



Alton • Bradley • Old Town

Community Connections

FEB 2024

Stats to Howl About at Old Town High School



540
students enrolled



109

students currently taking 210 free college courses

A

Average grade of college-level courses taken

591

college credits earned in 2022-2023

\$2.3M

in scholarships awarded to 2022-23 sr. class of 130

330

students on the Honor Roll in the first quarter this year

City of Old Town News & Updates

- City department updates: Everything you need to know to access City services
- City project updates: paving, bridge repair, new sidewalk
- **Upcoming Events:** Mark your calendar for the 2024 Fly-In and Riverfest, and 2025 Fire & Ice!

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AWARD-WINNING ALUMNI 31-32

Superintendent's Message



Matt Cyr

Annual Budget Update

This is the time of year when we anxiously await funding reports, refined cost projections, and grant award notices. The

RSU 34 school board is prepared to responsibly work through this year's budget process as this important information comes to light. In the meantime, school administrators and staff have been working hard to build draft budgets. We expect to have more information to share at the February 14 school board meeting.

Tree Cutting at OTHS

You may have noticed sections of tree removal at Old Town High School at the top of the hill near the alternative education building, and behind the baseball right field fence. These were done for safety reasons as there were clusters of trees that were dead or dying, some of which were already falling, but caught-up in other trees. There was a risk of trees falling on the concessions building and baseball fence,

and we had a piece of a tree fall on a staff member's car while parked on top of the hill (fortunately, nobody was hurt). These areas were cleared, and over the summer will be loamed and seeded. They will be great vantage points for viewing athletic events, but more importantly, provide safer facilities in these areas. We do not have any other plans for these areas at this time.

Parking Lot Changes

It has come to our attention that there has been an increase in incidents related to loitering in our school parking lots after hours, on weekends, and school vacations—in particular, at Old Town High School. Regrettably, these incidents have resulted in various concerns, including excessive littering, reports of dangerous driving, and other mischievous behaviors that compromise the safety and well-being of our school community.

In response to these concerning issues, we are implementing a "No Loitering" policy in all school parking areas. This policy prohibits any unauthorized individuals from lingering or spending unnecessary time in the school parking lots. We are working with the Old Town Police Department to help with enforcement. Signs will soon

be posted. We understand that the school parking lot serves as a congregating area for parents and guardians during drop-off and pick-up times and this can absolutely continue. However, we urge everyone to promptly depart from the premises after these activities are completed to mitigate any potential risks or disturbances.

The safety and security of our students, staff and visitors are our top priorities. By working together and respecting these guidelines, we can foster a safer and more secure environment for all. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter.

Strategic Planning Update

Assistant Superintendent Jon Doty and I have spent much of this fall and early winter interviewing a wide range of individuals including parents, school board members, staff, the education association, and municipal leaders. In addition, opportunities were made available for feedback from the general public. We then aggregated this data into 4 key 'Pillars' for RSU 34. They are: Raising Student Aspirations, Engagement and Achievement; Excellent, Empowered, and Supported Staff; Community Collaborations; & Safe and Sustainable Facilities and Operations. We are presently work-

ing with feedback to finetune the objectives and action strategies for each pillar. Once this phase is completed, we will finalize our Vision and Mission statements. We remain hopeful that all of this work will be completed before summer so that we can begin the 2024 - 2025 school year with a comprehensive and collaboratively developed 5-year strategic plan.

RSU 34 School & Community Spotlight Award

Recognition and acknowledgement are positive ways to highlight the work happening in our schools and communities. This form gives the opportunity to share the great things happening around us each day.

Please visit our website to see who has been celebrated and to submit an award nomination: <https://www.rsu34.org/page/rsu-34-school-community-spotlight-award> Respectfully,

Matthew D. Cyr
RSU 34 Superintendent



RSU 34 School Calendar 2023-2024

The School Board will soon take final action on the 2024-2025 School Calendar; it will be posted on our website.

August					September					October				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4					1	2	3	4	5	6-IS
7	8	9	10	11	4-H	5	6	7	8	9-H	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30-IS	31-IS		25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
November					December					January				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3					1	1-H	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10-H	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	11	12	13	14	15	15-H	16	17	18	19
20	21	22-IS	23-H	24-H	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30		25-H	26-V	27-V	28-V	29-V	29	30	31		
February					March					April				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2					1	1	2	3	4	5
5	6	7	8	9	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12
12	13	14	15	16	11	12	13	14	15-IS	15-H	16-V	17-V	18-V	19-V
19-H	20-V	21-V	22-V	23-V	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26
26	27	28	29		25	26	27	28	29	29	30			
May					June					July				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4-H	5
6	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	17	18	19-H	20	21	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26
27-H	28	29	30	31						29	30	31		

2023-2024 School Hours

Please be on time, every day!

- AES 7:40 - 2:10
- VRS 7:55 - 2:25
- OTHS 7:45 - 2:15
- LMS 8:35 - 3:05
- OTHS 8:30 - 3

Important Dates to Note

- **District Spirit Day:** Feb. 16 Favorite Team/Sports Day (Donations to benefit the RandMay Foundation Scholarship)
- **February vacation:** 19-23
- **April vacation:** 15-19
- **OTHS Graduation:** Fri. Jun. 7
- **Last Student Day:** Currently, Jun. 14

Staff In-Service Days

- March 15 (No students)

IS	In-Service Day--No Students
H	Holiday--No Students
V	School Vacation Day
	First/Last Day of School
	OTHS Graduation--June 7th

*Additional days will be added at the end of the school year to adjust for snow days or unexpected school cancellations.

*Parent-Teacher Conferences are in the fall, and scheduled on a building-by-building basis.



College students are helping small Maine schools fill teacher shortages

Republished with permission of the BDN Journalist, Valerie Royzman

Margaret “Maggie” Gurewicz will graduate from Husson University next spring with hundreds more hours of experience in elementary classrooms than some of her peers thanks to a program that pays college students to work in schools before graduation.

She is a participant in the Educator Accelerator program at Regional School Unit 34, which serves Alton, Bradley and Old Town. It launched in 2021 when it hired a cohort of college students to work in classrooms under the supervision of mentor teachers and as substitutes. They are paid as part-time employees while gaining extra field experience.

Have you ever considered becoming a teacher?

The district last week began a new school year with its fifth cohort, including about 10 to 12 participants from Eastern Maine Community College, Husson University, the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Augusta’s campus in Bangor.

The Educator Accelerator program has helped meet immediate staffing needs, and some graduates have gone on to work for the

district, Assistant Superintendent Jon Doty said. He called it a “win-win-win” for the district’s prekindergarten through 12th-grade students, pre-service educators and university partners, particularly during a nationwide shortage of teachers.

“Educator shortages have been a rising concern in our nation for a handful of years. We need to work aggressively as a state to bring people into the field and prepare them for the steep learning curve that happens during the first few years of the profession,” Doty said, which includes removing financial barriers.

RSU 34 relies on federal COVID relief money to fund the program. When those funds run out in about a year, every penny will count for school districts, Doty said. He and program partners are looking for other sources of funding, including an apprenticeship grant through

Maine’s education and labor departments.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated staffing shortages and was also when many students fell behind academically, socially and emotionally, Doty said.

That is evident to Gurewicz, an “educator accelerator” at Old Town Elementary, who has learned that teaching takes a team because students are at different levels with varying needs, she said.

Last year, she worked with fourth-graders, while this year she was hired again and assigned to Michelle Miller’s fifth-grade classroom. Having a blend of assignments — one day as a substitute and the next in Miller’s classroom with familiar students, for example — has taught her to adapt quickly and keep calm when circumstances are beyond her control, she said.

Juggling this work with two other part-time jobs, college classes and other commitments is challenging, but Gurewicz said she “wouldn’t trade this experience for anything.” The skills and tools she has gained for her future classroom are invaluable, she said.

“I have worked a lot of jobs in the last few years, and this one is my favorite,” she said. “This program has shown me where I want to take my career because there is so much beyond your four-year teaching degree.”

Gurewicz, 21, hopes to land a job at the district after graduation, when she will be certified to teach kindergarten through eighth grade. Then she wants to pursue a master’s degree in school counseling or special education.

RSU 34 has at least two full-time teachers who participated in the program, Doty said. The district welcomed them, the participants got to know district staff, and they could hit the ground running as full-time hires, he said.

Educator Accelerators use the program to meet their rigorous requirements for graduation, but some get involved, even surpassing hours, because they want authentic experiences and mentorship, said Shelly Tennett, chair of Husson’s education school and an assistant professor.

This is a model that can be replicated and have a positive effect on the profession, she said. Area schools like Center Drive School in Orrington, where Husson students are also involved, have drawn inspiration and created a similar program, said Evan Mooney, an assistant professor and clinical director of teacher education.

