcome to the garden! Something as simple as a fir wreath can dress up and set the tone for the holidays. *Bottom:* Start with a birch-twig wreath, add some personal touches of greenery or a string of battery-operated lights. Photos by Lynette L. Walther



Brown paper packages dressed up with red berries and sprigs of fir or cedar. Stencil or spray paint contractor's kraft paper for even more originality. *Photo by ProvenWinners*

• **NATURE'S WRAPPING PAPER** – Start with a can of spray paint (try gold or silver, as well as red or green), a roll of kraft paper or plain unprinted newspaper. Select a variety of natural items, fern leaves, cedar, pine, or fir tips, etc. Position greenery on paper and lightly spray your natural “stencils,” moving them around to create a pleasing pattern. A little greenery tucked into the ribbon bow adds an extra, thoughtful touch.

• **FRESH CENTERPIECE/TABLE TOPPERS** – Include the holiday table with an arrangement you fashion from conifer cones, holly berries, and greenery. Add a string of battery-powered mini-lights, glass or other tree ornaments to suit the mood. Or pull out those pedestal dishes to stack and create a Christmas “tree” of greenery.

• **FILL A WINDOW BOX** – Long after those geraniums and annuals in the window box have been cleared out, it is now time for them to shine again. Gather pine or fir cones, and fill those boxes brimming (If soil has been removed, fill lower two-thirds of box with something light like crushed paper or empty plastic bottles) and add sprigs of fir tips or pine.

Strings of lights, a colorful bow or glass Christmas balls add sparkle and contrast.

• **GRAPEVINE TREE** – Wild grapevines can do more than form wreath bases. Create a series of consecutively smaller wreaths to stack or wind vines into a cone shape which can be decorated with natural accents to form a “tree.” Flexible grapevines can also be used to create large spheres to add lights to and hang from tree branches or to create stars lit with strings of lights.

• **DON'T FORGET THE BIRDS** – We collect good pine and fir cones whenever we see them to save and use for holiday decorations. Cones make great little bird “feeders” when packed with a suet/peanut butter mixture and rolled in birdseed. Try stringing a line of these decorative cones to give our feathered friends a holiday treat.

• **GALVANIZE YOUR OUTDOOR CONTAINERS** with glittery galvanized buckets, watering cans, and tubs. Simply add greenery and a cheerful, red-plaid bow or glittery red or silvery ornaments, and “plant” a row of buckets along the walkway. Add battery-operated twinkle lights for a nighttime display. •

From top: Brilliant red berries decorate this Berry Poppins winterberry holly with a natural twist. *Photo by ProvenWinners* | The color red stands out in the landscape. A cheerful red lantern and a bit of white pine for contrast stage a welcome worthy of any entrance. *Photo by Lynette L. Walther* | Don't forget our feathered friends this holiday season. Pack pinecones with a mixture of peanut butter and birdseed and string where they can reach them. Don't be surprised if the squirrels take advantage of your holiday offering. *Photo by Lynette L. Walther* | Winter-safe ceramic pots can be dressed up with ornaments and greenery for the holidays to add color to the landscape. *Photo by Lynette L. Walther*



GINGERBREAD FUDGE

BY JIM BAILEY, THE YANKEE CHEF

Photos courtesy Jim Bailey

This fudge tastes exactly like gingerbread, I promise! Light, smooth and very creamy, this noncook version takes only minutes to make and even less time to eat. Make a batch to share. See the *Note* below for alternate ways of making this fudge if all you have is marshmallows. It will be just as good!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (12-oz.) bag white chocolate chips
- 1 1/4 cups marshmallow crème (see *Note*)
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk
- 1/2 teaspoon each cinnamon and ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon each allspice and nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves

INSTRUCTIONS

- Line an 8-inch square pan with waxed or parchment paper and set aside. Place all ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium low heat. Continue to heat until everything is melted and smooth, stirring a few times. Immediately pour into prepared pan and refrigerate at least 2 hours, or until firm.

Note:

- If you do not have marshmallow creme, it is easy enough to make your own or use just marshmallows in this recipe instead. If you decide to use all marshmallows, add an extra 2 tablespoons evaporated milk. Here are a couple of tips using marshmallows and marshmallow creme.

- You can substitute 1 (7-oz.) container of marshmallow creme with 4 cups mini marshmallows or 40 large marshmallows. Place 1 (16 oz.) bag of marshmallows in a large saucepan with 1/4 cup corn syrup and slowly heat and stir until smooth. Transfer to a covered container and cool.

