

MWMI

MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

VOLUME 12 | ISSUE 6 | OCTOBER 2018

WOMEN'S WORK

Artistic Director & Conductor Emily Isaacson

Women in the trades

+ *Meet three Portland
Police officers*

Maine style

Responsibly sourced bags by Jess Hart Lynch

+ 5 ways to embrace fall

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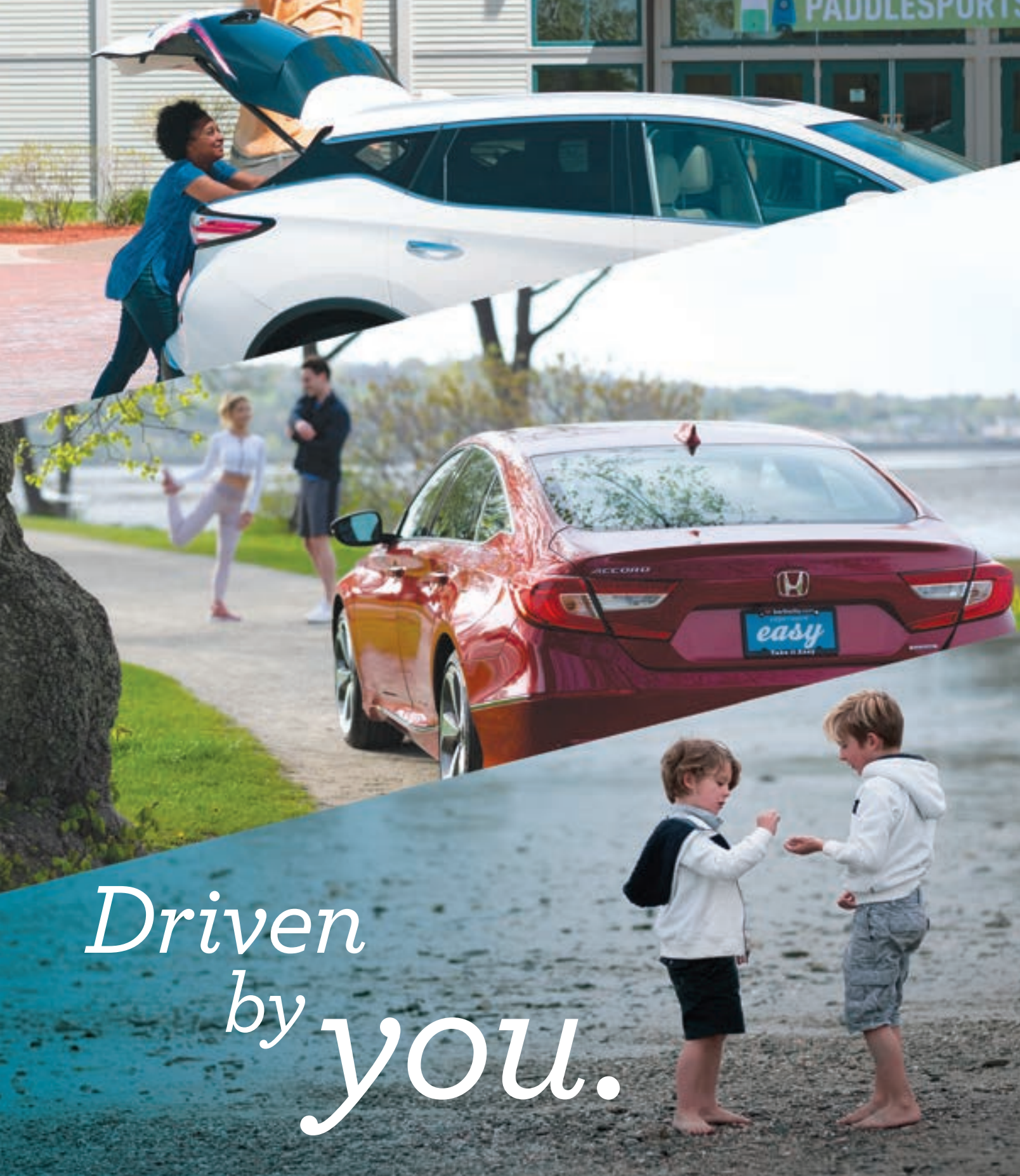
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At Ogunquit, home of the famous summer/fall Ogunquit Playhouse, enjoy "Jersey Boys" to Oct 28, 2018 evening or matinee, and dine at the Beach Lobster House right on Ogunquit Beach with indoor and outdoor seating. Bobby's Music Bar outside plus two lounges inside daily 8:00am-9:00pm with free evening beach parking adjacent!.

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Women work

When setting out to tackle a topic like women's work, the range is huge and the field is wide open. Let's face it: women work. We work in our jobs; we work in our homes, yards, and gardens; we raise children and take care of our families; we sit on boards and volunteer...we work a lot. So the challenge for our MWM team was to drill down and focus on just a few types of work that women in our community are doing.

Meet a couple of tradeswomen on page 30. Jennifer Somma, a mechanic-turned-carpenter who works as a field supervisor for Hardypond Construction, loves her work and that she is always learning new things. MJ Reed, a long-time electrician and the owner of MJR Electric, never expected to have a career in the trades. Reed learned from her dad initially, but then decided to seriously pursue the field while she was volunteering for Habitat for Humanity. She is driven by being self-employed and enjoys the ever-changing nature of her work.

Sara Ewing-Merrill is a pastor, a mom, a community builder and an activist who is always juggling. She is now a co-pastor with her husband at HopeGateWay, a diverse United Methodist congregation in Portland. While juggling this with her family life, last January Ewing-Merrill leaned on her interfaith connections to establish Greater Portland Family Promise, which provides housing, meals, case management and community for families with children experiencing homelessness. Read more on page 39.

Just over 10 percent of the sworn officers with the Portland Police Department are women, and we are featuring three of them in this issue. Detective Kelly Gorham, a sex crimes detective who handles most of downtown Portland, prefers the intricacies of long-term investiga-

tions rather than the crisis management and initial investigation of patrol calls for service. K9 Officer Michelle Cole works with her explosive detection dog Barni, who also goes home with her every night. Part of her work is being sure that Barni stays in great shape to do his job—her life depends on it. Officer Kate Phelan was an early childhood educator before she joined the Portland police force. Phelan is a patrol officer in the Deering neighborhood of Portland, where she encounters everything from routine traffic stops to domestic disputes, robberies and more. Read their stories on page 16.

I have worked since I was 12 years old. I've done menial jobs and important ones, boring and exciting, stressful and laid back. But I believe that most important work I've ever done was to raise my children. Though not only "women's work," I was mostly a single parent and I raised my kids thoughtfully, always putting their needs first and helping them all along the way to become independent adults—and today, they are. Hooray! That's the best performance review I could ever have. If you can relate to this, I think you will love this month's Momsense column by Maggie Knowles, on page 46. Knowles writes about Jennifer Smith, a stay-at-home mom of eight children, who also home schools her kids.

Thank you for reading Maine Women Magazine. Watch for our home issue, which will be on the stands in late October. Also, be sure to check out our Fall Expo, taking place on Nov. 10 at the Maine Mall in South Portland in the space formerly occupied by BonTon. All ticket proceeds go to benefit the Portland Boys & Girls Club. For more information: mainewomenexpo.com.



Lee Hews

ON THE COVER

Conductor Emily Isaacson, who is artistic director and conductor for both the Portland Bach Experience and the Oratorio Chorale, says she doesn't "fit the mold" some expect of a conductor. But it's the career she's wanted since she was 15 years old. Read her story on page 37.

Photo by Heidi Kirn



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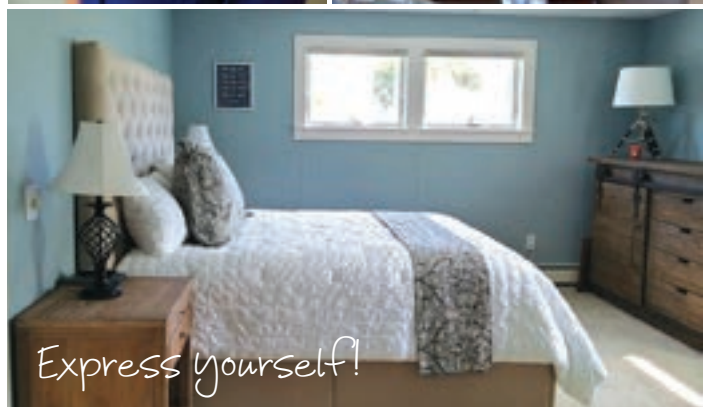
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"I'm a person who likes being in control and for the first time, I wasn't. I knew the experience would change me... and it did, in many ways, for the better." – *Sherri Turcotte, Lewiston, Maine*

Back in Control After Facing Breast Cancer



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Early Detection Saves Lives.

Oncology nurse Sherri was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer in August 2014. She had spent more than 20 years working with cancer patients only to now be a patient herself, receiving care from a team of doctors she knew extremely well. Her knowledge also helped her know what to expect from her treatment, which included a bilateral mastectomy, chemotherapy, radiation therapy and breast reconstruction.

With every step, she stayed focused on the next one, and her positive attitude (along with some laughter) carried her along the journey. After experiencing the care firsthand, she is prouder than ever to be part of the Central Maine Healthcare cancer team.

Central Maine Medical Center's Comprehensive Cancer Center provides a full range of services to help patients throughout their journey, from diagnosis to treatment to ongoing support. Our partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center in Boston, a world leader in cancer research and treatment protocols, also serves as a vital resource to our patients.



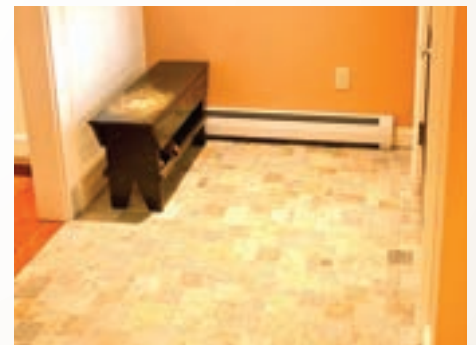
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FOOD FESTIVAL, HALLOWEEN AND WOMEN'S FUND GALA

Taste Maine's culinary delights during Harvest on the Harbor and celebrate 40 years of the Maine Women's Fund during an anniversary gala

WRITTEN BY AMY PARADYSZ



Photo courtesy of Harvest on the Harbor

Harvest on the Harbor

Oct. 16–21

Portland

Events during this Portland-based food-and-drink festival include Market on the Harbor, Lobster Chef of the Year, Oyster Fest, Different Roads (a tasty journey through Maine's culinary history), an On the Rocks cocktail party, and Hair of the Dog, an epic Bloody Mary battle and pig roast. These events support Maine Farmland Trust, Maine Aquaculture Association and the Southern Maine Community College Culinary Arts Program. *For more information: harvestontheharbor.com.*

Maine Women's Lobby 40th Anniversary Gala

Thursday, Oct. 4, 6–9 p.m.

Innovation Hall, 772 Stevens Avenue, Portland

The Maine Women's Lobby, which established Maine's Family and Medical Leave Act and passed the country's strongest law to address sexual harassment, is turning 40 and throwing a party. Honorees include Mary Bonauto, champion for LGBTQ+ rights; Joanne D'Arcangelo, champion policy leader for women and girls; Fatuma Hussein, champion for refugee and immigrant women and girls; Julia Kahrl, champion for reproductive rights; and Pat Ryan, champion for human rights and women's equality. *For tickets: mainewomen.org/mwl/40th-anniversary.*

Wabanaki Film 'Dawnland'

Oct. 5 at 2 and 6 p.m., Oct. 6 at 2 p.m. and Oct. 7 at 2 p.m.