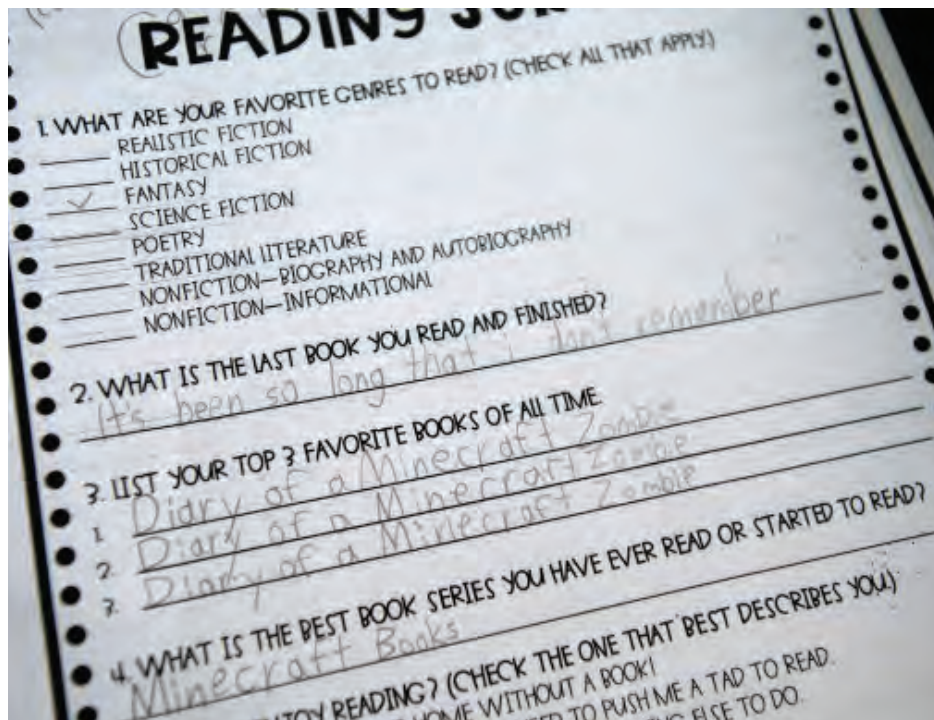
“The district has invested in a thoughtful way,” he said. “This is the way teacher education should be.”



Maggie Gurewicz and students at Old Town Elementary School. Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN



Margaret “Maggie” Gurewicz (right), a Husson University student studying elementary education, helps 11-year-old Abby Martin with her work during class last week. Gurewicz is a participant in Regional School Unit 34’s Educator Accelerator program at Old Town Elementary School, where she works alongside fifth-grade teacher Michelle Miller (left). Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN



A student worksheet at RSU 34’s Old Town Elementary School. Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN



Maggie Gurewicz chats with fifth grader Lucas Bates during class at Old Town Elementary School last week. Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN Credit: Linda Coan O’Kresik / BDN

RSU 34 Launches Apprenticeship Collaboration: Governor Mills Announces \$985,000 in Grants to Recruit, Train and Retain

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Grant awards to six Maine schools will significantly expand educator apprenticeship opportunities

Governor Janet Mills announced this week that her Administration has awarded six schools a total of \$985,000 to recruit, train, and retain educators through pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship pilot programs. Associate Commissioner of Labor Samantha Dina and Associate Commissioner of Education Megan Welter announced the awards during a Zoom press conference.

The initiative, funded in part by Governor Mills' Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan and unveiled earlier this year, is part of a larger effort by the Mills Administration to connect employers with a skilled workforce and workers with career opportunities.

The awards will be used to train nearly 200 new and existing educators in 12 counties across the state – with a focus on building pathways for multilingual individuals, people with disabilities, and people of color and rural communities to increase representation among Maine's educator workforce. The six institutions of education receiving awards are:

- Brunswick School Department - \$105,000
- MSAD 1/RSU #79 - \$75,000
- RSU #34 - \$249,000
- Portland Public Schools - \$250,000
- University of Maine Farmington - \$144,000
- University of Southern Maine - \$162,000

The six schools awarded funds will partner with the Maine Department of Education and the Maine Department of Labor's Registered Apprenticeship Program to pilot new educator apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.

"As the daughter of a longtime public school teacher, I understand the deep and lasting impact that teachers have on their students, schools, and communities," said Governor Janet Mills. "Helping Maine

educators advance and grow in their careers is not only good for them, but it is also good for our students and can lead to better outcomes for everyone in the long-term. I am pleased we are putting funds from my Jobs Plan to use to help Maine schools find the teachers they need and support educators on the path to fulfilling careers as they make a difference in the lives of our children."

Registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships are highly effective tools for workers to build their skill set and connect to high-wage careers and for employers to recruit and retain workers.

The Maine Apprenticeship Program currently has 1,382 apprentices and 411 participating businesses, with the program continuing to grow, including more than 30 educator apprentices through two distinct programs funded by the Governor's Jobs Plan – Gorham School District in partnership with Southern Maine Community College and University of Southern Maine, and Washington County Community College in partnership with MSAD 37.

The initiative expands a program launched last year at Washington County Community College and the Gorham School District. The program was created after the Maine Department of Education last year released its Teach Maine plan, in partnership with educators and stakeholders, to bolster the teacher workforce through innovative recruitment and retention strategies, including programs like apprenticeships. With encouragement from the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, Maine joined several other states in launching apprenticeships in educator occupations with new programs at Washington County Community College and the Gorham School District.

This expansion of teacher apprenticeship programs is supported by Federal funding, including \$375,000

through the Governor's Jobs Plan.

"The Maine Department of Labor works with employers to fulfill their workforce needs and works to connect Maine's people to high quality jobs. One way that we do this is through mutually beneficial registered apprenticeships," said Laura Fortman, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Labor. "Registered Apprenticeship is an excellent training model for schools to use, as it supports those already working in Maine's schools to advance down the path of becoming a certified teacher, while continuing to earn an income."

"The Maine Department of Education is committed to ensuring that everyone who wants to become a teacher in Maine has a pathway into the profession and is supported in the classroom. Teacher apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships offer a meaningful pathway to recruit, prepare, and support aspiring educators and we are excited to see these programs expanded across our state," said Pender Makin, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Education.

The Maine Departments of Labor and Education accepted applications from organizations through September 25, 2023. Fifteen applications were received, and funding was awarded with a focus on increasing representation in the education sector among rural communities, people of color, and multilingual learners.

This investment is the latest by the Mills Administration to strengthen Maine's workforce and create good-paying jobs in rewarding careers. It builds on the Mills Administration's commitment to addressing systemic challenges that have constrained Maine's ability to grow and thrive, with priority focus

on investments to grow and develop Maine's workforce.

This grant funding also builds on the investment of \$12.3 million awarded to expand apprenticeship through the Governor's Jobs Plan and other Federal funds.

Apprentices in Maine who completed their program in the last two years increased their wages, on average, by nearly 40 percent. Nationally, 91 percent of apprentices continue their employment with their apprenticeship sponsoring business once their training is complete.

Maine people or businesses interested in registered apprenticeships can check out videos of apprentices and employers in action, easily find information about how the program works, and use the map to find an apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship near you on the overhauled website: www.maine.gov/apprenticeship.

The Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan is the Governor's plan, approved by the Legislature, to invest nearly \$1 billion in Federal American Rescue Plan funds to improve the lives of Maine people and families, help businesses, create good-paying jobs, and build an economy poised for future prosperity.

Since the Jobs Plan took effect in October 2021, the Mills Administration has delivered direct economic relief to nearly 1,000 Maine small businesses, supported more than 100 infrastructure projects around the state to create jobs and revitalize communities, and invested in workforce programs estimated to offer apprenticeship, career and education advancement, and job training opportunities to 22,000 Maine people.

For more about Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, visit maine.gov/jobsplan.

School Counseling Week

February 5th-9th is National School Counseling Week. This week highlights the impact school counselors have in helping students achieve success. School counselors wear many hats including the implementation of a social emotional learning curriculum, individual and group counseling services,

connecting students and families to resources, as well as college and career readiness. The RSU #34 school counseling team has a wide range of experience and each member brings their own unique strengths to benefit the students and families of RSU #34.

RandMay Foundation: Building a Brighter Community

Three RSU #34 Staff Members Serve on Board of New Non-Profit

The RandMay Foundation for Children and Families is a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been founded with a mission to enrich the lives of children and families, ensuring that every child can embrace the joys of childhood. The foundation is a tribute to the legacy of Richard May and Warren & Norma Rand, embodying their spirit of community and care. Rooted in the belief that every child deserves a chance to thrive, the foundation focuses on providing financial assistance to families to help with the cost of playing sports and/or participating in other extracurricular activities. They also work to help out in times of hardship, recently donating to families who have lost their homes due to fire. Additionally, they offer scholarships to seniors graduating from Old Town High School, fostering educa-



tional opportunities for local youth.

The community is invited to join the RandMay Foundation's journey by connecting on their facebook page ([Facebook.com/RandMayFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/RandMayFoundation)). Here, you can learn more about their work, discover how to request support, and find ways to contribute to this meaningful cause.

The activities of the RandMay Foundation are coordinated by its volunteer Board, which includes RSU #34 staff members David May, Michael May, and Todd Rand."



The members of the school counseling team include: Kim Ketch, OTHS, 20 years of experience; Jami Martell, OTHS, 8 years of experience in school counseling, 20 total in mental health; Erica Tweedie, LMS, 19 years in public education, 10 years experience in school counseling; Vicki Wilcox, OTEs, 25 years of experience in teaching/school counseling; Trysha Lunn, OTEs, AES, and VRS, 8 years of experience as a school counselor

LEONARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dr. Gert Nesin, Principal
827-3900



Building Safe Expectations and Routines

At LMS this year, we have worked on building common expectations in all areas of school. There are 3 areas in particular that we have developed and continue to update; Handbook, Habits Matrix, and use of eHallPass and cameras.

Handbook

Over the summer, Miss Marvin and Dr. Nesin reviewed past handbooks to find what needed to be edited, added, or deleted. We shared the electronic link with students and families. During the first week of school, we reviewed the handbook with students. We especially emphasized the section on bullying, harassment, and civil rights viola-

tions.