- 10 large marshmallows equal 1 cup mini marshmallows, which is 2 ounces. One (7-oz.) jar marshmallow creme equals 2 1/2 cups, or 1 ounce of fluff equals about 1/3 cup. •

THANKSGIVING MEMORIES

BY SHELAGH TALBOT

This year we celebrate a special anniversary. In 1621, the Pilgrims of Plymouth had their first feast of thankfulness for the excellent harvest after that first year in their newly established colony. When I was a kid, I was interested in the history of the area where I lived, which was not far from Plymouth. We lived in a very old house, too – I’m guessing the 1770s. It had a huge fireplace and a fat chimney I was sure Santa could easily make it down.

I was, however, very curious about those first settlers in our part of the world. Not far from where I lived was a little path to a rock with a handprint on it. They called it Agawam’s Rock because supposedly a chief by that name had been shot by the colonists and as he died, he fell against that particular rock. You can see the handprint quite clearly and I was a true believer at the ripe old age of seven. The Native American factor was what I was most interested in, and I have felt for a long time that the Wampanoags and especially their leader Massasoit were not as honored as they should have been by their participation in this early gathering.

One year our mother decided the whole family would celebrate Thanksgiving at the Plimouth Plantation, which is the name of this special living museum close to where the Pilgrims originally set foot on dry land. They had hoped to arrive in Virginia, but lucky for us, they landed in Massachusetts. The spelling of the name of this museum is the same as the way William Bradford spelled it—he was a first settler who came on the Mayflower. This plantation, which was founded in 1947, is such fun to visit—in addition to early settler homes made of weathered grey clapboards, huge chimneys, and sometimes thatched roofs, there are fascinating exhibits and people demonstrating the crafts from 400 years ago. Later on, the organization developed a separate native village of Wampanoags which I would have loved to have seen as a child. But we were immersed as we walked the streets of the little settlement and marveled.

There’s so much to view and so much to learn. When you go to this living museum, your ticket will also include a visit to the replica of the Mayflower, which is remarkably small. I was only seven, yet I noticed I was almost as tall as those long-ago grownups. The Thanksgiving celebration is a singular event at the site, and we were very excited to attend. I’ve discovered since that the Plimouth Plantation starts booking for this event in May and it gets rapidly filled up!

The feast was held in a big room with long tables. We were welcomed by someone impersonating Governor William Bradford and were served by people in period costume which added greatly to the magic. Some of the meal hearkened back to that first gathering, including the succotash (which comes from the Narragansett word “msickquatash” meaning a vegetable dish), winter squash, and cranberries—the latter additions thanks to the Wampanoags and their chief Massasoit. The natives also brought deer meat, but there remains a historical question as to whether turkey was actually served at that first celebration. That whole tradition, I found out later, was ascribed to a magazine called *Godey’s Lady’s Book* from the 1840s. Their editor, Sarah Josepha Hale, started publishing articles and recipes about the feast and on October 3, 1863, President Lincoln proclaimed it a national holiday.

My young brothers and I were enchanted by this Thanksgiving meal and the whole event. I still vividly recall someone in costume explaining the history of that first gathering. And I delighted in the costumed people who served us the food. Despite the fact that every seat in the room was filled, we still felt we were at a special, perhaps once in a lifetime, event. I recollect that the turkey tasted extra good, and the Succotash and pudding were so yummy. Being sucked back into the mid 1600s was a touchstone for our family for years. Today, when I think of Thanksgiving, I still remember that meal and the tangible atmosphere from all those years ago. It felt like family—we gathered gratefully with strangers, but the laughter and conversation felt like a coming-together of old friends. •



The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth, a 1914 painting by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe. *Burstein/Corbis/VCG/Getty Images*

QUESTIONABLE ADVICE

BY L.C. VAN SAVAGE

I love my dog. I love my husband. I do not love riding in the car with my dog and husband. Those two prefer the windows down, which leaves my hair (and the dog's) blowing all over the place. I can't seem to arrive anywhere without the frizzies. I've had to pick dog hair out of my mouth after donning a mask to go into stores. Is there any way to tactfully convince my husband to keep the windows up without seeming like a mean pet mom? —Fur Fatigued

You're asking if there's a "tactful" way to convince your husband to keep the windows up? Did he and Fido tactfully ask you if they could leave the windows down when you're on the road? I doubt it. And by the way, how old IS your car anyway? They've had A/C in cars since 1940 (I checked) and having A/C in cars means windows stay UP! Problem solved. Oh, and get a newer car, with the A/C option. If after that, your loving spouse and loving dog still make you keep the windows down, causing you to suffer frizzies and hairballs, start looking around for a nearby no-kill rescue/adoption establishment—for your husband.