Portland Museum of Art, 7 Congress Square, Portland

For most of the 20th century, government agents systematically forced Native American children from their homes and placed them with white families. "Dawnland" follows the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to contemporary Wabanaki communities in Maine to witness intimate moments of truth-telling and healing. The Oct. 7 screening will be followed by a panel discussion. *Tickets for this 86-minute film are \$8 general admission/\$6 for students with ID: portlandmuseum.org/movies/dawnland.*

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk

Saturday, Oct. 14, registration at 9:30 a.m. and opening ceremony at 10:30 a.m.

Fort Williams Park, 1000 Shore Road, Cape Elizabeth

This 3-mile fundraising walk in one of the most beautiful stretches of Maine shoreline is a workout for the soul as well as the body and an empowering fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. *Sign up in advance and start gathering pledges: makingstrideswalk.org/greaterportlandme.*

Ghoulwill Ball

Saturday, Oct. 20, 7:30–11 p.m.

The Portland Club, 156 State St., Portland

Load your glue guns, ladies! Goodwill of Northern New England's annual 21+ Halloween dance party, with several costume contests, is the perfect opportunity to showcase your creativity and get freaky with Motor Booty Affair. Proceeds benefit Goodwill's Workforce Fund. *Tickets are \$15 online: goodwillnne.org.*

Women Veterans Luncheon

Saturday, Oct. 27, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

184 Congress St., Rumford

This free annual program and luncheon, open to all female veterans, is hosted by the Department of Maine American Legion, which works to ensure women veterans are providing the Department of Maine with their issues and being properly considered as equal veterans in both ideas and action. *RSVP to Tricia Thurston at 207-357-3289.*



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ENFORCING



Officer Kate Phelan of the Portland Police Department on patrol.

THE LAW

Sex crimes Detective Kelly Gorham, K9 Officer Michelle Cole and Patrol Officer Kate Phelan are among the 17 women on the force keeping Portland safer

WRITTEN BY AMY PARADYSZ | PHOTOGRAPHED BY LAURYN HOTTINGER

Criminal investigator Kelly Gorham knew she wanted to be a detective by the time she was 10. K9 Officer Michelle Cole loves being on the job with her dog and Officer Kate Phelan discovered her knack for crisis management when she worked in a special education classroom.

These three Portland Police officers are among the 17 women on a total sworn force of 154. "It's like any other male-dominated field," Phelan says. "We're here, but there's not a ton of us."

DETECTIVE KELLY GORHAM, 41, OF CUMBERLAND

Gorham remembers that when she joined the Portland Police Department in 2002 she was one of 22 women. Coming off a two-year stint with Federal Border Patrol in Arizona, the Grafton, Massachusetts, native with a degree in criminology applied for municipal officer positions all over New England and got picked up by Portland.

"I never thought I would stay here," Gorham says. "I wanted someplace bigger, like Worcester or Boston. But I was surprised by how much crime there is here for a small city."

She worked drug enforcement and undercover with the plainclothes division, eventually married another Portland Police officer, and had two children, who are now 9 and 8.

"I don't really want to be out there doing the things I was doing in my twenties, going call to call," Gorham says. "You never know who will open the door, and I now prefer to use my brain more than my body. I prefer the intricacies of long-term investigations rather than the crisis management and initial investigation of patrol calls for service. And, having children—I want to go home to them."

But being a mom also makes her current work as a sex crimes detective all that more emotionally charged when the victims are children.

"I try to do everything I can for the victims, and sometimes it's not enough," Gorham says. "It's so hard to prove things. I need A

to Z to show a jury what happened. Jurors want evidence. I work my ass off, because it's a human being who has been violated."

Two detectives split the city, with Gorham handling all sex crimes that happen east of Forest Avenue. Her territory includes all of the Old Port, where alcohol and drugs are even more likely to be involved, blurring the distinctions of consent.

"It is easier for a female to tell me about a sex assault than to tell a male," says Gorham. "Nine times out of 10, I know that the girl's not lying, but how do I prove it? It really comes down to the quality of the case and whether there's proof."

And, Gorham says, sometimes the accused is innocent and it's her job to prove that. Either way, cases are never solved in an hour like they are on television.

"I just got a DNA hit on a burglary from three years ago, because that's how backed up things are at the Maine State Police crime lab," Gorham says. "But violent crimes—crimes against people rather than property—take priority."

She's the first person in her large Irish-Catholic family to go into law enforcement.

"I always wanted to put away the bad guys," Gorham says. "My parents were divorced when I was really young, and I think it had a lot to do with that. Sixteen years in, and I still think it's the best job out there. One successful case makes all the other ones okay to handle."



K9 OFFICER MICHELLE COLE, 40, OF CASCO

While some officers strive to leave work behind when they go home, K9 Officer Michelle Cole takes explosives detection dog Barni home with her to her husband, two kids and narcotics detection dog Kaine, who retired to pet status at the age of 8.

“Kaine was trained to sniff out marijuana,” Cole explains. “And when it was legalized, it sort of crippled us. His sniff used to be probable cause to search a vehicle. But you can’t untrain that.”

Since April, Cole has been working with Barni, a German shorthair pointer, patrolling bus stations and ferry terminals and responding to calls about bomb threats at the airport. An officer since 1998, Cole joined the K9 unit in 2001—the day before 9/11.

“If I go my entire career and I don’t find a thing, I’m totally OK with it,” Cole says. “I’ve had two other explosives dogs, and we never found anything. But we always train as if we will find it. Working with the dog is all about timing, positive reinforcement and appropriate corrections as necessary. The way we’re training, my dog thinks we go to work and play a game.”

But, for her, knowing the stakes of her dog’s ability to detect an explosive device, the work is serious—as well as sometimes physically demanding, dirty and wet.

“You need to be able to take care of yourself and be able to keep up with your own dog,” she says. “For me, the position is all the time. When you’re home you’re worrying about what your dog is doing, his eating and sleeping. Like an Olympic athlete who fuels their body for what they’re doing, I need to keep my dog healthy all the time.”

OFFICER KATE PHELAN, 27, OF SOUTH PORTLAND

Officer Kate Phelan studied elementary education and spent two years teaching special education before she joined the Portland Police Department. The two careers, though completely different on the surface, both involve crisis management, being part of a team and serving the community.

“Once you’re sworn in as an officer, you’re part of the family, and that’s clear right from day one,” Phelan says. “We’re in the cars alone for the most part, but we’re driving to calls and meeting our partner there.”

A patrol officer in the Deering neighborhood of Portland, Phelan encounters everything from traffic violations to theft, burglary, suspicious activity and domestic disputes. She’s also a member of the crisis negotiation team, having trained with the FBI in a 40-hour course on how to handle, for example, suicidal individuals, barricaded subjects and hostage situations.

“Females in general tend to be great communicators,” Phelan says. “We’re able to de-escalate a lot of situations through communication and tone of voice.”

There have been calls that have certainly gotten her heart pumping, but she relies on everything she learned not only in the FBI course but over 18 weeks of Maine State Police Academy and 14 weeks of field training.

“Your training and experience kicks in,” she says, “and you take control of the situation.”

“

I ALWAYS WANTED TO PUT AWAY THE BAD GUYS...SIXTEEN YEARS IN, AND I STILL THINK IT'S THE BEST JOB OUT THERE.”

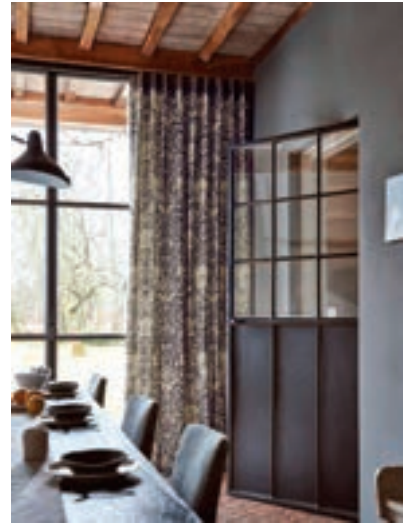
Women tend to be great communicators, says Officer Kate Phelan, 27, who is also a member of the crisis negotiation team. “We’re able to de-escalate a lot of situations through communication and tone of voice.”

Below: Officer Kelly Gorham directing traffic during a Sea Dogs game in Portland this summer.



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

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BY DESIGN

Architects Judy Johnson and Jessie Carroll enjoy challenging work and creative problem solving

WRITTEN BY PATRICIA MCCARTHY

As an architect, the longer you refine a project, the more beautiful and better it becomes. Improving upon improvements can become addictive and lead to some very long hours.

The time requirements involved in this profession are part of the reason it hasn't been widely appealing to women who are interested in also having a family.

"Balancing the pressures of family life and client needs can become a real challenge," says Judy Johnson, one woman who has successful-

ly managed those demands for more than 30 years. "It's more of a difficult path than some other careers."

The principal at Harriman in Portland raised three daughters while working and being married to a landscape architect.

"We made it work. I had a great husband," she says. "We don't have any family here at all, but we had a network of people we could call on if we got stuck. It was before the days of being able to work from home, so we relied on great friends and neighbors."

Johnson, 59, made it work because, essen-

tially, there was no way she wasn't going to make it work—she says she knew what she wanted to do for a living at age 10.

"It was all I've ever wanted to do," she says. "As a kid, I used to build with Lincoln Logs and draw all day long, and I remember my father saying that I should be an architect."

An experience with a questionable teacher in eighth grade made her fully determined to make that happen.

"We were required to take a home economics class, and on the first day, Miss Davis asked everybody to stand up and say what they'd like



Architect Judy Johnson, principal at Harriman in Portland, in her office on Middle Street.

"I don't do the same thing two days in a row, and I've been able to exercise the creative side of my brain," says Johnson, 59, who says she knew at age 10 that she wanted to be an architect.

Photos by Lauryn Hottinger



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Architect Jessie Carroll, an associate principal
at Whitten Associates in Portland.

Photo by Christina Wnek Photography



to do when they grew up. I said I want to be an architect, and she made fun of me! Can you imagine? She said, 'Well, girls can't do that!' She also told Barbara Peck that her purple suede bell-bottom pants didn't match her red shirt. So then it was 'I'll Show Her!'"

From that point on, Johnson took art and mechanical drawing classes and learned how to draft. At Virginia Tech, she immediately declared architecture as her major. She met her husband in school, and after working in Atlanta, they moved to Portland in 1987.

With Harriman, she's been involved in a range of corporate, municipal and educational projects—the InterMed Building on Marginal Way in Portland, Hilton Garden Inn on Commercial Street in Portland and Cliff House Maine resort and spa in Cape Neddick in York, to name a few. She also holds leadership positions in state and regional professional architect organizations and feels compelled to mentor newcomers to the profession, especially young women.

With frequent night meetings, her long hours persist—it's still common for Johnson to put in 13- to 16-hour workdays. But that hasn't interfered with her love for what she does for a living.

"I don't do the same thing two days in a row,



Carroll designed an addition and substantial barn renovation at this Freeport home.

Photos by Jonathan Reece Photography

and I've been able to exercise the creative side of my brain. I get a lot of joy from solving problems and providing solutions and making and exceeding expectations."

Johnson says working in a field dominated by men has been a non-issue for her.

"I don't think much about it and never have. I was not intimidated by men. I think it always

came down to feeling comfortable enough with myself. If I'm in a meeting with 12 men, it doesn't take long to have them know I really know what I'm doing."

Like Johnson, Jessie Carroll, an associate principal at Whitten Associates in Portland, says working in a male-dominated world hasn't been daunting for her because of the ap-



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The Presque Isle Community Center, designed by architect Judy Johnson, is a beacon for community engagement within the city. It includes a 30,000-square-foot recreation center with a gymnasium and indoor walking track, teen center, senior center and art center.

Photo by Siri Blanchette/Blind Dog Photo Associates

proach she has taken.

“My attitude has always been to do the job, do it well, and let my work speak for itself,” she says. “Just like any profession, you have to work hard to earn respect.”

Because Whitten’s clients are residential customers, Carroll, 32, says being a woman is actually an asset for her now, since many home-building decisions are made by women who appreciate her presence.