All students heard the following message: “At LMS, we want all people—adults and kids—to feel safe, welcome, and respected.” We tell them the categories that are protected from harassment BY LAW, which are, “Race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry or national origin, hair, or disability.” LMS does not tolerate any form of harassment. The school board has defined harassment very clearly as any behavior that deliberately causes emotional suffering, embarrassment, or pain. We defined for students the steps that we take if we find they violate these expectations, and we

are very diligent about following those steps when violations are observed or reported, and verified through investigation.

Habits Matrix


At LMS, we teach, evaluate, and support Habits of Work (Drive, Engage, and Focus) and Habits of Citizenship. At the beginning of the year, we asked teachers and students to get together and look at our areas of our Habits of Citizenship (Respect, Own It, Kindness, and Speak Up). They developed a matrix of what that would look like in each area of the school that defines how to keep all areas of our school safe, and a way to talk to kids about

growing toward Habits of Citizenship expectations and routines.

e-Hall Pass and Cameras

After talking with Mr. Gordon and Mr. Bousquet at Old Town High School, we put e-Hall Pass in place at LMS. We are still working out the details of how to use it effectively and efficiently, but it has allowed us to find and address patterns of student movement around the school. In combination with the new cameras in all common areas of the school, we are able to monitor student movement and behavior, and more accurately investigate reported incidents.

LMS R.O.K.S.

	Hallway	Classroom	Bathroom	Recess	Lunchroom	Bus	Technology	Extra & Co Curricular Activities
Respect	-Use only your locker. -Use the correct paths and stay on the right side of the hallway. -Use inside voice level and be calm.	-Use classroom supplies appropriately. -Follow classroom/teacher expectations. -Use inside voice level.	-Use the facilities and supplies appropriately. -Keep the bathroom clean. -Use inside voice level.	-Take care of the property and equipment. -Follow recess guidelines. -Listen to the recess monitor.	-Pick up after yourself (put trays and trash in the right places). -Stay at your table. -Use inside voice level.	-Keep the bus clean. -Listen to the bus driver and follow all bus rules. -Use inside voice level.	-Take care of materials (laptop, case, charger). -Use only your device.	-Use equipment and supplies appropriately. -Pick up after yourself. -Listen to the adults who are in charge.
Own it	-Be timely. -Have permission and a pass when you are in the hallway.	-Be responsible and be truthful. -Use class time wisely. -Complete and turn in your assigned work.	-Be timely. -Only use the bathroom when you need to.	-Follow the agreed upon rules for the game. -Make good choices about who and what you play with. -Own your mistakes and repair any harm.	-Use appropriate conversation topics and noise level. -Wait your turn.	-Have appropriate conversations. -Be safe (stay out of the aisle, face forward, etc.).	-Stay on appropriate sites. -Put your personal device inside the secure space in the classroom.	-Be on time. -Represent yourself and LMS in a positive way. -Lead by example.
Kindness	-Greet others in a friendly, considerate, and quiet way.	-Be nice to teacher and students. -Help teachers and students. -Listen to others.	-Be considerate of others' privacy. -Be friendly to others.	-Include people -Choose kind words and actions.	-Invite others to sit with you. -Use manners (please/thank you).	-Greet your bus driver and use manners. -Choose kind words and actions.	-Use friendly language when communicating with others electronically.	-Invite others to join you if they are left out. -Show good sportsmanship.
Speak Up	If you hear or see something, say something. Address incidents on your own or report incidents to a staff member immediately.							

Breaking News: Introducing the Thrilling World of Cheerleading and Basketball!

LMS held cheerleading tryouts Monday–Friday, November 13–17, from 3-5 p.m. The tryouts were held in the LMS gym, and about 19 students tried out. The coaches are Kiarah DeShane and Erin O'Brien.

Teams were announced on a Friday, a few days after the last tryout.

Colbie Williams, a 7th grade cheerleader, says, “Tryouts were very interesting.” The first game of cheer will happen on December 18th at the elementary school.

Basketball tryouts were held at LMS in the gym, and 12 students made the A team, and 12 students

made the B team. The coach for the A team boys is Mr. Morin. The coach for the B team boys is Mr. York. The first game was held at Ellsworth on November 29th. A team won, but B team had a tough loss.

The first game for girls basket-

ball was held at 3 p.m. at OTES on November 29. The coach for A team girls is Mr. Mamaril, and the coach for B team girls is Mr. Griffin. Both teams won their games. “The team played really hard, and they had a lot of fun. I’m looking forward to the rest of the season,” says Mr. Griffin.

Teachers Learning at LMS

In addition to their very busy day jobs, several of our teachers are working on their own learning and professional development. We all attend many hours of required professional development around teaching, learning, safety, and supporting all of our students. Some of our teachers have gone above and beyond, making a commitment to becoming better teachers for our children.



Amy Clement, Literacy Specialist

Mrs. Clement is training with the Children's Dyslexia Center in Bangor where she is learning new strategies for teaching reading. These strategies are helpful to any student in reading, whether they have dyslexia or are just working on becoming a better reader. Mrs. Clement's training takes the full school year, and she will finish with a project that shows how to use these new literacy strategies with students of any age in small groups or one-on-one. She is learning so much in this course and is excited to reach more students with this work!

Nicole Daigle, Special Education Teacher

Mrs. Daigle is working through the University of Maine on her Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) in Special Education, which will qualify her for special education leadership. This past summer, she earned a graduate certificate in behavior intervention. She continues to take classes, while teaching full time and sharing the family obligations of raising three children.

Rachel Beckwith, Grade 8 Teacher

In December, after matriculating in a doctoral program at the University of Northern Colorado, Dr. Beckwith earned her Ed.D. She successfully defended her dissertation by Zoom, discussing her findings about empowering students to become active participants in their learning. Dr. Beckwith continues to take advantage of a variety of professional development opportunities, from professional conferences (attending and presenting), institutes, and book groups.



Doretta Callahan, Grade 7 Teacher

In addition to participating in a variety of PD opportunities, Mrs. Callahan is working with the Maine Department of Education on Wabanaki Studies. She also will be attending a week-long National Endowment for Humanities Institute at the University of New Hampshire this summer, after she attends the Middle Level Institute at the University of Maine.

Kim Emerson, Literacy Interventionist Ed Tech

Ms. Emerson is currently working through the University of Maine to earn her Bachelors Degree in Secondary Education or Child Development and Family Relations. Eventually, she would like to earn a Masters Degree in Educational Counseling. After years of being an excellent school secretary and then joining us this year, she says it's never too late to learn something new!

Derek Bizier, Grade 8 Teacher

Mr. Bizier started his classroom teaching career at LMS with conditional 7-12 math and science certification. He is now fully certified in both of those areas, and is also taking coursework to earn a professional K-8 teaching certificate.

Jantha Henry

Ms. Henry was a classroom teacher for several years, with a Masters of Arts in Teaching. She earned her 7-12 teaching certificate in English, and also became qualified to teach middle school (5-8) ELA and social studies. This year, she has taken on dual roles as Library/Media Specialist and Chapter 104 Coordinator. She has started coursework and is working toward full certification in both areas.

LMS Winter Sports Update

From Lucas Grinnell, LMS

The winter sports season is well underway at LMS. We are happy to welcome the newest additions to our coaching staff. Dylan York as our "B" Boys Basketball coach, Riley Griffin as our "B" Girls Basketball coach, Kiarah Deshane as our new Head Cheerleading coach and Erin O'Brien as our Assistant cheerleading coach. Everyone is excited for the return of "B" basketball, bringing our program totals to 22 girls and 24 boys. Heading into holiday break, the Girls "A" team is currently 3-2, the "B" team is 2-3. Boys "A"

team is currently 4-1, and the "B" team is 1-4. The LMS cheering team started the season with 18 students. They are working hard each day in preparation for their competitions, with the first set for January 13. Shout out to Old Town Elementary School for again allowing us to host our home games and practices this season. Thank you for all your help and support.

Be sure to stay up to date with LMS Athletics on our RSU 34 Athletic website. There you will find game updates, schedules and all things sports in RSU 34.

Looking at Math Data

Our math consultant, Jenn Fronczak, conducted some math research under the guidance of Dr. Franziska Peterson at the RiSE Center at the University of Maine. She also looked at student beliefs about math, and how well students are prepared for high school.

Student Beliefs About Math

Our students took a survey at the beginning of the school year, asking them several questions about the following areas:

- **Confidence:** Can learn and do hard math
- **Value:** Math is important
- **Enjoyment:** Like to learn and do math
- **Motivation:** Will work hard to learn math

Students rated statements on a scale of 1-5, with 1 rating lowest and 5 rating highest.

She also compared Grade General Education, Special Education, and Chapter 104. Her find-

ings: "The Chapter 104 population across grade levels felt strongly positive about their abilities, interests, enjoyment, and value of math. The Special Education population...also felt more comfortable in the math classroom, compared to the general education population."

What could be the reasons for the differences in Chapter 104/Special Education and General Education? It could be individualized curriculum and instruction, significantly smaller groups, different methods of instruction, and/or something else. This is another question worth investigating.

We will give the same survey at the end of the year, after implementing Building Thinking Classrooms for the year.

Grade	6	7	8	Total
Confidence	3.29	3.28	3.14	3.24
Value	3.47	3.49	3.5	3.49
Enjoyment	3.03	3.12	2.93	3.02
Motivation	2.95	3.11	2.85	2.96

Algebra 1 Placement Data

At the end of every school year, all of the schools that feed into OTHS take an Algebra 1 Placement test, to assist in placement and to plan instruction for the upcoming year.