When the days grow shorter and darker, I get gloomy, too. I try to keep up a positive and energetic front, but I feel like I must run on solar energy. There are days my thinking is foggy and my mood is dour, all for the want of some warm, golden rays of sunshine! How can I better keep my spirits and my energy up during our long Maine winters? —Gloomy Gus

Oh Gus, Gus, Gus—the answer to your problem is so simple. Florida. Hey, everyone's doing it. Any chance you can work remotely? If yes, and if you have no family obligations, pack up all your necessary stuff, especially techie stuff, and point your well-packed vehicle south, keeping the Atlantic Ocean constantly on your left, and eventually you'll have to end up in Florida, because after Florida, there's no place left to drive unless your vehicle has easily attachable pontoons. Might be helpful, too, if you've phoned ahead and reserved a nice mobile home or condo or yurt or something from maybe November through April somewhere in the Sunshine State. You'll be unfogged, undoured, energized, happy and spirited in the unrelenting Florida sunshine. Then come back to the real Paradise—Maine.

Is it really cruel to share fresh-grown zucchini with all of our friends and neighbors? I didn't know, when I put in twelve plants last spring, what would happen! I didn't leave piles of it on everyone's doorstep in the dead of night. I came prepared, with a large bag of zucchini, and several recipes in hand for zucchini bread, zucchini pickles, zucchini pizza and more. So why did people pretend not to be home when I arrived with my bounty? —Green Thumb

"Cruel" is maybe a word I have not heard connected to zucchini overload but you may have a point. The reason people drop to the floor and shriek "kill the lights!" when they see you strolling up their front paths with your largesse is because all the other gardener-loving neighbors have been trying to "kindly" unload the same bounty on them and all the other friends and neighbors well before you. It's hard to unload those squashes even when they're piled on the sides of highways with a big FREE sign. And by the way, what on earth were you thinking when you planted twelve zucchini plants last spring? Did you not really know what happens when you do that?? One zucchini plant can supply a good-sized family with lots and lots of zucchini bread, zucchini pickles, pizza, bowls filled with boiled and broiled and roasted and mashed zucchini, zucchini quiche, zucchini parmesan, souffles, zucchini baked Alaska, and a whole lot more. Next spring, plant flowers.



DOING THE
MOST GOOD

Veterans Give and Receive

Blanche Kelley, who goes by her last name "Kelley," remembered seeing an ad in Maine Seniors Magazine about charitable gift annuities with The Salvation Army. Kelley, who was familiar with annuities, placed a call to find out more about the annuity program. She explained to Planned Giving Director, Amy Anderson, that she likes making an investment with a good rate of return and at the same time making

a difference for those less fortunate in Maine. Kelley has supported The Salvation Army over the years with annual appeals for causes. "People need help and I trust The Salvation Army to help those where it is needed most," Kelley expressed.

When asked about her career, she got up from her chair and disappeared down the hall (her Pug, Ricki, following close behind). She returned with a pile of scrapbooks in her arms. The books were filled with photographs, letters, outstanding recruitment awards, and certificates spanning her military career. A certificate read "Nation's Top WAC recruiter for Northern Maine. Recommended for her honor on the basis of her performance as outstanding recruiter." A newspaper clipping by Portland Evening Express staff reporter, Lyn Liljeholm, read: "Perky Blanche Kelley, WAC Recruiter for the State of Maine, is her own best advertisement." Kelley is quoted as saying, "It's a wonderful life," referring to her Army service, sitting at recruiting headquarters on Congress Street, surrounded by papers to process.

Her military career began in 1950 when she enlisted in the U.S. Army in her home state of Indiana. She decided to join the military in honor and memory of her fiancé, Stanley, who was killed in the Korean War.

Kelley was assigned to Fort Lee, Virginia for training and then transferred to Washington, D.C. For 18 months she drove dignitaries such as Dwight D. Eisenhower, Charles de Gaulle, and General



Douglas MacArthur. She would pick them up at the Pentagon and drive them to appointments and to their quarters. She recalls that she would open the back car door and salute them. "It was captivating to be in the presence of these notable men," Kelley expressed.

In 1954 she was reassigned to Fort Williams, Maine and has never left. As a recruiter, her territory covered most of Maine and Northern New Hampshire. She spoke to senior class members at many area high schools, conducted informational programs over the radio station WIDE of Biddeford, and appeared in newspapers as a recruiting counselor of the Armed Forces, recruiting young ladies to enlist.

She was up front when she spoke to young women at high schools about what was involved with the training and the benefits of receiving an education all while serving the country.

After 23 years of service, Kelley retired in 1973 as a Master Sergeant, which is the military rank for a senior non-commissioned officer for performance and years of service.

*The Salvation Army salutes MSG Kelley for her service.
To learn about gifts that pay you back, contact Amy at 245.3734.*



Sgt. Kelley in NY City doing a radio tape with comedian Jack Benny.

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