But she clearly recalls a time early on when she was encouraged to downplay her femininity.

“When I was in school being trained for interviews, I was told not to wear a skirt to a job site, not to wear jewelry—basically to look more like a man!”

Carroll senses that landscape has changed for the better.

“I hope my students aren’t thinking that way now, and they’ll just dress according to the situation, with practicality in mind.”

Carroll spent the past three years teaching architecture classes part-time at the University of Maine at Augusta because mentoring a new generation of architects is important to her.

“I’ve had so many great mentors along the

way—yes, all men! And they’re why I wanted to teach,” she says. “Architecture is a field where you can’t mail it in. I had a lot of people who encouraged me to stick with it when it was tough. I was very lucky.”

Many people don’t realize that becoming an architect “is the long game. It takes about 12 years,” Carroll says. “I had undergrad and graduate school, three years of internships and then a series of exams and five years before you’re licensed.”

And this long process happens in people’s 20s to early 30s, at the same time many are hoping to start families.

Carroll, who has a boyfriend, says she sees the time commitment to become an architect, along with the long hours of an architect’s work day, as deterrents still keeping women from the field. Things like maternity and family leave “would have to look pretty different” for motherhood to be accommodated better and work for her, she says.

She encourages anyone considering a career in architecture to job-shadow and talk with people about what it takes and pursue hands-on internships. Internships through college gave her practical experience that helped her land a great job in Boston early on,

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HAVE THEM KNOW
I REALLY KNOW
WHAT I’M DOING.”

and her first internship—after graduating from high school early—shaped her whole career path.

Carroll intended to become a nurse and geared her high school studies toward that. But a pre-college internship at Children’s Hospital in Boston put an abrupt end to that plan. “I very quickly realized that while I had compassion for others, I did not have the stomach for the medical field,” she says.

So she pursued Northeastern’s course catalog to see what else might pique her interest. She loved her first architecture classes and found her new pursuit immediately fulfilling.

“I was always a strong student, but I found the courses to be incredibly challenging. I loved it right off the bat. And I still do.”

Patricia McCarthy is a longtime writer and editor. She has three daughters, lives in Portland, and also has a photography business (patriciamccarthy.com).

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Dynamic work and the chance to be your own boss lead women into the trades

WRITTEN BY BAILEY O'BRIEN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY LAURYN HOTTINGER



Jennifer Somma, a mechanic-turned-carpenter who works as a field supervisor for Hardypond Construction, works at a job site in Scarborough.



MJ REED, A LONGTIME ELECTRICIAN AND THE OWNER OF MJR ELECTRIC, NEVER EXPECTED TO HAVE A CAREER IN THE TRADES.

She learned electrical work as an unofficial apprentice for her father at his electrical company while she was in high school and college, “but I didn’t really see myself pursuing it,” she says. It wasn’t until she wanted to volunteer as an electrician for Habitat for Humanity while studying sociology at the University of Southern Maine that she decided to get her license. After graduating and working as an independent electrician for a year, “I was like, ‘Oh my God! I just supported myself completely at 23 years old.’” From there, she was hooked. “Self-employment is the biggest drive behind what I do, and I love the freedom, flexibility and pride that I get out of being self-employed,” she says.

While Reed, 40, was drawn to being her own boss, Jennifer Somma, a mechanic-turned-carpenter for Hardypond Construction, has spent her trade career following her passions as they grow and change. “I went to the vocational school here in Portland (Portland Arts & Technology High School) for automotive technology, and I graduated at the top of my class,” says Somma, 29. “I got a scholarship to go to Central Maine Community College and I graduated there in 2009 with an associate’s in auto technology and applied sciences.” She worked as a mechanic in garages for seven years until she decided to change paths and give flooring a try. “I worked there for two years, and I realized I liked construction—the whole project of it—and working [in flooring] is what really made me want to come [to Hardypond] and try building construction.” She began as a laborer and carpenter, but as of late, she has taken on a new role as field supervisor.

Both women have found joy in the ever-changing nature of their jobs, whether it be mastering systems or finding solutions to unique problems.

“There’s always something new to learn,” says Somma. “That’s what I love about this field. You’re never not learning something. You could be in this business for 40 years, and you’re still going to learn something. You can’t really get bored.” Lately, she’s been learning how to read blueprints with the help of her Hardypond co-worker Dave Garand. “I want to know more. I’d like to know as much as I can.”

Reed shares this enthusiasm for the daily mental exercise of the job. “It fits my personality. It’s very dynamic,” she says. “The beginning of any project is like ‘Oh, yay! A new toy!’” However, she recognizes that constant change may not appeal to everyone. “There are opportunities for tons of different personalities in [this field],” she says. “There are larger companies where they’re on a job for a year or six months, so you are going to the same place every day working, relatively, with the same people,” she says.

Whether someone chooses to work on long-term projects or seeks out new environments like Reed and Somma, there is a uniform feeling of accomplishment and pride when a project is finished. “We’ve done a lot of renovations, and it’s just a nightmare,” says Somma. “You go through hell tearing it apart. You literally put your blood, sweat and tears into it. It’s your work and the subcontractors’ work, and the end result is powerful.”

Reed finds additional fulfillment from her time spent volunteering for the Greater Portland affiliate Habitat for Humanity, the place where her career began. “It makes me feel like I’m doing it for more than just money. It’s a skill that I’m lucky to have,” says Reed. “I studied sociology in college, so I’m interested in the human condition, and this is a way to feel like I’m contributing to the world while still making a living.” Reed also uses these job sites as safe places to train new employees or introduce someone to electrical work for the first time.

When asked why young people, particularly girls, are hesitant to seek a career in the trades, Somma suggests that it’s rooted in social media culture. “I feel like girls have a harder time because they have to get past the

“Find a way to get your hands dirty, whether it’s through volunteering, finding someone who needs an extra hand, getting a job as a carpenter’s helper.”

judgment of their peers, their friends, the guys in the program,” she says. She sees the availability of trade jobs as an opportunity for young women to secure careers in an industry that hasn’t always been welcoming to women. “There are so many places hiring that are willing to train, and they don’t care if you’re a girl or a guy. It’s easier now than when I was in school,” she says.

Reed believes this hesitation has a similar primary cause. “It just needs to be marketed differently,” she says. This misconception speaks to the troubling stigma surrounding vocational careers. “[The trades are] something people aren’t going into because they feel the pressure to have a more prestigious title or prestigious degree,” says Reed, “but [these careers] are still an opportunity to make a great living.” She, Somma and many others in the field are working to change this perception.

In their efforts to shed new light on the vocations, both women have been active in encouraging girls to explore different trade paths. Reed, who has been involved in Totally Trades!, a program that aims to inspire young girls to pursue careers in the trades, recommends that women just starting out learn as much as possible. “Find a way to get your hands dirty, whether it’s through volunteering, finding someone who needs an extra hand, getting a job as a carpenter’s helper—something that would recreate the environment that will get you used to what this world is all about,” she says.

Somma’s advice to young girls speaks to her own struggles with gender discrimination and is a lesson she learned only recently herself. “You don’t need to prove anything to anybody. The only person you need to prove that you can do it to is yourself,” she says. “And when you’ve done that, then you just grow immensely.”

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

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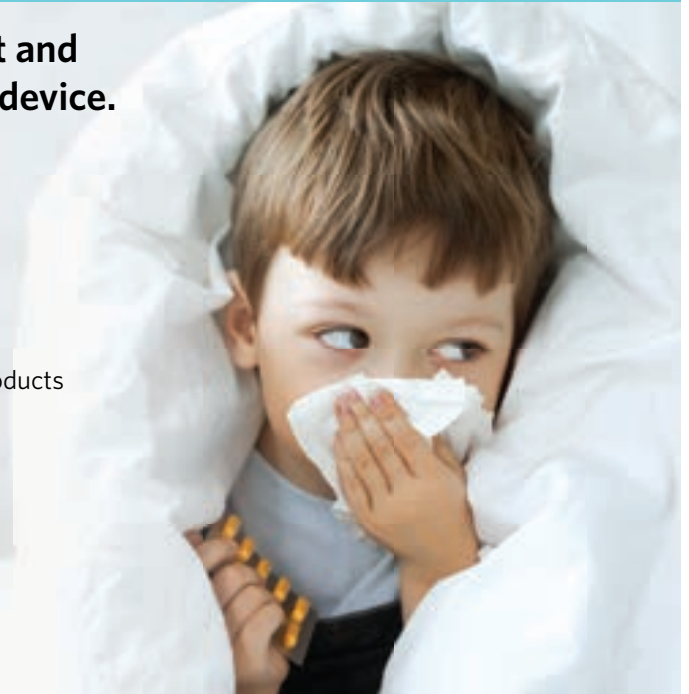
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ON THE JOB

Women do impactful work everywhere, including fields that have historically not been welcoming to us. Meet six Maine women who are passionate about the work they do.



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Emily Isaacson

WRITTEN BY PATRICIA MCCARTHY



Photo by Heidi Kim

“As a woman, I bring a different vocabulary to the conversation,” says conductor Emily Isaacson, pictured far right.

When conductor Emily Isaacson of Portland steps up to the podium, she’s aware of the wariness surrounding her. She accepts that she’ll feel it from far-more-experienced musicians and from audiences, too.

She’s a woman in a field that’s largely composed of men. According to Bachtrack, which bills itself as “The classical music website,” only five of the top 150 conductors in the world in 2017 were women. Even in the chorale world, only 19 percent of professional ensembles have female conductors.

Isaacson is also young—36. And she says she’s even more of a rarity in her chosen profession because she’s a mom—she and her husband have two children, ages 5 and 2.

“I’m a tall, blonde, young woman, and that’s unexpected. I don’t fit the mold, and not everyone reacts well to that. There are a lot of expectations, and it definitely was

intimidating in the beginning. But fortunately, I love challenges,” says Isaacson, who is artistic director and conductor for both the Portland Bach Experience (since 2016) and the Oratorio Chorale (since 2013) and also has started guest conducting elsewhere.

Isaacson counters doubters by being energetic, holding herself to the highest standards possible in knowing “every nook and cranny of great works of music, bringing new ideas to them, and mixing it up.”

By taking this approach, she says she’s often able to quickly turn impressions around. Plus, she says, with many audience members concerned about the future of classical music, they’re often rooting for her to succeed.

“I’m not going to be able to convince everyone, but that’s OK,” she says. “I do think, as a woman, I bring a different vocabulary to the conversation. And I think of my job as bringing ideas together and creating the best version of

a piece of music that I can.”

Growing up on the Bowdoin College campus in Brunswick in a family “where music was always a part of life,” she frequently attended Bowdoin International Music Festival performances.

By the tender age of 15, she knew she wanted to be a conductor and never veered from that plan. Along the way, she’s earned two master’s degrees (in musicology and conducting) and a Ph.D. in musical arts in choral conducting.

Isaacson can play music—piano, cello and percussion—and she considers herself a good singer, but she doesn’t possess the virtuoso skills that typically lead people into her profession.

“My path has been a little unconventional, to be sure.”

Patricia McCarthy is a longtime writer and editor. She has three daughters, lives in Portland, and also has a photography business (patriciamccarthy.com).



HYDROPOWER LICENSING CONSULTANT Sarah Verville

WRITTEN BY SARAH HOLMAN

clients across the country. “It was one of the first virtual offices,” she explains. “I was a single mom raising two kids, and it was a great opportunity.” But there was a lot of travel, which got harder as her kids got older. “The work-life balance is very difficult. It’s one of the barriers that keeps women from reaching senior positions.”

After seven years at Long View Associates, Verville joined Pierce Atwood, a large Portland law firm representing numerous energy clients. Despite decades of experience, she never walked into a meeting unprepared. “My male colleagues could come in and wing it. I didn’t feel like I had the leisure to do that.”

Verville, who is now 62, would eventually move on and retire from TRC Solutions, an environmental and engineering consulting firm.