Amy Ketch, Christina Doore, and Jenn Fronczak looked through the tests and data. Here is a summary of their findings for LMS students:

Mastery of addition and subtraction of fractions, order of operations, perimeter, introductory probability,

creating and solving algebraic equations

Challenges with multiplication and division of fractions, complex probability, deep understanding of slope

Mastery of 32/48 questions

Although there is sometimes a perception that students from other feeder schools come better prepared in math, this turned out not to be true for this placement test. LMS actually scored significantly higher.

LMS Coyote RoBOBtics



Pictured in front from left to right are Alex Roach, Jordyn Larrabee, Mason McCann, Jack Carlisle, and Christopher Genge. In back are Coach Maija Overturf, Ciera McCash, Levi Lane, Zander Smith, Coach Melissa Zabierek, and Frank Ramirez-Pastrana. Not pictured is Ruth Mark.

The team is off to a great start to our season! With ten members representing grades 6-8, we have worked hard to build our team's identity, core values, and goals. This year's FIRST LEGO League Challenge is called "Masterpiece", with a theme of "Lights, Camera, STEAM!" We are using a LEGO Spike Prime robot to navigate and complete missions on a competition table, researching for our team's innovation project, and learning how to work together to accomplish our goals.

Recently, the team took a field trip to the Stewart Learning Center in Lincoln, ME, to complete an

escape room challenge. Team members applied their problem solving, communication, and perseverance skills to solve all of the puzzles. The attached picture shows how excited the team members were to finally escape the whale's belly and complete the challenge!

The team will participate in the annual Maine FIRST LEGO League Challenge Competition in Brewer, ME, on February 3, 2024. We look forward to improving our score from last year's competition and to represent Old Town the best we can!

Thank you!
Melissa

Puffin Team News

by Doretta Callahan

The Puffin Team at LMS has been very busy with lots of innovative learning going on inside and outside of the classroom. Check out our happenings!

September saw the entire 7th grade head to the Common Ground Fair located in Unity, Maine. Students were able to see first hand how sustainability, a year long theme in 7th grade, can work along with having a lot of fun! They saw sheep dog trials, sheep shearing, goat milking as well as working with stone cutting tools and getting their faces painted. Some even went on wagon rides!



Taste testing during Team Time to find out what type of apple trees to plant

October saw the Puffin Team head to Cole's Land and Transportation Museum to not only see the museum, but to experience living history by talking with veterans that volunteer their time so students can learn. This was followed up by students writing essays on 'What Freedom Means to Me' as well as 'Heroes.' Students really enjoyed their time spent with the veterans. The Puffin Team also participated in LMS Student Council Trunk or Treat - with the Puffin Team being voted 'the best!' Students had fun decorating their vehicle and handing out goodies to the younger students.

November saw the Puffin Team host their 2nd annual Veterans Day Celebration just before Veterans Day. This was a student led celebration that honored veterans the students had in their life. This year, nine veterans attended including Mr. Bob Miller. Mr. Miller, who was



Bob Miller, invited by Nick Murchison at the Veterans Day Celebration



Puffin students at Cole's Land & Transportation Museum

99 at the time, was a World War II veteran. He shared information about his life in the service, which was quite amazing. Harper Oakes and Anna Morey shared essays they had written on 'What Freedom Means to Me.' Thank you to all who donated drinks and cookies for refreshments. Puffin students, in remembering, made birthday cards for Mr. Miller for his 100th birthday in December. Happy birthday Bob!

The Puffin Team would also like to introduce their 'Team Time.'

During the first trimester, students met three times a week where they were working on service projects for their school and community. Projects include murals, gardening, developing an apple orchard, a community cultural cookbook, volunteering at OTEs and local day care center, writing for Community Connections, video making for new students, and others. They are truly learning what it means to be of service to their school and community. Great job Puffins!

LMS Students Enjoy Field Trips

Author: Konner Brooks. 7th Grade Student

Eighth grade students of Team Pamola and Team Eagle went on a field trip to Grindstone Falls last September. Grindstone Falls is in Penobscot County. It is north of Old Town and near Katahdin. Some students went hiking and some students enjoyed canoeing on the Penobscot River. According to eighth grade teacher Mr. Jay, "Learning in the wild is important." In the future they are hoping to go hiking in Blue Hill on Nov. 17th, they are also hoping to go kayaking sometime in

Spring. There is also a plan to go to Peaks Kenny in June and according to an eighth grade student the field trips are "Amazing."

The seventh grade teams of Puffin and Loon went on a field trip to the Common Ground Fair which is held in Unity, Maine. They went in early September and about 100 students attended the field trip. According to seventh grade teacher Mrs. Callahan, "It was great for students to experience things they don't normally experience and students need

to realize there is more to the world than Old Town." Whilst at the fair there were many things to do, such as ride bikes, look at and visit livestock, and participate in carpentry and stone cutting. Some students even got to go on a hayride. Overall, they had an amazing experience. Avery, a 7th grade student, said, "I thought it was really fun."

According to teacher Ms. Miller, sixth grade students haven't gone on any field trips just yet, but they plan to go to an art museum at the Gulf of Maine Institute and the Hudson Museum in Orono in the spring.



Bryce White at Common Ground Fair trying out alternative transportation



LMS Winter Concert Series

Members of the Leonard Middle School Chorus performing a concert on December 5th at Minsky Auditorium. The evening featured soloists, student emcees, and a variety of styles of music including: jazz, classical, Broadway, and a Hebrew blessing dedicated to the victims of the October 25th tragedy in Lewiston, Maine. The LMS chorus will have another concert on February 29th.

The LMS bands had their winter concert on December 14th. The Symphonic Band, 6th Grade Band, and Concert Band each performed three selections in varying styles.



Has the internet made society better?

By Harper Oakes of Puffin 7th grade team

Did you know that 94% of children from eight to eighteen have a Smartphone? That is up 91% from two years before! Some people believe this is not good. Here is my opinion:

Firstly, kids can use the internet for many positive things including studying, messaging friends, reading, writing, and drawing! People can also be informed about things from videos and articles! But the internet also has risks. Kids can be exposed to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and in some cases,

online predators. This is why some parents don't want their kids to use the internet.

Secondly, it is shown that kids who have excessive internet time are prone to get little sleep, fail to eat for long periods, and have limited physical activity. This is because of the heightened level of physical arousal. These problems could result in OCD, Anxiety, depression, and bad family relationships. The internet can also spread fake news and misleading information. This is really bad for impressionable children and teens.

dren and teens.

Thirdly, a lot of people get addicted to the internet. It's not good to be staring at a screen all the time. Teenagers are recommended to spend only two hours a day on screens. It is proven that staring at a screen causes you to blink less, resulting in dry and irritated eyes.

Besides all the negative effects, the internet can actually be pretty positive! It offers one of the highest means of communication that we didn't have before. It's also a great way to interact with others!

In my opinion, I think the internet has many positive traits. But I also believe that there should be a limit on how much time is used. Kids shouldn't be on their devices all the time. A great way to solve this problem is to put blockers on devices. This way inappropriate content is prevented and time is monitored. In conclusion, the internet HAS made society better. It is a great tool when used with caution, and can be very helpful. Just make sure you aren't overdoing it! And parents, make sure to keep an eye on your kids!

LMS Library News

Lots of fun is happening at the LMS library this year. Ms. Henry and Mx. Marie have been busy creating a comfortable space where every student can find something to enjoy. We have been repurposing some old books and turning them into pumpkins, turkeys, trees, and snowmen. There have been lots of contests, including the Great Pump-

kin Character Challenge and the Ugly Sweater Coloring Contest.

We also recognized World Kindness Day by creating a Kindness "Quilt" for students to complete. Mustaches were worn by all when we recognized Movember/No Shave November. Several male faculty members even shaved their beards and sported some fierce mustaches

in support of the cause.

Finally, two annual iconic LMS events continued this year with the Big Read and the Scholastic Book Fair. Every student in grades 5-8 received a copy of the book, *The Benefits of Being an Octopus* by Ann Braden, to read. Ann then visited our school and entertained us all with an insightful presentation on

her books and the writing process. Ann encouraged students to use their own super powers of inner strength, creating connections, and questioning. Stay tuned as the fun continues at the LMS library!



LMS Student Council

Submitted by Doretta Callahan Leonard Middle School student council has had a very busy start to the school year! Student Council is a service organization where students learn not only leadership skills, but also what it means to be of service to your school and community. They meet every Wednesday morning at LMS. This group of students are doing amazing things. Check out what they have accomplished in just a few months!

Elections were held in September with Kelsea Fournier elected

as president, Brooklyn Rand as vice-president, Stella McKay as secretary, and Emily Lawrence as treasurer. What a great leadership team! Our year started with the third annual Trunk or Treat in October. A lot of fun was had carving out pumpkins for the event! It was great to see the community come out and enjoy it. This was followed by the annual Halloween social night held at LMS. Lots of great, innovative costumes with lots of fun for everyone! The end of October was Red Ribbon Week, which pro-

notes living substance free. Contests were held daily to help promote the week. Student Council also supported 7th and 8th grade with funding for their service projects for our school community. It was a very busy October!

November was just as busy as the "Fill the Bus" food drive for our local food cupboard in Old Town was the first three weeks. There might have been a little friendly competition between classrooms! Student Council members, along with assistance from Cyr Bus, delivered the food to the cupboard on November 21st. It was very exciting to see all the seats in the bus have food in them!