“I loved my career, and when I left TRC there were as many women entering my field as men. I still don’t see significant numbers of women reaching senior positions in the environment and

“His coworker replied, ‘That’s the little girl lawyer from upstairs.’ I thought, oh boy, I’ve got my work cut out for me.”

energy field, and that is disappointing.”

Is she optimistic about the future? “I am hopeful. This is a really rewarding field, particularly with the emphasis on renewable energy. That conversation will dominate our industry for decades, and hopefully there will be many opportunities for women to make more progress.”

Sarah Holman is a writer living in Portland. She is enthusiastic about cheese plates, thrift shop treasures and old houses in need of saving. Find her online at storiesandsidebars.com.

“Large Maine corporation seeking attorney, 1-3 years’ experience. That’s all it said.” When Sarah Verville answered the vague employment ad, she was 29 and had a year under her belt at a small law firm. “In 1984 it was hard to get hired as a female attorney. It was chance that I got the job at Central Maine Power,” Verville says.

Though she knew nothing about electricity, she was assigned to represent CMP in the licensing of hydroelectric projects, working closely with the male-dominated engineering department. “My first day, one of the engineers saw me and said, ‘Who’s that?’ His coworker replied, ‘That’s the little girl lawyer from upstairs.’ I thought, oh

boy, I’ve got my work cut out for me.”

During her 12 years as in-house counsel, Verville’s confidence grew. “I was given a lot of autonomy, and I was surrounded by smart, qualified people who mentored me.” Still, she remained mindful of being one of the few professional women at CMP. “I was cautious about when I spoke up. Women who were outspoken often met condescension. I didn’t hold back, but I waited, and I became more forceful as I gained credibility.”

In the late 1990s, deregulation of Maine’s electricity supply forced changes at CMP. By then, Verville was an expert in her field. She joined an energy consultancy as a project manager with

Photo by Heidi Kim

SPIRITUAL LEADER

Sara Ewing-Merrill

WRITTEN BY AMY PARADYSZ



“Mother. Pastor. Family Promise director. Juggler of chaos. Lover of diversity. Hope seeker.”

That’s how Sara Ewing-Merrill describes herself.

For the past 11 years, she has been co-pastor with her husband, Allen Ewing-Merrill, at HopeGateWay, a diverse United Methodist congregation that meets on Forest Avenue in Portland. Sunday services attract members of the LGBT community, immigrants from East Africa and Angola, individuals struggling with addiction and families with children and teens.

“It’s definitely a progressive community of people who are trying to put

their faith and their worldview together in an integrated way,” Ewing-Merrill says. “To act justly and to love mercy: I feel like it’s not just our ideal, it’s what we’re doing together.”

After seminary, her first congregations were United Methodist churches in Old Orchard Beach and Saco, both of which were looking to replace a male pastor who had retired. She was just 26.

“I replaced two men, and two men replaced me when I left,” she laughs. “When people would say things to me that I felt were slights of my role and my authority, I would take it personally. But now that I’m past 40, if somebody says something to me, I don’t internalize it. You may not recognize that I have fully claimed this role, but I have.”

Once the Ewing-Merrills had a 1-year-old daughter, they didn’t want to be split between “mommy’s church” and “daddy’s church.”

“We asked to move to Portland and serve together and make half the money in order to have an integrated life,” she says. “We wanted to be led by our own expectations of what we would like our life to be: authentic, faithful and responsive to the needs we see in the world and compassionate to those needs, not just in thought but in action.”

She’s part of a group of Portland-area clergy that meets monthly for lunch, and half the clergy are female, including a rabbi, a Buddhist nun and members of the Baha’i faith. “In that group,” she says, “if anybody said something about women not being pastors, we’d look at them like, ‘That conversation was resolved decades ago.’”

Last January, Ewing-Merrill leaned on her interfaith connections to establish Greater Portland Family Promise, which provides housing, meals, case management and community for families with children experiencing homelessness. Thirteen host congregations house families for a week at a time in a quarterly rotation, and 30 congregations contribute funding and volunteers.

While Ewing-Merrill leads Greater Portland Family Promise, her husband is a convener with Moral Movement Maine, an interfaith political advocacy group led by clergy. He was one of nine religious leaders arrested on trespassing charges in December 2017 after occupying Sen. Susan Collins’ office for about 10 hours in protest of her support of a Republican tax cut. Ewing-Merrill was at a candlelight vigil across the street with her daughters because, she says, both parents shouldn’t get arrested. But they can both take a stand politically—and they do, nearly every week.

“For our own integrity,” she says, “we need to be voices speaking out for those who don’t have a voice or who would be endangered by speaking out.”

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

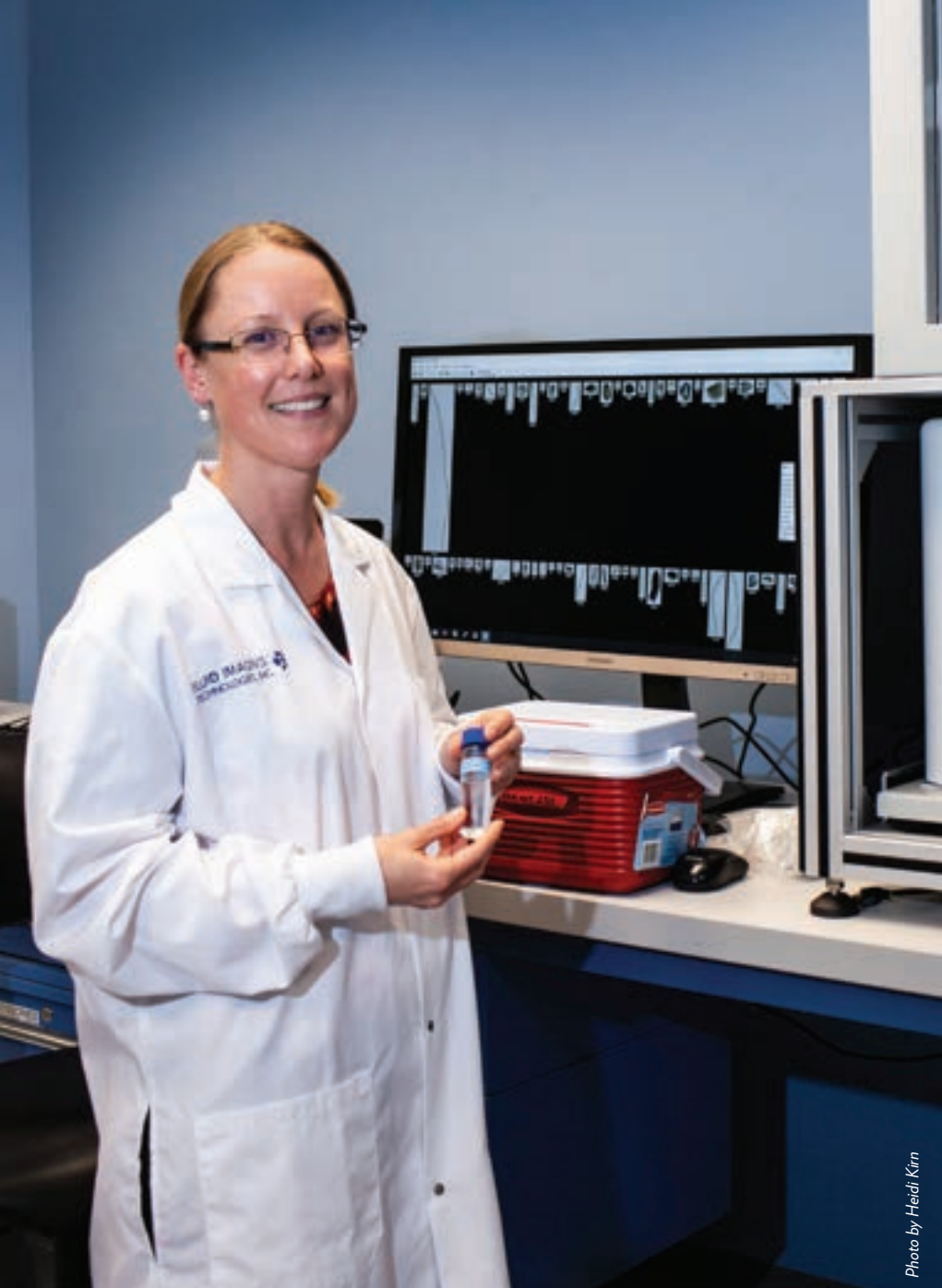


Photo by Heidi Kirn

APPLICATIONS SCIENTIST

Heather Anne Wright

WRITTEN BY SARAH HOLMAN

the States. “I sent out over 200 resumes. The science field is incredibly competitive, and gender does matter, especially in pay scale and roles of leadership.”

When she was hired, there were three other women at Fluid Imaging, in admin and marketing roles. Now the company is two-thirds female. But there are still challenges. “It takes a strong woman to say, ‘Hey, listen to me.’ You take some flack if you’re the first person to do that,” Wright says. “When I meet other women in similar careers, I hear that many are still trying too hard to silence their ideas. They don’t want to be pigeonholed as the ‘talky female.’”

Wright often speaks up for coworkers who are less confident, especially when interacting with management. She believes firmly in women supporting other women and recalls a time when there wasn’t much peer encouragement in her field. “I feel like we are much better about promoting ourselves and each other as female scientists. Twenty years ago there was a lot of competition between women trying to break into these male-dominated roles.”

Wright is optimistic about the future for women in her field. “If we shift our perspective toward skills, merit and experience, we can remove gender from the equation. Things are improving slowly because we’re talking about it. And that’s a good thing.”

Sarah Holman is a writer living in Portland. She is enthusiastic about cheese plates, thrift shop treasures and old houses in need of saving. Find her online at storiesandsidebars.com.

“The biotech industry represents the interface between science and technology,” says Heather Anne Wright. “It’s a broad way to think about how research is translated and applied.”

Born in Transvaal, South Africa, Wright’s journey to applications scientist at Fluid Imaging Technologies in Scarborough was far from direct. She is a classically trained pianist who spent most of her young life preparing for a career in music. “But I loved science, too, and I wanted to be able to make a living!” she says, laughing.

During her undergraduate work at the

University of New England, Wright, took an internship at Bigelow Laboratory in Boothbay Harbor. There she met her first serious science mentor, Paty Matrai. “She propelled my interest forward. She gave me opportunities to go out to sea, conduct research in her lab and participate in global projects. It was real science.” That same summer, Wright met Chris Sieracki, the developer of the FlowCam, a particle analysis instrument that Fluid Imaging is known for.

For the next 20 years, Wright, 42, held research and teaching jobs and eventually moved to Europe to pursue doctoral work. When her funding ran out, she returned to



SEABIRD BIOLOGIST

Aly McKnight

WRITTEN BY ANNE GABBIANELLI

Aly McKnight is all about the birds. “I fell in love with birds when I took ornithology at UMass,” says McKnight, who lives in Winterport. Little did the 44-year-old know back in 1999 that her passion would lead to valuable research about our planet’s ecosystem.

“While marine birds are interesting and valuable in and of themselves, they are even more valuable as the proverbial ‘canaries in a coal mine,’” says McKnight, whose studies have spanned the Americas. Birds just “kinda happened” for McKnight. “I actually worked with green crabs for my master’s degree, but I had a chance to volunteer for a seabird project in Alaska stemming from the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.” That’s when McKnight fell in love with the lifestyle of a seabird field biologist, living and working on boats all the time in remote field camps, which McKnight calls “jaw-droppingly beautiful locales.”

In addition, McKnight says she was lucky to stumble into a discipline where women are generally perceived as equals. “Field biology involves a lot of manual labor, and I’ve always said that working from a remote field camp is 60 percent working to survive and 40 percent science. From my earliest experiences, there’s never been an expectation that women didn’t have to do just as much of that labor as the men, especially since we’d often outnumber them.”

She has lugged around 30-horsepower motors and shared equally in the joy of rolling hundreds of 55-gallon drums of gasoline up beaches to stock fuel caches for field work, along with other physically demanding chores. “I’ve also captained boats and ordered field crews around, and I’ve found in the course of training and leading field crews that if we never establish any gender-based expectations to start with, the crew tends to function as a team of equals.”

The lifestyle of a seabird biologist also includes struggles between


science and politics. “It’s very hard to get funding for just the kind of long-term monitoring essential to tracking and planning for ecosystem changes. Science seems to be valued less and less in the current political atmosphere, but it’s really our best hope in climbing out of the brewing environmental disasters we are facing,” she says.

“I think we are fast approaching the stage where climate problems are immediate and in our faces, and at that point, our options for mitigating them or adapting to them will be much more limited than they were just decades ago.”

What keeps McKnight hooked is the uncharted territory regarding fish and bird interactions. She says birds are like barometers and, based on their feeding habits, we can learn more about struggles on the horizon for the commercial fishing industry. “Birds also respond to large-scale shifts in climate patterns, so they’re not just indicators of fish stocks. If we know how to interpret their trends, they can actually tell us a lot about what’s going on ‘under the surface’ in our oceans and atmosphere.”

McKnight, who has a PhD in ecology and environmental science, brings this hands-on knowledge back to the classroom at Unity College where she is a visiting assistant professor and a researcher with the Gulf of Maine Coastal Ecosystem Survey. Her work has been shared in National Geographic along with numerous agency reports and peer-reviewed publications. “I’m really just getting started,” she says.

Anne Gabbianelli is a veteran journalist and educator. She teaches at the University of Maine Augusta and Eastern Maine Community College in Bangor. Aside from sharing her passion for writing and communication with her students, she enjoys telling people’s stories.



WIND
TURBINE
TECHNICIAN

Holly
Zschetzsche

WRITTEN BY PATRICIA MCCARTHY

The wind turbines that Holly Zschetzsche loves fixing and maintaining are as tall as a football field is long—300 feet.

That's in no way daunting for the 23-year-old who lives in Rumford and works on General Electric towers in Carthage and Canton, Maine, and Berlin, New Hampshire. She has zero fear about climbing these towers to do her daily work. In fact, it brings her boundless joy.

"It's amazingly lucky that I've found what I like. No matter what the conditions are, it's spectacular," says Zschetzsche (pronounced Zetchie). "The whole valley, the fog in the morning. It's all something to marvel at."

As a child, she was always happy being many feet off the ground.

"My mom would tell you that I was always climbing on top of the couch and jumping off when I was really little, and I used to climb out my bedroom window and hop onto the roof to do my homework and just read books."

In high school, as she considered her future, Zschetzsche knew that a small college north of her hometown of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, offered a series of classes in careers that don't typically attract women. Her mother had gone through the program and recommended it.

"I was a teenager and wasn't really listening to my mother. I was like, OK, yeah, Mom. But I have my own plan."

Zschetzsche knew she wanted to go to college—and had a great interest in glaciology, the study of snow and glaciers—but was more practical than most teens in considering what would come next (huge college debt and likely trouble finding a job in such an unusual field).

So she decided to earn her way through college by enlisting at age 17 in the Army National Guard. As a minor, she needed her parents' permission.

"For me, it was a no-brainer," she says.

Once she fulfilled her active-duty requirements—starting as an intelligence analyst and



Photo by Richard Tacey

then learning about locomotives and electrical and mechanical technology—she enrolled in college, trying the program her mother had recommended years earlier.

"I did welding and nuclear power, and had signed up for the automotive part, but the moment I started the wind class, I just fell in love with it, and there was no other thing I wanted to do."

She was hired as a traveling technician for wind turbines right out of school, saw much of the country and Canada, and landed her "dream job" about a year ago with G.E. in Maine. She's the only woman on her team—a fact that does not deter her. But she says she

does appreciate being able to interact with a few women staff members from time to time.

Before July, when she fractured her leg during an Army Reserve training session in California (her duty now consists of one weekend a month and two weeks each summer), Zschetzsche worked primarily on electrical and mechanical components of turbines, climbing towers daily except when platform conditions were too icy and snowy. She also can't work on towers if temperatures reach below -25 degrees or above 107 degrees.

The injury will leave her sidelined for six to eight months, and that's not sitting well for someone accustomed to working out six days



“ I MAKE IT A POINT (EVEN IN WINTER TIME) TO POP MY HEAD OUT OF THE TOP HATCH AND REMIND MYSELF WHY I LOVE AND KEEP DOING THIS JOB,” SAYS WIND TURBINE TECHNICIAN HOLLY ZSCHETZSCHE. “THEY’RE JUST ALL THE GORGEOUS VIEWS I GET TO SEE EVERY DAY.”

a week to stay strong and limber and being outside for work daily.

She says it’s been terribly depressing and “the guys I work with try to help as much as they can. They give me play-by-plays about what they did up the tower that day. They try to keep me busy with paperwork, but it’s not the same as climbing. I always ask them to teach me something I didn’t know about the turbine before, and that usually boosts my mood the most,” says Zschetzsche, who has assumed the duties of environmental health and safety coordinator.

“I’m just glad it’s something I can return from,” she says.

Waiting to heal is especially tough for such a high-energy woman who loves downhill skiing, snowboarding and ice-skating and tried ice climbing last winter. Zschetzsche

thrives on adventure and being outside her comfort zone.

To celebrate each of her last few birthdays, she’s taken trips that would make many people edgy to contemplate—bungee jumping in South America, skydiving in Cuba and swimming in a bioluminescent lagoon in Jamaica.

For her next birthday, Zschetzsche has her sights set on a winter climb of Mount Washington.

“I like to really welcome in each new year,” she explains with a laugh.

Patricia McCarthy is a longtime writer and editor. She has three daughters, lives in Portland, and also has a photography business (patriciamccarthy.com).



Photos courtesy of Zschetzsche

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THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK

*Stay-at-home mom Jennifer Smith sees the blessings
in raising and schooling her eight kids*

WRITTEN BY MAGGIE KNOWLES | PHOTOGRAPHED BY LAURYN HOTTINGER





It's not always a choice.

But for those moms who can swing staying home full-time, trading a desk for dawn-to-dusk running, wiping, whining, snuggling, singing, yelling, eating, making, creating, debating and loving, there is no other choice.

It's more than a full-time job if you do it with one child.

It's more than double a full-time job if you do it with two.

But what about eight?

A chattering of roosters and children circulates in the grassy space around the Smith's house in Casco. Squeals and giggles are intercepted with squawks and trills from the chicken coop. Seven black chicks, their bodies so fluffy and round it's impossible not to imagine scooping them up and nestling them, peck about in a tight tribe at the edge of the lawn.

"One more and they would have matched us!" Madeline, stoic at age 10, points out as she watches 4-year-old Julia try to herd the chicks my way.

"We saw them hatch," Julia says as the chicks retreat to the leaves in search of a late-day bug.

"That is one of the really wonderful aspects of homeschooling," says Jennifer Smith, mom to eight kids ranging in age from 2-year-old Lillianna, forever "the baby," to 22-year-old Brandon. "They got to watch the eggs, see them hatch, help build the coop and now feed and play with the chicks. They learn so much about life right in their own yard."

It is easy to assume that with more children than a hockey team, Smith would be a panicked mess, barking orders to the brood

and seeping exasperation. However, as she stands to the side, watching six of the eight romp on the lawn, cuddle the chicks and hang upside-down from the swingset trapeze, her energy is akin to a conductor who has faith that her performers have practiced their music and know exactly how to play to complement the other instruments.

I stare in awe.

Smith laughs. "Oh, it isn't always like this. But I have learned it is better to invite them into your calm instead of rising to your anger."

And mostly it is best not to take them all grocery shopping.

Oh, the comments," she says. "People want to know why they aren't in school, or they ask why I have so many. Shopping alone has become a bit of a treat. Luckily, we grow our own babysitters!"

Her two oldest sons, Brandon, 22, and Jacob, 20, are in college, but they are often around to help and play.

Though the majority of Smith's time and energy is spent parenting, she is very aware of the importance of "me time."

"It is vital that moms have something beyond 'just staying home,'" Jennifer says. "You have to have time to fill your soul and be active."

Her favorite morning ritual is to rise early, enjoy a quiet coffee and book.

"I am a lifelong learner," she says. "That input of knowledge fuels and recharges me."

And in the evening, she and her husband, Mike, enjoy their couple time walking a 1.5-mile loop around their property.

As the children start to wake in the morning, the school day begins. With a background in early-childhood education, Smith was inspired

At left: Jennifer Smith carries daughters, Lilliana, 2, and Julia, 4, on her hips. As a mother of eight, much of her time and energy is spent parenting, but she also recognizes the importance of filling her own soul and taking time for herself. Above: Family play time with Connor and Isabella, dad Michael with Wyatt slung over his shoulder and Jacob throwing Lilliana into the air.

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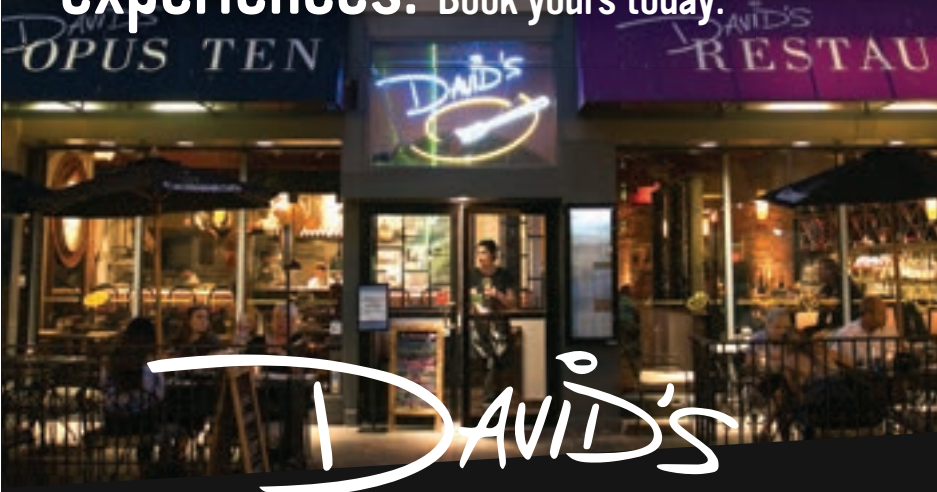
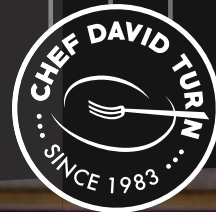
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by watching her preschoolers light up when she would tell them stories.

"That's a powerful impact," she says. "I knew I wanted to be able to do that for my kids. To watch them make those connections and feel that magic."

The days starts with reading the Bible and working on grammar then shifts to art, history or science. The older kids, Isabella, 8, Madeline and Connor, 15, take a more "self-directed" learning route, choosing subjects that spark their passions and interacting with an online tutor.

Homeschooling isn't for everyone and it certainly "takes a village" for many who decide to make education a family affair. Smith has found a group of like-minded moms and two days of the week they teach as part of a co-op.

"One of the amazing things about homeschooling is that wherever we are, that's school," Smith says. "In the kitchen there is math, in the garden that's science. Plus, they do extracurricular activities like dance and music."

Regardless of the number of kids one has or whether Mom works in or out of the

**"IF I DIDN'T HAVE THE KIDS,
I WOULDN'T HAVE THE
MESSES. I SEE THE BLESS-
INGS IN THE MESSES."**

house, most struggle with the concept of "balance." How do we work and play and stay healthy and cook and clean...all with a smile?

Smith rolls her eyes. "It is easy to feel like there is never an end. But the dishes will still be here in the morning. I need to sleep." She pauses. "If I didn't have the kids, I wouldn't have the messes. I see the blessings in the messes."

Sparkly 4-year-old Julia bounds into the kitchen. "If you not gonna be a star, what you gonna be?" she booms. Then scampers off.