LMS Student Council didn't slow down in December! LMS Student Council went shopping for the holidays to help those in need in our school community. They also started planning for the upcoming community event "Fire and Ice!"

Lots of planning is happening for the rest of the school year that will benefit the school and our community. Stay tuned to see what happens next!



LMS Puffin Students Collaborate On Service Projects

By Harper Oakes

At LMS, The 7th grade Puffin Team is now working on "Team Time" projects. The teachers on the Puffin Team who are facilitating the projects are Mrs. Tuttle, Mrs. Kenny, Ms. Callahan, and Ms. Mauger. The team has also pulled in community members to help, including Officer King, Nick and Joe from the SAY Group from Penquis, School Superintendent Cyr, Retired LMS teacher, Mr. Maxim, and an On-Air Radio Host from Town Square Media, Kori Skall.

A list of projects include the follow-

ing: a video welcoming new students to LMS, new signage for the trails and back of LMS that will be written in Penobscot, English, and French, a walking tour of Old Town, working on the gardens at LMS as well as planting an apple orchard, school murals, a cultural cookbook, a journal club, how to make a grow lab (vegetables), a volunteer relationship with OTEs, volunteer relationship with Little Angels Daycare, care bags to donate to homeless shelters, building awareness about substance use, and designing the history of our school for our website. The kids involved were split

into groups according to which project they wanted to work on.

Students have been working on their projects for at least an hour every day, for nearly a month. Their projects will culminate by the end of the trimester. "We are doing Team Time for several reasons, one, to work with different people, two, so that we can help our community, and so we can be active citizens in our community," 7th grade teacher Mrs. Kenny says.

"It's fun!" says Puffin student Isaac Vorpapel. Mrs. Kenny said the idea of Team Time came from 7th grade

teachers. "The initial idea came from the teachers, but the kids helped brainstorm a lot of the projects."

Not only are the students helping others, they are also learning things themselves. For example, some students have to learn how to write a news article, and others are learning more about the history of Old Town. Others are learning the needs of younger students in literacy and math, while others are learning about gardening.

All in all, Team Time has enabled students to learn and help their community.

Bridging the Gap: 8th Graders Host "Desserts & Discussions" to Mentor 6th Graders

Submitted by Jay Meigs McDonald

In a heartwarming initiative, 8th grade students recently took the lead in fostering a sense of community and mentorship by organizing "Desserts & Discussions," an event for their younger peers. This event went beyond the typical social gathering, as the 8th graders took on the roles of mentors, imparting lessons to their 6th grade peers.

The event, held in the decked-out 8th grade classrooms, featured a delightful array of desserts, setting a relaxed and inviting atmosphere. The purpose was not only to satisfy sweet cravings but to create a comfortable space for dialogue and shared learning.

Each 8th grader played a role by preparing a short lesson on a subject of their choice, ranging from study tips and time management to navigating the challenges of middle school life. The lessons were interactive and engaging, designed to spark curiosity and facilitate discussions among the students.

The 8th graders' initiative aimed to bridge the gap between the different grade levels, fostering a sense of community within the school. It provided the 6th graders with the opportunity to learn from their older peers, gaining insights into



the academic and social aspects of middle school that are often daunting for newcomers.

One of the key benefits of this mentorship was the promotion of a positive and supportive school culture. By establishing connections across grade levels, the 8th graders helped create an environment where younger students were valued and supported. The 8th graders also experienced the satisfaction



of being in charge and making a positive impact on the school. "Desserts & Discussions" showcased the power of student-to-student learning and demonstrated that everyone



has something valuable to contribute, regardless of age or grade level.

How schools should handle bullying

By Charlotte Horton LMS student

Have you seen a movie about a kid that gets bullied at school? This does not just happen to kids in movies; this is a big struggle for many kids especially in middle school through high school. Bullying leads to low self-esteem, anxiety, poor academic performance, feeling more sadness or loneliness, poor choices, bad mental/emotional health, bad habits, and much more. In fact, 1 in 5 students ages 12-18 get bullied during a school year. Kids start to hate the fact that they have to go to school because they know they will get bullied. That's why about 160,000 teens skip school because of bullying.

People get bullied in so many

different ways. If you think about bullying you probably think about a bully making cruel jokes about people and their appearances, that is verbal harassment. Specifically to a girl it usually is rude, unwanted comments on their body and specifically received from boys. 79% of bullying is verbal harassment. It is very common in schools. But mostly, middle and high schools.

Bullying results in kids scoring lower grades due to their inability to focus. What makes it harder is that they will be carrying that weight of having a low grade because parents or teachers pressure them to do better. Another thing that makes it harder is that when students get older they are less likely to report this bullying because they feel em-

barrassed or ashamed. Most of the time they think they are being bullied because of something they did or because there is something wrong with them. It's not coincident, only 39% of highschoolers getting bullied report it.

I think we should start to do something about this. Not a lot of peers, who witness others being bullied, do something about it. Being a bystander and not saying something is just as bad as mistreating someone. I believe schools should do more to prevent bullying than putting up a posting saying something like "Spread kindness not hate!" or "Be a buddy not a bully!" because no bully is going to look at that and say, "Oh, I'm not going to bully anymore!" Schools should encourage

students to report any bullying they see and report themselves if victimized.

Furthermore, I think there should be more major and immediate consequences for bullying such as an in school suspension or after school detention for at least a week. No one should put people down one day when the teachers aren't around then the next day get the "Kindness award". Teachers don't always see things happen especially when no one reports it.

These are the reasons I believe that schools should stand up to bullying and encourage individuals to report bullying in their communities because everyone's feelings and self esteem matter.

FALL

By Harper Oakes

Leaves falling to the ground
If you listen closely, you can hear the sound
Of the wind whistling and the birds singing
Of bugs crawling and swings swinging
I can smell the food cooking
The bats watching, the wolves lurking
Watching the carousel go 'round
At me happily barks a hound
As I sit, taking in the sun
An eventful day of Autumn fun.

Service Learning

Seventh grade Puffin students from LMS spent the last few months working together to plan and implement a service learning project. Some of the students were interested in establishing a volunteer relationship with the Old Town Elementary School. One small group decided to work with 2nd graders on literacy skills, while another small group chose to work with 1st graders on math skills. Avery, Nolan, Ben, and Cooper began writing pen pal letters to 2nd graders- and then were able to meet their pen pals to share some reading time with them. Seventh graders Charlotte, Charleigh, Amiyah, Dez-zie, and Colbie planned and created math games. They enjoyed working in Ms.Ouellette's class, playing their games with the students. All in all, the students had a good time and felt like they were making a

positive impact on their community. They hope to continue to support

the students at OTES throughout the school year.



Avery Mitchell reads to Alexis and Bentley



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6th- 8th Graders Hold Social Night

By Micah Broeur, Student

On September 15th, the LMS had their first social night in the gym and cafeteria. This social night started at 6:30 PM and ended at 8:00 PM. It was arranged by Assistant Principal Marvin and Principal Nesin.

At the social night the kids can dance in the gym to the music chosen by DJ Keegan Plourde- a former LMS student. According to Charleigh York, one of the students' favorite songs is "Our Song" by Taylor Swift. Seventh grade teacher and chaperone Mrs. Tuttle says, "A lot of the kids like to walk around, talk, be silly, and steal each other's hats."

In the cafeteria, in lieu of dancing, there are games. Some of the games are a Nintendo Switch, Chess, Checkers, Uno and many more board and card

games.

The Student council has decided that 5 dollars is a fair price to charge. The profit from the dance is used for school resources and more games for social nights. Some teachers reward their students with free dance passes for good behavior and kindness, but you have to earn them so you can't ask for one.

Students who want to attend the social night must have been in school that day, and they also must meet eligibility status.

Many students enjoy the social nights and look forward to the next one. A seventh grader named Luke says, "I thought the dance was nice."

The next social night will be sponsored by the student council and is called Winter Wonderland. It's not a dance but a peaceful lit walk in the woods.

Old Town LMS Student Council

By Anna Morey

Several students come into the Leonard Middle School early in the morning to meet in Ms. Colvin's room at 7:45 for a student council meeting. The teachers that are leading them are 8th grade teacher Ms. Ciera Colvin and 7th grade teacher Ms. Doretta Callahan. Ms. Colvin has been in the student council for six years, and Ms. Callahan has been in the student council for three years. Roughly twenty students participate in the student council. The president is Kelsea Fournier, Vice president is Brooklyn Rand, the other officers are Stella McKay- secretary and Emily Lawerace-

treasurer.

The council members have been very busy throughout the beginning of this year.

They held the Trunk or Treat in October, and every grade and Penquis S.A.Y. (Substance Affected Youth) group participated. According to a Puffin 7th grader named Isaac, "It was a lot of fun and I enjoyed helping little kids." The council also sponsored Red Ribbon Week, which was October 23-27.

During this week the council raised awareness of the dangers of doing drugs. Part of the activities were a door decorating contest, wear red day and penny drive.

In the future, the council will host a Winter Wonderland Walk in the back of the school.



Congratulations Coach Libby!

The Maine Association of Basketball Coaches announced Coach Garrett Libby as the recipient of basketball North Class B Boy's Coach of the Year for 2024.

Garrett was named as coach for the Old Town High School basketball program in 2019.

Join us in congratulating Coach Libby!

ALTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Cheryl Leonard, Principal
394-2331



Annual Book Character Pumpkin Contest



This year's contest at Alton Elementary piqued the interest of many students. Several pumpkins



came in making it hard for students to decide on their favorite pumpkin. First place went to Bentley Mushero



and his scary pumpkin. Olivia Macauley took second place with Clifford- the big red dog. Carson

Kennedy's Elephant and Piggy came in third place.