Smith's gaze follows Julia back into the yard, as if she was a comet headed back into the little universe of sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, with Mike and Jennifer at the center of the sun.

Maggie Knowles writes about all things kid. She and her family live in Yarmouth, where she gardens, keeps bees and refuses to get rid of her stilettos.

“I knew I wanted to be able to do that for my kids. To watch them make those connections and feel that magic.”



The Smith family at home in Casco: Isabella, 8, Madeline, 10, Wyatt, 6, Julia, 4, and mom Jennifer holding Lillianna, 2. Back row: Brandon, 22, Jacob, 20, Connor, 15, and dad Michael.



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Fatuma Hussein

Fatuma Hussein is the executive director of the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine, an organization she founded in 2002 to help Somali immigrants settle in the state. A leading voice against gender-based violence in the African immigrant community and in society at large, Fatuma has been the subject of several newspaper and magazine articles. She received an honorary degree from Bowdoin College in 2017.



Joanne D'Arcangelo

Joanne D'Arcangelo, owner of JD'A Consulting, Inc., is an advocacy, political, and organizational consultant. She was chief of staff for Maine's Speaker of the House during the 122nd Maine legislature and has served on the boards of the Maine Women's Fund and the Muskie Commission on Access to Civil Legal Services, among others. She currently serves as chair of the board of trustees of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.



Pat Ryan

Pat Ryan was appointed executive director of the Maine Human Rights Commission in 1979, a position she held for 32 years. In 1974, she worked to secure passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. She then served as chairwoman of the Governor's Advisory Council on the Status of Women and chair of the International Women's Year Coordinating Committee for Maine. She is one of the original founders of the Maine Women's Lobby.



Judy Kahrl

As a daughter of the founder of Pathfinder International, Judy Kahrl grew up in a family where reproductive health and birth control was dinner table conversation. Frustrated by recent laws passed to restrict access to family planning and abortion clinics in the U.S., she established Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights in 2013, advocating for secure access to reproductive rights, justice and comprehensive health care.



Mary L. Bonauto

Mary L. Bonauto has served as the civil rights project director at GLAD since 1990 and litigated in the state and federal courts of New England on discrimination issues, parental rights, free speech and religious liberty. In 2015, she successfully argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in the historic case Obergefell v. Hodges, establishing the freedom to marry for same-sex couples nationwide. Her work has been recognized with numerous awards, including the 2014 MacArthur Fellowship.

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BOUNDARY BREAKERS

Three women of Maine's history

WRITTEN BY LUCINDA HANNINGTON

Charlotte Cunningham, fully garbed in her welding leathers, outside her home on Sawyer Road in Cape Elizabeth on November 4, 1944. Cunningham wore these leather clothes when she was working as a welder at the South Portland shipyard.

For as long as there have been organized societies, women have been told that certain types of work were acceptable and others were meant to be performed only by men. Despite that, the women of Maine have been breaking barriers for centuries. Here are three examples of women who paved the way for future generations.

Sarah Peters was born in Guinea and brought as a slave to the town of Warren in the mid 1770s. Not one to be held back by circumstances, in 1784 she hired a lawyer to determine whether or not slavery had been abolished in Massachusetts (Maine was a part of Massachusetts at the time). When she discovered that the practice had, indeed, been outlawed, she argued that she was actually a free woman. As an emancipated member of the community, Peters was a founding member of the town's Baptist church and her large family became well established in trades related to the sea. With time, what began as simply a tract of land for the family grew to a community that included free blacks from elsewhere in the United States. The village of Peterborough in Warren is named for Peters (and her husband Amos) and had, in the 19th century, the greatest percentage of African Americans in any town in Maine. The black population of Peterborough was able to prosper and to take advantage of financial and professional arenas open to them there that were not available elsewhere. Peters' determination that the laws of Massachusetts be enforced in the territory of Maine ensured that African Americans in the region were able to benefit from the end of slavery.

Carrie Gertrude Stevens is a name that may not be well known today (except in fishing circles) but she can be credited with helping to put the Rangeley area on the map as a destination for fishing. Trained as a milliner, Stevens began tying flies in the early 1920s. The first fly she tied led her to catch a trout that won second prize in Field & Stream magazine's

annual fishing contest. The magazine publicized both her catch and her fly, which led her to a career in tying. Over time, she developed more than 120 distinct patterns, including one, the Grey Ghost Streamer, still widely used today. Her unique designs revolutionized the sport of fly fishing by creating lures that better resemble bait fish, and avid fishers came from great distances to purchase her flies and fish in Rangeley.

During World War II, manufacturing jobs traditionally held by men were taken by women, especially those jobs that directly related to the war effort. South Portland was home to two shipyards, where over 250 cargo ships were built from 1941 to 1945; by 1943, the two shipyards had merged to form the New England Shipbuilding Corporation. The vast majority of ships built were Liberty Ships—American cargo transport vessels—but there were also 30 Ocean Ships built for the British government. The shipyard employed approximately 30,000 people, with about 3,700 of them being women. Many of these women came to be known as “Wendy the Welders,” but women also worked as painters, burners, crane operators and riveters. In addition to being built by women, several of the ships were named for notable Maine women, including opera singer Lillian Nordica and writers Sarah Orne Jewett and Harriet Beecher Stowe. When the war ended in 1945, the demand for ships declined and soldiers returned home. As a result, women were, in South Portland and throughout the country, cut from the workforce in great numbers and expected to return to their roles as office workers and stay-at-home wives.

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

5 things

5 WAYS TO EMBRACE FALL

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED
BY SHANNON BRYAN

If the crisp air and the gloriously colored leaves aren't enough to get you swooning over fall in Maine, maybe an apple cider doughnut and a corn maze will convince you. It's also the perfect time of year to hike, carve a pumpkin and get spooked inside a haunted house.

1 | Carve a cool pumpkin

We owe our pumpkin-carving tradition to Irish immigrants, who brought the idea to America. Except in Ireland, they didn't carve pumpkins, they carved turnips and potatoes and put them in windows to ward away evil spirits. These days, the classic orange pumpkin is the most prolific carving pumpkin, but other varieties sold at local garden centers can be carved, too, and offer a unique alternative to the classic. Look out for white and yellow pumpkins, hilariously lumpy knucklehead pumpkins, the spooky green-gray jarrahdale, and kakai pumpkins with their green stripes.





Hike or bike amid the fall leaves

2

Get onto a tree-lined trail for a fall hike or bike ride. The autumn colors will dazzle you the whole way. Acadia National Park is a popular destination, with wide carriage trails perfect for walking or riding. *To find the perfect trail for you—whether you're looking for a challenge or a short jaunt—check out mainetrailfinder.com.*

3 Find your way through a corn maze

Bring the kids or make it a corn-field challenge with some friends. There are several corn mazes in Maine, and some even have nighttime hours for added difficulty (that's also creepier and more fun). Most locations also offer other entertainment, like hayrides, pumpkin picking, food and more. Treworgy Family Orchards in Levant has a small kid-friendly maze. Pumpkin Valley Farm in Dayton has a 6-acre maze that's sure to stump you several times. *For a list of corn mazes in Maine, go to newenglandfallevents.com/maine/corn-mazes.*





4 | Go apple picking (and eat apple cider doughnuts)

True, you can pick up a half-peck of local apples at the grocery store, but what's the fun in that? Instead, head to an apple orchard to pick your own. Choose from a range of varieties—Cortland, McIntosh, Fortune and more—and many orchards also sell pies, candy apples, apple cider, apple cider doughnuts and other delicious fall goodies. *To find a pick-your-own orchard near you, go to maineapples.org.*

5 | Get spooked in a haunted fort

Stories of spirits abound this time of year, and there are plenty of ways to celebrate the scary in Maine. Fright at the Fort takes places at Fort Knox in Prospect on Oct. 13, 19, 20, 26 and 27 from 5:30–7 p.m. There's also the Night Terrors Haunted Woods Walk in Kittery, which opens Oct. 12 and is sure to have you screaming. If Maine's haunted history is more your thing, join a Red Cloak Haunted History Tour and hear stories by lantern light. Tours run all month in Bath, Damariscotta, Camden, Wiscasset or Boothbay Harbor, Rockland, Bar Harbor or Hallowell. *Find all kinds of haunted goings-on at mainehauntedhouses.com.*

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THIS THING I LOVE

Martial Artist Jaclyn Ouillette

WRITTEN BY JACLYN OUILLETTE
PHOTOGRAPHED BY LAURYN HOTTINGER





I love to experience the edge of my beliefs in myself. I love to explore my boundaries—then continue through in order to break out on the other side. I love to experience my body in nature in all of the elements. To experience my emotions, thoughts and truth through physical and spiritual practice. I love the freedom that comes when I move through places in my life that I thought were impossible.

In the Japanese Tradition of Sho-Kai (The Energy of Water), Earth is our dojo. That means wherever I am, that is my studio, my classroom, my temple, my place of practice. There have been days when I was crawling through the wet grass, dragging myself through the mud and pushing my body to the limits, only to roll over and look up and find myself doing crunches beneath a beautiful double rainbow. The raindrops, the sweat, the smell of the wet grass and the earth smeared all over my body are all part of the practice and add to the physical experience of being grounded, connected to the earth and feeling alive.

There are limitations of the mind, and Master asks me to see them and to move beyond them. I have found myself hanging from trees for what seems like an eternity...he encourages me to practice not letting go when my mind says to, but allowing my

body to find its inner strength to keep going. Sometimes I find myself standing on beautiful mountains, moving and breathing with the wind. I find myself standing solidly on wet rocks at the edge of the ocean as waves pull and push me. Sometimes I find myself balancing where I never thought I could, yet looking out at the beautiful colors of sunset reflected in the water. When I am complete with each lesson, and when I am complete with the day, I feel calm, peace and an inner strength that is incomparable to anything else.

Jaelyn Ouillette lives in Cumberland and is an energy worker, body worker, teacher, retreat leader, black belt and martial arts instructor and mother. She loves exploring the wilderness and outdoors and expanding her edges. Her goal is to empower women through wellness practices, martial arts and wilderness. See more information on her website wildernesswisdomjourneys.com.

NOTE ABOUT THIS THING I LOVE

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

It's in the bag

Sharp-looking and responsibly sourced bags by Jess Hart Lynch

WRITTEN BY AMY POWER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMANDA WHITEGIVER

Good design is often born from a need to make everyday items more functional and more beautiful. Jess Lynch, owner of Pips and Squeaks, a children's boutique in Yarmouth, noticed as her kids were getting older and her family started to travel more, that packing efficiently for a family of four was no easy feat. She sacrificed her own colorful accessories to save space overall, which meant her own ensembles while traveling felt...bland. She spent hours searching online for her ideal travel bags (simple design, collapsable, bold pops of color, renewable materials and ethical manufacturing practices), but couldn't find exactly what she was looking for. Not one to give up—or to shy away from a project—she started looking for the raw materials to make them instead, and thus the Jess Hart Lynch line of bags was born.

Lynch wasn't looking for just fabrics though. Like with her children's clothing brand, every step in her creative process keeps labor ethics and environmental impact in mind. Leather is beautiful and durable, but the tanning process can be detrimental to the people who are doing it, and it can be bad for the environment around the facility as well. So Lynch honed in on leather alternatives that were visually interesting and durable.

One such product is made from Piñatex by Ananas Anam, a natural material manufactured from the leaves of pineapples. The leaves are a natural agricultural byproduct that farmers would otherwise have to dispose of or burn. Instead, the leaves are processed into Piñatex fabric by the Ananas Anam company, so waste turns into income for farmers, providing them an additional revenue stream and creating another life for what would otherwise be refuse. The look and feel is certainly different from leather, but the durability, visual and physical texture, and ethical roots make it the perfect choice.





This bag from Jess Hart Lynch is made with Piñatex by Ananas Anam, a natural material manufactured from the leaves of pineapples.



GET THE LOOK

Polka dot and white button-up shirts (\$248) by Jill McGowan, available at jillmcgowan.com
Cashmere poncho (\$115) and available at the Jill McGowan store, 56 Main St., Freeport
Jess Hart Lynch bags start at \$85 and are available at jesscahartlynch.com

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Lynch buys zippers made in the U.S. and sources fabrics from designer deadstocks, repurposing these gorgeous fabric ends into limited-edition bags. The gray bag with orange handles, pictured on the opposite page, was sourced in this manner. It's a wool blend, which offers a durable and renewable material, exemplifying the values at the core of Lynch's design.

Lynch likes to dress in simple, comfortable neutrals and switch things up with playful accessories like bags and shoes (hence the fun luggage!), so we opted to pair her playful creations with a classic closet staple: a white shirt from Maine's own Jill McGowan. There's something about a perfectly crafted button up, jeans and flats that makes me feel ready to take on the world. Fashion certainly has its share of innovations, but the empowerment we magically feel from this simply pulled-together combination will always make it a winner. We added the sumptuously soft cashmere poncho, also available at McGowan's shop (56 Main St., Freeport), for a cozy layering piece perfect for the car, plane or in a chilly office. We also test drove some glasses that protect your eyes from computer blue light (also available at McGowan's shop) for good measure. They're certainly the most flattering eye protection we've come across to date!

The Jess Hart Lynch line isn't limited to luggage. She also designs and manufactures wristlets, totes, reusable shopping bags, backpacks and more. From its heart, the brand is built upon a desire to provide people an ethical choice for locally made, responsibly sourced items they can be proud to wear and love every day. For now, every item is lovingly crafted by Lynch in her Yarmouth studio. Each material is thoughtfully chosen for the story and meaning attached. Her long-term goal is to have the JHL line carried at department stores, keeping the design and manufacturing here in Maine. The phrase "Made in Maine" has a proud tradition of quality, and she hopes to continue that tradition while creating ethical fashion we can all enjoy.

Amy Power and Amanda Whitegiver are co-founders of East Coast Inspired, a fashion and lifestyle blog. Amy is a mother of two (and the model featured in this column's photos) who spends her days dreaming of the ultimate craft room and intending to go for a run. Amanda is a lifestyle family photographer who adores dark chocolate and singing with her two daughters.

Jess Hart Lynch sources fabrics from designer deadstocks, repurposing these gorgeous fabric ends into limited-edition bags, like this gray bag with orange handles.

For more detailed fit reviews of these items and more Maine fashion, head over to the East Coast Inspired blog: eastcoastinspired.com

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Jane Harrell founded 'cause Digital Marketing in 2016 to help pet- and cause-based businesses with marketing solutions.

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WRITTEN BY MERCEDES GRANDIN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY DEREK GUIMOND

Jane Harrell's Instagram bio reads: "marketing exec who jumped off the corporate ladder to grow world-changing businesses, foster outstanding lives and rescue animals." Harrell spent over a decade leading marketing and consumer-based strategy for global pet brands including Petfinder, IDEXX and Purina. A New York City native, Harrell was recruited to Maine to be the head of consumer communications for IDEXX in 2013. Three years later, in March 2016, she founded 'cause Digital Marketing, a marketing agency geared toward pet-based businesses.

Harrell lives and works from her new home in Biddeford (she recently moved from Portland), where she resides with her fiancé and a menagerie of pets: two dogs, three cats and a turtle. "I never could have pursued this dream without coming to Maine," she says. "I love it here and am proud to be an entrepreneur bringing money, resources and jobs to our community."

She's always felt connected to animals. As a child growing up in Manhattan, she volunteered with rescue groups and fostered animals. While a student at Emerson College in Boston, she developed her own interdisciplinary major combining marketing and writing for social causes and pursued a work-study grant to work

with a large local animal shelter. It was there she realized that pets are a common denominator for 68 percent of American households. "There have been many times when I find that, among a group of people, their love of animals is their only commonality. What's amazing is they'll put aside their differences so they can make a difference for the animals they love," Harrell says.

Taking the initial leap from the corporate world to running her own self-funded business was "terrifying," she says, but also extremely rewarding. "I'm not someone who jumps without knowing where I'm going to land. This leap was scary, but I've never regretted it or looked back." As soon as she sent notice to her contacts explaining what she was planning to do, she started getting calls. Her biggest challenge so far is accelerated growth. She hit her two-year financial goals in her first nine months of operation, and 'cause became a quarter-of-a-million-dollar business in less than two years. "Last fall I had clients waiting six months to work with us, and that's after turning projects that didn't fit our team away fairly regularly."

Harrell's mantra is helping her clients hone their focus and understand "you don't need to be everywhere and do everything. In fact, it works better if you're not."



Harrell is able to work from just about anywhere, including her home in Biddeford, where she resides with her fiancé and two dogs, three cats and a turtle. (Although this isn't her dog. This is Henry, a dog of a friend.)

A self-described “data geek,” Harrell works with companies to identify their audience and make it easy and cost-effective to reach them. She also helps connect larger businesses with influencers and community partners who can “be brand evangelists” and help grow a business. In the last 12 years, Harrell’s helped leaders like Petfinder, IDEXX, The Humane Society of the United States and the American Animal Hospital Association provide tools for local animal businesses to connect more effectively with pet owners.

One of Harrell’s talents is being able to recognize the gaps within systems, which in the pet industry includes reaching out to diverse communities. “One of the fastest growing pet owner populations in the U.S. is the Hispanic population,” Harrell says. “I have some clients who are specifically targeting the Spanish-speaking population because they’ve historically been ignored from a market standpoint.” One of Harrell’s clients, Global United Foundation, is a non-profit that works internationally to connect pet education and resources to communities in need. Harrell helped them create their marketing plan and expand their Spanish-language outreach online to reach broader audiences.

She also found the pet industry lacks marketing data, which is one of her areas of expertise. As an \$86 billion industry, the pet business is poised for opportunity. “I think a lot of businesses don’t realize what a big industry the pet space is. We’re specifically looking at the pet space to see what’s working and not working, what are the industry markers and how we as an industry can help one another.” For example, Harrell has worked with housing-market search engines to appeal more to pet owners. “One of the biggest reasons why pets are relinquished to shelters is because of lack of pet-friendly housing. Yet, most of the big housing search engines have weak pet-friendly searches.”

By focusing on what matters most to her clients, Harrell helps them become savvy digital marketers and grow their businesses. “We’re able to help them focus, make important decisions and understand what to hand off, what to move forward with and what to spend.” She takes pride in leading a team of independent contractors, matching their strengths with her clients’ projects. She currently has 16 independent contractors who



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help her with various aspects of the business, including SEO, editorial, PR, website development, user interface design and branding. “I’ve been lucky to develop amazing partnerships with some of the best digital specialists in the space. One thing I ask our team members frequently is, ‘what do you want to work on?’ Then I pair them with the client who has that need. This keeps them motivated and leads to better results.”

Harrell also attributes her success to her mentor at Coastal Enterprises Inc. in Brunswick, Sarah Guerette, who helped her understand how to run a startup, including understanding cash flow and a company’s profit potential versus overhead expenses. “I’d run strategy and budgets for parts of huge corporations, but I wasn’t trained specifically for running a small business,” she says. “CEI offers free support for Maine women-owned startups, and Sarah has helped me connect with small business owners and agencies who aren’t in a competitive space but who are similar to mine, to help me work through business challenges that come up.”

In her third year of operation, Harrell is focusing on scaling up her business and adding full-time employees. “In 10 years, I want to change the world through our client’s success. I want to see fewer pets leave homes, lower euthanasia rates at shelters and help pets and people live better lives together.” Harrell also hopes to help her clients find balance to help them be happier and more sustainable in the long run because she says, “I’ve seen far too many really strong people burn out, and I’ve faced it multiple times myself.” Harrell explains that U.S. veterinarians have a high rate of suicide (1 in 6 have considered it, according to a 2014 CDC survey), and many animal businesses fail because they don’t know how to successfully monetize. She’s hoping her work will help to make an impact and help her clients be more connected to “the need to do well—financially and emotionally—to keep doing good in the world.”

Harrell is leading by example in terms of her own happiness quotient. “When I started ‘cause, I wanted to find a new way of working. I’m 35 and asked myself, ‘what’s going to keep me in this space for the next 25-30 years?’ I realized there were some lifestyle pieces that needed to be in place.” One major benefit to running her own business has been working from home (she’s 10 minutes from the beach)



With a decade of experience in marketing and consumer-based strategy for global pet brands, Harrell says taking the leap to start her own business was terrifying—but also extremely rewarding.

and choosing what work she wants to pursue and when to take time off. During her first six months in operation, Harrell’s father was ill and she moved to New York to be with him for two months while he recovered. “Having the freedom and ability to take care of my family was critical, but it didn’t hurt the business or our clients. In fact, we excelled.”

Harrell has found Maine to be a welcoming home base for her new venture and says

it’s “an amazing space for startups, especially startups that want to do things a little differently. There’s a magic moment here right now and I’d like to think of ‘cause as one of those successes.”

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



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The Ghoulish Dark & Stormy

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY
JESSIE LACEY

There are several parts to this normally simple drink, but the work is well worth the creepy outcome. Who doesn't want to look like they are drinking from a vessel filled with eyeballs? This is a truly delicious and fun drink to make for a Halloween party.

The first two parts—the eyeball ice cubes and the lime simple syrup—should be made ahead of time. You'll need a can of lychees—a summer fruit native to southern China, which can be purchased in cans year-round, especially at Asian markets. To make the ice cubes, pour the syrup from the can of lychees into a pot with the freshly peeled ginger, heat to a boil, then remove from the heat, cover and let sit for 30 minutes. Then, stuff a cherry into each lychee for the eyeballs and put each one into an ice cube tray. Set aside a couple lychee eyeballs for the garnish. Pour the lychee and ginger syrup into the ice cubes tray and freeze for at least 5 hours.

For the lime simple syrup, stir the sugar and lime juice until the sugar is fully dissolved and store in the fridge until you're ready to make cocktails.

When your eyeballs are fully frozen, mix 1/4 part lime simple syrup with 1 part dark rum and carefully place in a few frozen lychee eyeballs. Slowly pour over 3 parts ginger beer and garnish with a couple extra lychee eyeballs.

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



THE RECIPE

20-ounce can lychees in heavy syrup
1/4 cup thinly peeled fresh ginger
brandied cherries
1/4 cup superfine sugar
1/2 cup fresh lime juice
1 part dark rum
3 parts ginger beer

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A life well lived

'The Afterlife of Kenzaburo Tsuruda' is a spiritual tale of hubris and redemption

WRITTEN BY AMY CANFIELD



"The Afterlife of
Kenzaburo Tsuruda"
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I have to admit I was a bit leery when I picked up "The Afterlife of Kenzaburo Tsuruda." A friend of the author contacted me about the novel, written by Elisabeth Wilkins Lombardo of Cape Elizabeth, who died of cancer in 2015 at age 47. A group of friends had rallied to get her book published posthumously. Moved by this labor of love and loyalty, I agreed to take a look, but cynically suspected that it was just that and that, to anyone not clouded by their grief and loss, the book would likely prove to be unexceptional at best.

I was wrong. This spellbinding novel had me on the first page. "I am a reluctant ghost," says Tsuruda, a man of science who doesn't believe in the afterlife he finds himself in. He is visiting his home during his first Obon, a Japanese Buddhist festival that honors the spirits of ancestors. "During the Days of the Dead, we spirits are allowed to visit our old lives. We loiter in the living world to watch our family lines dwindle from a torrent to the intermittent drip, drip, drip of water off a cedar bough," Tsuruda explains.

Tsuruda's experiences during his first Obon are just one facet of this enlightening spiritual tale of hubris and redemption. Regret is a heavy burden in this story that begins in the 1990s and explores the lives of Tsuruda, his wife, sister-in-law and his modern-minded daughter, whose aspirations have been hijacked. The story seamlessly goes back to the WWII years, including the bombing of Hiroshima. Each character is fallible, each has secrets.