Forest Friday

Forest Friday is something first graders look forward to every week. They join their Pre-K and kindergarten friends for outdoor, nature-based learning. They explore the forest behind the school and engage in outdoor learning experiences through math, science, literacy, and art.

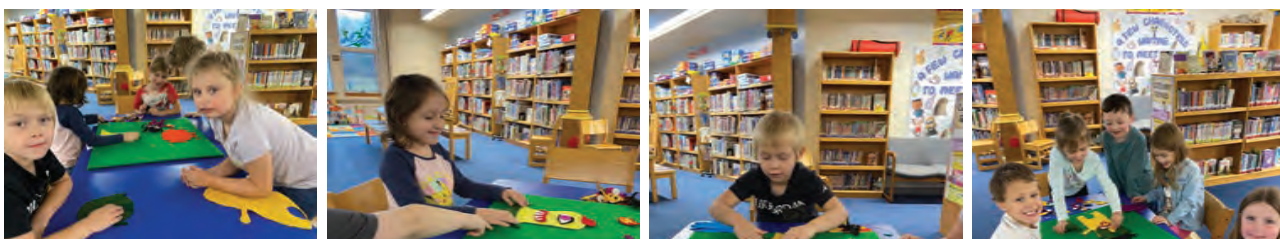


Library Monsters!

First graders at AES have been coming to the library for an extra session each week to work on storytelling. This storytelling activity aligns well with what is going on in their classroom. They come in

small groups of roughly 5 students and play storytelling games based on figures or objects found on cards. They have used felt boards to create a monster which they named, described and developed a story about.

Even a coloring sheet became a springboard for telling a story. Many students are working on creating a book they will bring home.



Treworgy Farm Field Trip

First graders from the Alton Elementary School enjoyed their field trip with their kindergarten friends to Treworgy Farm. We saw horses, fed goats, petted bunnies, and picked apples.

We snacked on homemade cider doughnuts- which were delicious! And, we also picked small pumpkins and played on the playground (after our picnic lunch). It was so much fun!



Veteran's Day at AES

In Second Grade at Alton Elementary, we had two guest speakers come in and talk to the students

about how they have or are serving our country. This was in honor of Veteran's Day. Our guest speakers,

Mr. Josh Vose and Airman Soucy, talked with the students, answered questions and read a favorite book.

We thank you for your service.



Second graders at Alton Elementary work on team building activities and problem solving skills.



**VIOLA RAND SCHOOL,
BRADLEY**
Cheryl Leonard, Principal
827-2508



Apple Cider!

Students at the VRS got to make fresh apple cider! They learned how to use the press and strainer by watching a demonstration. They got to take turns putting in apples and turning the crank. The students and staff enjoyed the finished product together outside on a beautiful Fall day. Thank you to Mrs. Goodwin for providing this opportunity.



Mrs Goodwin, Mrs Ploch, Judson Oakes, Parker Zabierek, Owen Waller, Ethan Violette



Sunrise behind Viola Rand School. Photo taken by Owen Arey.



Mrs. Goodwin & Owen Waller



Zayne Worster

Nocturnal Animals

First graders at the Viola Rand School did a unit of study on nocturnal animals. Students studied facts and information about owls, made owl habitats, and learned about features of nonfiction writing.

They were intrigued by the fact that owls swallow food whole and then cough up the parts that can't be digested, so we culminated our unit by dissecting owl pellets. Each pair of students was equipped with

rubber gloves, tweezers and a picker to examine the inside of the pellets. This activity was a great hands-on learning experience that fostered prediction, observation and cooperation. They used a reference diagram

to inspect the bones and cartilage from each pellet, to show what type of animal was swallowed. Students enthusiastically shared their observations at the end of the lesson!



First graders examining the bones from each owl pellet to determine what kind of animal it may have eaten.

VRS Celebrates the Holidays

The Viola Rand School had a holiday concert and gingerbread house decorating on December 11th. Families listened to students sing,

decorated gingerbread houses, and enjoyed all the Candy Cane Forest decorations throughout the school.



Madden King



Kenny Lizzotte



Emma Smart



Stori-Rae Gray

Fridays at the Library

On Fridays first grade students at Viola Rand School visit the library twice. First, they visit for the normal library time in the morning and then come back for 20 minutes in the afternoon. During the afternoon visit they have fun doing activities related to storytelling. Students have played the Storytelling Game where they are dealt five cards with words and images on them. The students develop a story using the images and they play the image when

they mention it in their story. Also, the students created a monster using felt pieces. They named their monster, described it and explained what happened to the monster. Another activity involved a student starting a story with another student adding to it and another until all students had added a part. Below are just a few pictures taken during the storytelling library time.



Caroling

The students of Viola Rand School sang carols to the Meadows and Penobscot Terraces on January 19th. One of the songs they sang was, "This Little Light of Mine."

After the song, the students presented each resident a "light of friendship" light bulb and poem.



Mr & Mrs. Blair, residents of the Penobscot Terraces

Fire Safety Week

Chief Gifford and Fire Fighter Mike Beal of the Bradley Fire Department taught the Viola Rand School students about fire safety. The students enjoyed the assembly, fire trucks and their fire hats!!



PRIDE Fall Festival

The VRS families enjoyed the Fall Festival sponsored by PRIDE. The students painted pumpkins, ran through the harvest obstacle course, had their faces painted, found toys in the haystack treasure hunt,

played pumpkin golf, did a musical walk and decorated cookies. Thank you to PRIDE, parents, staff, and high school students that volunteered.



Parker Zabierek



Kayla Carlisle



Emma Smart

VRS Pumpkin Characters



Viola Rand may be a smaller school, but the participation in the Book Char-

acter Pumpkin Contest suggests it is much bigger! Many students brought in pumpkins, making the vote for your favorite character quite challenging.

1st Place went to Raiden Lynch for his Minecraft pumpkin. 2nd Place was a tie! Both Kayla Carlisle (unicorn) & Stori-Rae Gray (Olaf) shared the honor. 3rd Place went to Madden King for his Bad Kitty pumpkin. Nice work to everyone who brought in a pumpkin!



Buddy Reading

First graders at the Viola Rand School are practicing narrative writing. After hearing different versions of "The Mitten" story, Mrs. Berube's class wrote their own stories and shared them with Mrs. Ploch's Pre-K students. This

is one of the many "buddy reading" opportunities that we are providing as we continue to foster a sense of community in our special little school! This was a positive and collaborative experience that fosters leadership and social skills!



Ryker Smart and Ryleigh Auclair



VRS Veteran's Day

Viola Rand School appreciates those who presented at an assembly and read to the classes in honor

of Veteran's Day. Pictured are Sgt Susan Slick (US Army), Airman First Class Gracie Soucy (US

Army), First Lieutenant Dominic D'Angelo (US Army and former VRS student), and Sgt Jana Caron (US Army and Navy, and VRS/

OTHS school nurse). A very special morning for the VRS students and staff!"



Above, L to R: Dominic D'Angelo, Jana Caron, Susan Slick, Gracie Soucy



below: Maverick Hogan and Charlotte Lynch





OLD TOWN HIGH SCHOOL
Scott Gordon, Principal, 827-3910

OTHS Student Scientists Combat Invasive Species

Using a Homemade Juglone Solution from Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*) to Combat Invasive Jointed Charlock (*Raphanus raphanistrum*)

Tegbaru Coiley, Peyton Desmond, Makayla Emerson, Saige Evans, Triston Hamm, Maxwell Hoxie, Livia Lynch, Autumn Moores, Lucas Parker-McDonough & Bryan Spencer

Table 1. Plant life score descriptions

Life Score	Description of Score
0	Plant is dead.
1	Plant is showing high levels of distress. Yellowing across leaves and stem. Wilting all over plant, Dropping of flowers and leaves. Near death.
2	Plant is showing moderate distress. Leaves yellowing, wilting occurring across entire plant.
3	Plant is showing some distress, Minor discoloration in basal leaves. Minor wilting only impacting flowers, basal leaves
4	Plants is healthy and thriving.

Invasive species are plants, animals and other organ-



Figure 2. Walnuts from a Black Walnut tree

isms that are not native to an area that “takeover” their new land, negatively affecting native species in the process.

Native to Eurasia, Jointed charlock is known for producing competitive and aggressive weeds that can take over open fields and outcome native plants in the state of Maine. Certain plants have adapted to the impacts of competition and have developed ways to take care of themselves. One such way is allelopathy, a type of plant-based chemical warfare. Allelopathy in plants occurs when one species produces chemical toxins that kill or slow the growth

of competing species. One native species that uses allelopathy in the Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*), using a chemical called juglone. We tested to see if we could make a homemade herbicide from Black Walnut with the hopes of being able to kill invasive Jointed Charlock. We exposed Jointed Charlock to either a single dose of 200mL juglone, or two 60mL of juglone every two days. Compared to a control where most Jointed Charlock plants survived the entire study period, plants exposed to 200mL of juglone died rapidly (within 4 days), and plants exposed to 60mL of juglone every other day died by within a week and half. These findings are important because no one has tried to remove invasive Jointed Charlock using Juglone, an all-natural and free herbicide.



Figure 3. (from left to right). Boiling down the juglone solution, husks from a Black Walnut tree used to make the solution, a student applying juglone solution to a Jointed Charlock plant.



Figure 4. (from left to right). A Jointed Charlock plant, students collection Joint Charlock, a student holding a Jointed Charlock plant.

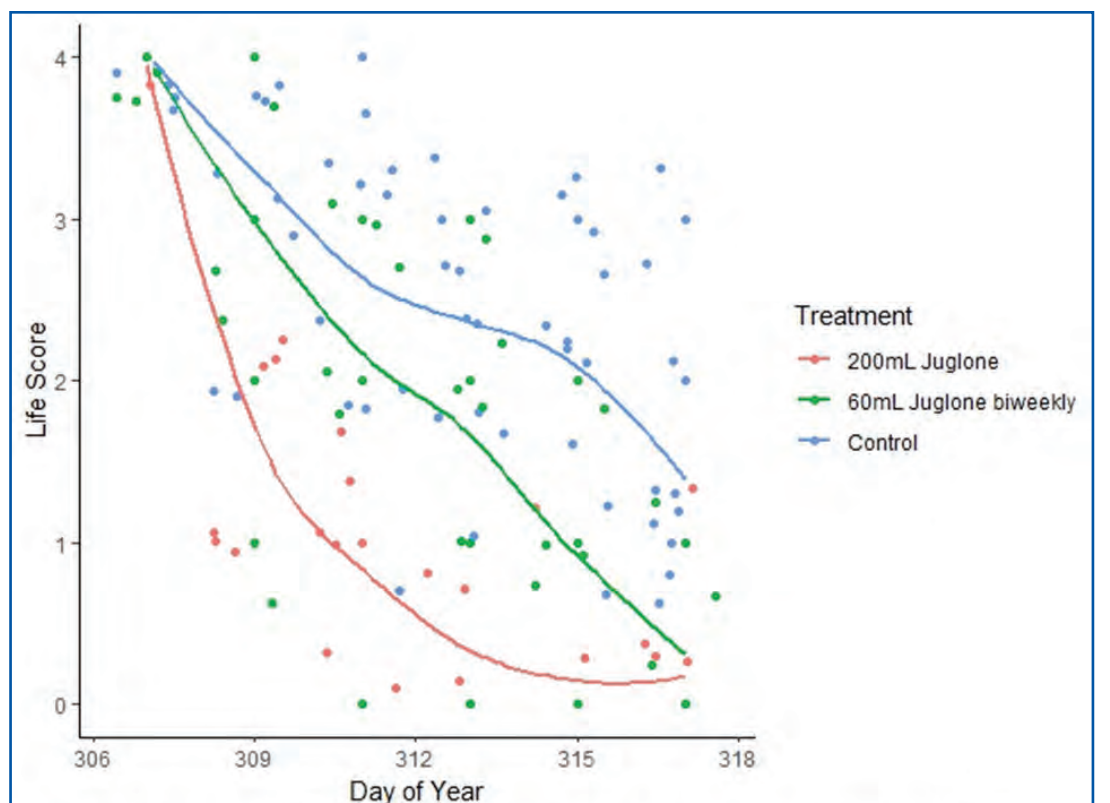


Figure 5. Life Scores of Jointed Charlock plants over the study period window. Day 306 equaling November 3rd, 2023. Trend lines used to show the average decline in health for each treatment group.



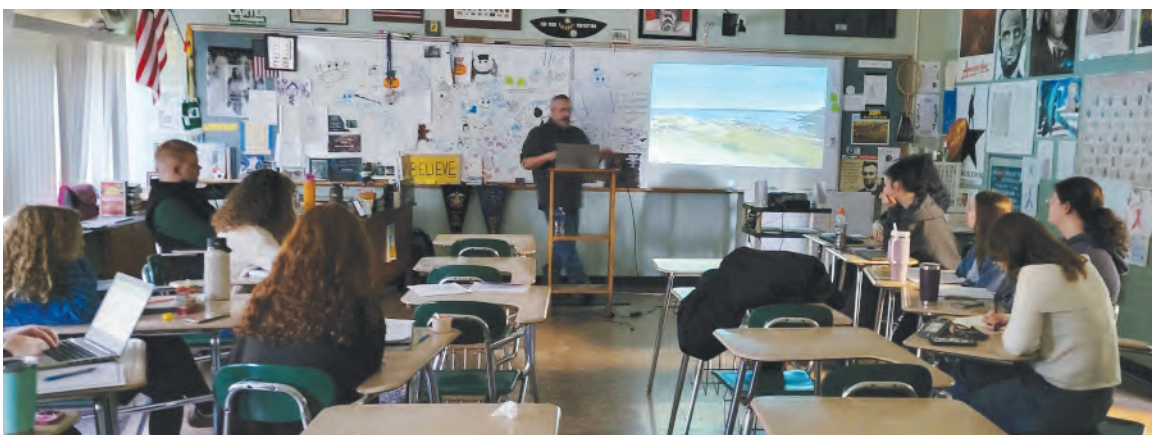
Figure 6. Jointed Charlock plants in the 200mL treatment group on day 1 (November 3rd, 2023) and Day 3 (November 5th, 2023).

OLD TOWN CT COYOTES

**Arts,
Humanities,
and Sciences**



Mrs. Thompson's landscape art project



Chris Sockalexis, UMaine Tribal Preservation Officer for the Penobscot Tribe speaking to our Humanities class.



Mr. Priest's Jazz Ensemble class practicing for the upcoming Jazz season



Mr. Gilbert and students as they investigate the findings of a trap from behind OTHS



OTHs concert band rocking MacKenzie Gymnasium with their recent winter concert

Cadets of the Month

The Cadet of the Month program continues this year for the Coyote Battalion. The program is designed to recognize Cadets who go above and beyond to support the battalion and OTHS. It recognizes both the performance and potential of individual Cadets.



September 2023, Cadet First Lieutenant Kylee Murray is the "Voice of the Coyotes" each morning bringing our campus community the daily highlights. She has helped the Coyote Battalion to get off to a quick start this school year with her planning and executing of the Red Cross Blood Drive. The Red Cross recognized Kylee for her efforts and making the blood drive a success. Kylee is also a member of our competitive Drill Team. In addition to JROTC, she is a member of the Equity Committee, Track Team, and Pep Band.



October 2023, Cadet Major Jesse Bouchard is the Operations Officer and one of the driving forces on the Coyote Battalion Staff. His contributions to the Drill Team this fall were a direct reflection of the success and continued growth of the team. Jesse planned and organized this year's Mogadishu Mile. The event was highly successful with 38 participants from Old Town and Bangor JROTC programs as well as UMaine ROTC, the highest number to date. Additionally, he is involved within the school through Pep Band, Key Club, and STUCO. Jesse still finds time to be engaged in the community through River Runners and Scouts.



November 2023, Cadet First Sergeant Alexis Wesley is an outstanding example of a developing leader. She is actively engaged in the Battalion activities; she provided logistical support during the 5K Turkey Trot, developed a tracker for daily flag detail, and is a crucial member of developing the Honor Guard program. In addition to her JROTC participation, Alexis is a dedicated member of the Cross Country and Track teams, as well as the Key Club. She is also a recent inductee to the National Honor Society.



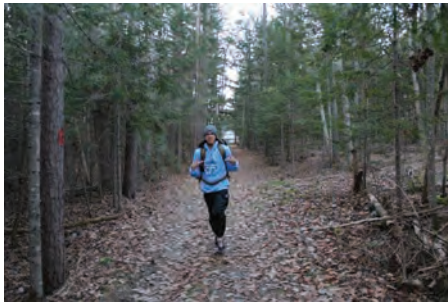
December 2023, Cadet Staff Sergeant Zachary S. Wilson has made positive contributions to the Coyote Battalion throughout the school year. The Coyote Battalion Drill Team benefited from his experience and mentorship during the season. Zachary is a dependable individual always willing to step up and contribute whether it is a Color Guard, providing logistical support to battalion events, or the blood drive. Additionally, Zachary is a member of the Coyote swim and tennis teams.

Coyote Challenge

Written By: Cameron Jones

Four years ago, the Coyote Battalion created the Coyote Challenge event to promote physical fitness within the battalion. The program consists of multiple levels and fitness challenges that Cadets can accomplish throughout their time in the battalion. The entry level is the Copper Level, a two-mile fitness challenge.

On October 3rd, the battalion hosted the Fourth Annual Moga-



dishu Mile. This event commemorated the 30th anniversary of Operation Gothic Serpent and the 19 service members who had lost their lives during the mission in Somalia. The name, Mogadishu Mile, comes from the distance of the battle to the stadium where soldiers were being extracted to safety. Since the creation of the event four years ago, it has continued to grow, with 38 participants this year. This is the second year that participants from both the school and community competed. In addition to OTHS JROTC Cadets, participants included OTHS staff and student body, Bangor JROTC, and members of the University of Maine ROTC.

The challenge consisted of a one-mile run, a series of ruck pushups, ruck squats, and other calisthenics, followed by another one-mile run.



During the run and calisthenics participants carried a 25-pound rucksack. The Mogadishu Mile is an optional event for the Cadets with incentives for uniform ribbons and overall place finisher medals. Hayna Francis (OTHS) was the first male competitor to finish, followed by Mathew Morin (BHS), and Cooper Neely (OTHS). The top female finishers were Alexis Blue, Emily Caulkis, and Kali Snowden, all from Bangor High School.

Instead of a Veterans Day 5K this year, the Cadets elected to host a 5K Turkey Trot on November

21st. This was open to the OTHS faculty and student body. Participants complete the 5K with a 25-pound rucksack. Completion of this event, in conjunction with the Mogadishu Mile, brings the Cadet to the Bronze Level of the Coyote Challenge. The competitors braved the near-freezing temperatures to complete this 3.1-mile cross country course. Again, Hayna Francis was the top male finisher, and Lilly Mitchell the top female. Both received turkeys for their accomplishment.