It is Tsuruda's task in Yamato, a limbo between life and the true rewards of the afterlife, to save his family line. For generations, the Tsurudas have been "hungry ghosts," unable to move on. If Tsuruda fails, his wife, who is near death, and his daughter will suffer the same fate. He has until his third Obon to do it, but time as he knows it is altered in Yamato, and Tsuruda feels the pressure.

In the afterlife, Tsuruda is told, "the rules are different" than those he previously followed with his logical mind. "You must rely on that

which tells you the most vital truths, but which you have ignored for fear of appearing weak or stupid. ...Your greed was the greed of ignorance, your selfishness evidenced by your unwillingness to see the truth if it meant your life would be disrupted." That selfish disregard for loved ones has plagued the Tsurudas. He comes to see, with gratitude, that "even in death one can learn."

Lombardo lived in Japan for 10 years and her writing is rich with lovely details of Japanese culture, from the goddesses to the landscape, both of the past and the present. "That night, paper lanterns decorated every wall in our neighborhood, forming an illuminated line down the mountain to the sea. The small river beside our house reflected the light of the lanterns that bobbed along its surface. Fireflies blinked and sparked in the night air. Other lanterns seemed to float down the street, carried by unseen hands."

Tsuruda's turmoil comes alive even in this flowingly peaceful and gentle writing. "The memory, fresh as green cut melon...More memories come rushing back, swallows to their home, darting inside the cracks of my resolve."

In "The Afterlife of Kenzaburo Tsuruda," Lombardo takes on the meaning of a life well lived and renders it beautifully.

"Beth wrote a novel about the delicate veil between life and death—and now she is herself, dead. Beth would see humor in that. She loved to laugh," her husband writes in a foreword to her novel. "Beth believed in an afterlife, and through her story of a complex Japanese family—both living and dead—I can see, smell, hear, and taste exactly how that afterlife existed in her mind. Those descriptions comfort me, as well as the other people who knew her best."

Lombardo's friends may have set out on a labor of love, but the fruits of their labor are a gift not just to the spirit of Lombardo, but to all.

Amy Canfield is a bibliophile who lives in South Portland.



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A flavorful fall fiesta

The whole family will be on board with these veggie-filled fiesta boats

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY CANDACE KARU

There is a term in the travel industry for the time between peak and off-peak travel—it's called the shoulder season. And if you ask me, there's a culinary shoulder season in my kitchen as well. It's the time after the warm, light-filled days of summer but before the cold and dark of winter sets in, a season that allows us to gradually shift our cooking and eating habits.

As my summer garden output and local produce selections start to dwindle, I think of ways to transition meal prep to suit cooler days and heartier dishes.

Zucchini—a vegetable that seems ever-present, no matter the season—is a healthy and tasty foundation for one of my favorite transitional meals. Reader, I give you...

◀ ¡Fiesta Boats!

Fun, nutritious and practical, zucchini boats have been staple in my kitchen since my now-grown children were school aged and demanding things like regular meals with alarming regularity. And really, little green boats filled with goodness and topped with cheese, who's going to say no to that? My family was totally on board. (See what I did there?)

My early forays into zucchini boats had a decidedly American inclination—squash stuffed with ground beef, tomatoes, onions, salt and pepper topped with cheddar cheese. But as my children became more adventurous eaters, I added more veggies—peppers, corn, mushrooms, spinach, kale—as well as grains like wild rice, barley, quinoa and wheat berries.

We settled on our favorite, the aforementioned fiesta boats, because of our enduring love of all foods Mexican and Tex-Mex. The recipe below is the culmination of much experimentation with the fiesta filling. This is a perfect dish for making the transition to fall; it's light and filled with wholesome ingredients, but it's hearty enough for cool fall evenings. Call it comfort food for the shoulder season.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 zucchini, medium to large
- 1 pound ground turkey, chicken, or beef
- 1/2 red onion, diced
- 1/2 bell pepper (*any color*), diced
- 1 jalapeno pepper (*seeded and diced*)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup salsa (*drain as much liquid as possible*)
- 1/2 cup corn (*canned or fresh*)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder (*1 use chipotle chili powder*)
- 1/2 fresh cilantro, chopped, plus more for garnish
- 1 cup grated pepper jack cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 400°.

Slice each zucchini in half lengthwise and scoop out the inside of each half using a spoon or melon baller, leaving enough zucchini to make sure you have a sturdy little boat (about 1/4 inch). Save the scooped out zucchini to add to your fiesta filling.

In a large skillet, heat olive oil and cook onions, garlic and peppers until softened. Add ground meat and cook through.

Add salsa, corn, chili powder, and cumin and cook until combined, about 5 minutes.

Remove from heat. Add cilantro and salt and pepper to taste.

Grease a large casserole dish and arrange zucchini boats so they are not touching each other. Generously fill each boat with fiesta filling and top with cheese.

Cover the casserole dish with aluminum foil and bake for 20 minutes. Turn oven to broil, remove foil and broil the boats until the cheese is bubbly and golden.


Garnish with cilantro and serve piping hot.

FIESTA BOAT PRO TIPS


This recipe yields more fiesta filling than you will need for your boats. That's my gift to you. There should be enough left over that if you add a can of beans and reheat, you can have fiesta chili for dinner the next night. Or heat and serve it over rice for a yummy fiesta bowl. Or use it as taco filling and have fiesta tacos. The possibilities are practically endless.

Fiesta boats make a tasty meatless entrée. Just substitute a can of black beans for the ground meat and the vegetarians (and non-vegetarians) will say "¡Olé!"

Not in the mood for Mexican? Make yours Italian by subtracting chili powder and cumin and adding Italian seasoning and topping with Parmesan cheese.



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These Mexican-style ice pops, or paletas, are fruity, cool, refreshing and so easy to make.

◀ Paletas

How about a super-easy sweet treat after you're finished fiesta boating? Try these Mexican-style paletas (it means "little stick" in Spanish) or ice pops. They're fruity, cool, refreshing and so easy to make.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup sugar
 1/3 cup water
 2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice
 3 cups fresh fruit, chopped (*blueberries, strawberries, pineapple, mango, kiwi, honeydew, watermelon*)

INSTRUCTIONS

In a blender or food processor (*I use my Magic Bullet*), blend sugar, water, lime juice and half the fruit until smooth.

Spoon the diced fruit into ice pop molds (*I use four molds per batch*) then add the blended liquid. Fill each mold, leaving about a quarter inch at the tip.

Freeze molds for about an hour, until mixture is slushy, and insert pop sticks. Freeze for another 4–6 hour until solid.

Run the bottom of the molds under warm water to release the pops.

PALETAS PRO TIPS

You can substitute fruit juice or coconut water for the sugar and water for a quick fix and more flavor.

Add a dash of chili powder to your pops for a burst of authentic flavor.

Substitute cream in place of water and you have a sweet, creamy paleta.

I use herb tea instead of water for my honeydew pops and add a few mint leaves to the blender for a sophisticated taste. It's like a spa day on a stick.

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



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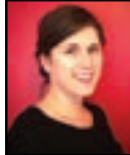
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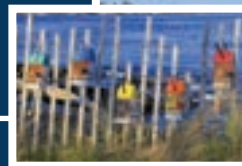
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Empower Maine Women Network

A diverse group of Maine women supporting, sharing and enriching each other's lives

WRITTEN BY AMY PARADYSZ

"It's very rich to be in each other's lives," says Cathy Lee, a Maine attorney who counts among her friends dozens of immigrant women. The assumption might be that Lee got to know these immigrant women through her legal practice—but her career is focused on climate change. It's her heart that's open wide to cultural change.

When Lee heard of the inaugural Empower the Immigrant Woman Conference that Mufalo Chitam was organizing in 2015, the two women talked for more than an hour. Lee wanted to support the Empower effort—not just financially.

"We agreed that some sort of networking between immigrant women and the rest of us would be helpful after the conference," Lee says. "It started out as purely social. The idea is for us to help immigrant women in whatever way they need help, which may be simply friendship, improving their English language skills or connecting with a peer group around a particular interest."

Each Empower Network gathering includes a presentation on a program or resource potentially useful to immigrant women, whether they're looking for housing, child care, English classes or help establishing a business.

The American-born women who choose to be part of the Empower Network tend to have connections in terms of housing, child care, education or charities or be in careers in business, law or medicine. Likewise, many of the immigrant women had high-powered jobs as engineers, lawyers, midwives or business leaders in their home coun-



Top: Iranian immigrant Parivash Rohani, a 2016 Trailblazer Award recipient, introduces herself. Photo courtesy of Catherine Frost.

Above: Cathy Lee and other Empower Network ladies react joyfully to a performance of the Pihcintu Multicultural Chorus. Photo by Amy Paradysz




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The 2018 Empower Network conference is being supported by the Intercultural Community Center and led by volunteer Ghomri Rostampour, a Kurdish American from South Portland. Includes panel discussions and a resource fair.

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Left: Hawo Abdille, an English language specialist for Lewiston Public Schools, at an Empower Network gathering. *Photo by Amy Paradysz*

Top: A resource fair connect immigrant women with helpful community organizations. *Photo courtesy of Catherine Frost*

Above: The Empower Network is a sisterhood in which immigrant women—and sometimes their children—feel safe and loved. *Photo by Amy Paradysz*

tries. Sometimes all they need to find a job, an apartment or whatever they need is, as Chitam says, “to know people who know people.”

“For me, one of the things I struggled with for the longest time was how to find a mentor or somebody to look up to who I just like,” says Chitam, who, nearly 20 years after immigrating to Maine, became the first executive director of the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition. “Now I look up to Cathy, and she’s become a good family friend who I can invite to my house and cook for her and she invites me to her house. You don’t know where friendships will start. We’re just people.”

In this group that meets monthly, American-

born women are in the minority. And, Lee says, there’s value in being part of a group like that and getting a fresh perspective. For example, there was an Empower Network gathering the day after the 2017 presidential inauguration.

“The women from Maine were in despair,” Lee says, “and the immigrant women said we had no idea how good we have it that we have democratic institutions that protect freedom of speech and the right to vote. To me, this was a wakeup call that I need to be there fighting to protect these basic democratic rights that we now feel are at risk.”

This year’s Empower conference at the University of Southern Maine on Nov. 10 will

include panel discussions on inclusive democracy and civic engagement as well as a resource fair. That evening, the annual Trailblazers gala will celebrate immigrant women doing amazing things in their communities here in Maine.

One of the Trailblazers in 2017 was Fowsia Musse, a refugee from Somalia who works with Healthy Androscoggin, going door to door to teach people about lead paint risks, and is a member of the Lewiston City Council's Immigrant and Refugee Integration and Policy Development Working Group. (Musse is also a member of Maine Women Magazine's advisory board.)

"She's one of my closest friends," says Hawo Abdille, another commu-

nity leader among new Mainers in the Lewiston area. Abdille's family left Somalia when she was just 1 year old. A Lewiston High School graduate and an American citizen, she's clear that Maine is her home—and she wants to be a positive force for change. She's also the new English Language Learners Intake Assessment coordinator for the Lewiston Public Schools and a passionate member of the Empower Network.

"This group inspires me," Abdille says. "I feel like we can change the world. We are strong women, and the sky is the limit."

"I feel like we can change the world. We are strong women, and the sky is the limit."

Amy Paradysz is a freelance writer based in Scarborough who writes about women's groups.

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Photo by Jessica Nolette

Megunticook

Written by Diane Lebson, Camden

Floating
Quiet, sweet quiet
I hear nothing but my breath
and the loon.
The river's loon.
Our loon.

I open my eyes to endless blue
The sky.
The water.
It expands inside me
and makes me whole.

The dock is always there
even when it's not.
When it's winter
and it's been pulled up on shore
it's in my soul now
and makes me whole.

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Rhiannon G., Sea Change Yoga student

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