Coyote Battalion Partners with Local Veterans Organizations

Cadets from the Coyote Battalion continued to partner with local Veterans this fall. VFW Post 3381 located in Old Town found itself in



possession of hundreds of pairs of new shoes. The shoes were donated to the VFW from Phoenix Footwear in Old Town. This allowed the VFW to sell the shoes at \$5-\$10 a pair and provide a service to the community. Cadets provided manpower during the multi-day sale earning \$4,244 to help fund upcoming battalion activities.

The VFW also hosted the Voice of Democracy essay contest. This year's prompt was "Why is the Veteran Important?" Six Cadets participated in the event. Participants provided a written essay and a voice recording of their work. Jesse Bouchard received top honors and



a check for \$200. The other entries each received \$50 for their efforts. Jesse will advance to the Regional Competition with the hopes of moving on to the State and eventually National competitions.

Cadets also partnered with the Old Town American Legion during a Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony on December 7th. For the second consecutive year, Cadets provided a Color Guard for this event.

Coyote Drill Team

The Coyotes had another strong Drill season this fall. After losing some core veterans, the team saw enthusiastic second and third year Cadets step up and put their leadership skills on display. The typical team competition consists of six events; Color Guard, Squad, Squad with Arms (w/rifle), Platoon, Platoon with Arms, and Inspection. At the end of each team competition is the Individual Drill Review (IDR). This is a “Knockout” style event done both with and without arms.

The season opened with the OTHS hosted Gary Gordon Memorial Drill Competition. Teams from Bangor and Nokomis joined the Coyotes on the drill floor. The Coyotes placed second overall with a first and two second place team event finishes.

The following week at Bangor, the team again finished second but showed overall improvement in both the team and individual events. The Coyotes had one first place finish and three second place finishes. Individually Kevin Murray placed second in Armed IDR. Isaac Lankist had a fourth place finish in both Armed and Unarmed IDR, this is especially impressive for a first year Cadet.

Nokomis hosted the final competition of the season. Again, the Coyotes finished second, a mere one point separated the top two teams. The team had two first place finishes and second place in the remaining four events. In addition to the normal events, there was a Senior IDR event for our Class of 2024 Cadets. Braydon Porter and Norah Sanborn placed second and third respectively in Unarmed IDR.

Considering the lack of competitive experience, the team had a solid season and has set the bar high for next year.



Coyote Battalion Color Guard

The Coyote Battalion Color Guard has been busy supporting both the school and the local community this fall. In addition to the traditional home football games and RSU 34 School Board meetings, the Cadets were able to represent Old Town High School at two UMaine hockey games, as the Black Bears kicked off their competitive season. The battalion also presented the Colors at the New England Fights 55 event on Veterans Day at the Cross Center. These were awesome opportunities for the Cadets and challenged them to provide a professional Color Guard.

As a result, the Cadet staff is in the process of developing an Honor

Guard. The intent of the Honor Guard is to have a pool of trained and experienced Cadets available for these higher-profile events. The Honor Guard program will be tiered and allow new Cadets to participate by allowing them to gain experience through some of the more routine events, and to work their way up to the higher-tiered events. The program will have awards and incentives associated with it that will promote participation and professionalism.

In addition to these events, the battalion marched in both the Riverfest and Bangor Veterans Day Parades, also providing a Color Guard during these events.

Cyber Security Champions!

This school year, OTHS JROTC started a Cyber Security team and competed with other JROTC programs within our league for the chance to compete at the 2ND ROTC Brigade competition. Our team won the League Championship and has been invited to the Brigade event on March 29, at Wilson High School in Reading, PA. The Army will pay the transportation, room and board costs for the 5 Cadet team members and a chaperone.

National Honor Society Inducts 25 new members at OTHS

By: Saige Evans, President, NHS, OTHS, 2023-24

On November 30, 2023, 25 new members were inducted into the Old Town High School's National Honor Society. The NHS is thrilled to have these new members in our chapter and we welcome their energy and ideas to our proud and prestigious organization. We honor the four pillars of scholarship, leadership, service, and character and base our membership off of these qualities. The guest speaker who welcomed our new inductees was Dr. Tuell. She spoke on the importance of following the four pillars of membership and how they will be keys in the inductees' futures. We would like to congratulate and welcome the new inductees on becoming members of the National Honor Society!



2023 NHS Inductees (L-R): Front Row: Rufaydah Ojugbele, Taylor Dellechiaie, Alexis Wesley, Kaylee Lagasse, Morgan Davis, Jenelle Sanchez, Mikayla Johnston, Rhiannon Bousquet, Abigail Richmond, Dr. Tuell. Middle Row: Charlotte Blanchard, Brea Smickle, Martie LeClair, Josephine Bishop, Lilly Mitchell, Brianna Engstrom, Kylee Murray, Samuel Goddard, Tegbaru Coiley. Back Row: Kaiden Plourde, Hayna Francis, Kameron Plourde, Kevin Murray, Jesse Bouchard, Cameron Jones, Jackson Lizzotte



‘Box of Maine’ Connects Old Town Elementary Students with Maine Studies Curriculum Through Their Taste Buds

A few years ago 4th grade teacher Todd Rand had an idea to support the Maine Studies Curriculum at Old Town Elementary by bringing a taste of Maine into the classroom. He connected with small business owner, Daniel Finnemore and the Box of Maine Company to supply his students with monthly “Tastes O’Maine” to expand the students’ understanding of the products, businesses, and culture Maine has to offer.

Todd Rand approached the school’s Parent Teacher Club (PTC) to support purchasing a monthly subscription to the Box of Maine for every fourth grader at Old Town Elementary School. The PTC jumped at the opportunity to help bring the

Maine Studies Curriculum alive.

Each month Box of Maine ships the boxes filled with a specific item for the students to sample. Todd has worked with the company to feature connected curriculum items to align with the lessons being taught for the month. For example, when the 4th graders celebrated Maine’s birthday in March of 2023, the students were supplied with whoopie pies, Maine’s finest dessert, to celebrate the occasion.

The partnership with the Box of Maine has added a new dimension



to the celebration of Maine and students are exposed to many new

experiences through the monthly boxes.

K-Kids Food Drive at OTES

The K-Kids of OTES decided to partner with the University of Maine to help with their annual food drive. Sometimes we forget that university students are a needy population in our community and this food drive was a great opportunity to connect with the students and help to make their school a better place for all.

The K-Kids opened up the one week food collection from November 13 to November 21. They collected and tallied all the food items by classroom to determine the class-

room that collected the most food for this project. Students were excited to compete for the prize of a PIZZA PARTY with the Maine Black Bear Athletes.

When all was said and done the school collected so much food, the UMaine students had to make two trips to pick it all up. The K-Kids were proud of their efforts and were amazed at the support they received with this project.

The winner of the Pizza Party was 5th graders in Mrs. Miller’s classroom.



Symbolic Monarch Migration- International Ambassadors



For the second year, five second grade classrooms in Alton and Old Town joined thousands of other youth across the U.S. and Canada sending paper butterflies to Mexico as part of the 28th annual “Symbolic Monarch Butterfly Migration.” The Symbolic Migration project is a partnership project between Journey North, a program of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum, and Monarchs Across Georgia, a committee of The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia, a 501(c).

This cross-curricular project integrates art, Spanish and science learning objectives. Students decorated individual paper butterflies and styled Ambassador butterflies in art classes with teachers Tiffany Palmer and Pam Dunphy.

In Spanish classes with Señora Kristen LePard, students learned about the monarch migration to Mexico and the importance of preserving the monarch’s habitat. Students also learned a fun hand clapping game using the Spanish

word for butterfly “mariposa.”

In science classes with their classroom teachers, students studied the life cycle of the monarch butterfly as well as learned about pollination.

The \$15 per class “passenger ticket” fee supports school visits in Mexico to deliver the butterflies and conservation education.

During the winter, the symbolic butterflies will be delivered to schools in Mexico and we will learn about the overwintering sites. The cycle of friendship continues in the spring when each class will receive a cluster of butterflies from over the U.S. and Canada as well as a letter from a Mexican student.



OTES 4th Graders “Dig” Potatoes

Submitted by Kristen LePard, RSU# 34 Elementary World Language Teacher and Christina Lannan, Volunteer Garden Coordinator

4th grade students at OTES completed an integrated Spanish, social studies and garden unit this fall about potatoes. In Spanish classes students expressed their likes and dislikes about various potato dishes, learned the parts of a potato plant and also about Peru where potatoes originated.

Fourth grade students learn about the agricultural importance of potatoes within Maine as part of their in-depth state studies curriculum. Twice a year field trips to the University of Maine’s research farm allow them to experience larger scale mechanized planting and harvesting as well as learning about current research being done with plant breeding.

The unit concluded with a sample



4th grade student Kaleb is enjoying the Peruvian roasted potatoes

taste test of Peruvian roasted potatoes made from a variety of potatoes harvested by the students themselves. Thank you to RSU#34 Community Liaison Jennifer Goodwin and Volunteer Garden Coordinator Christina Lannan for their tireless efforts in the learning garden to make these curricular connections possible.

Food lessons work well with world language programs because of the natural connections to cultural learning. Food is so closely tied to community and a sense of identity and therefore can be really impactful in helping students in understanding other cultures.



4th grade students in Mrs. Sullivan’s class are all smiles about Peruvian roasted potatoes.

Green Screen Magic

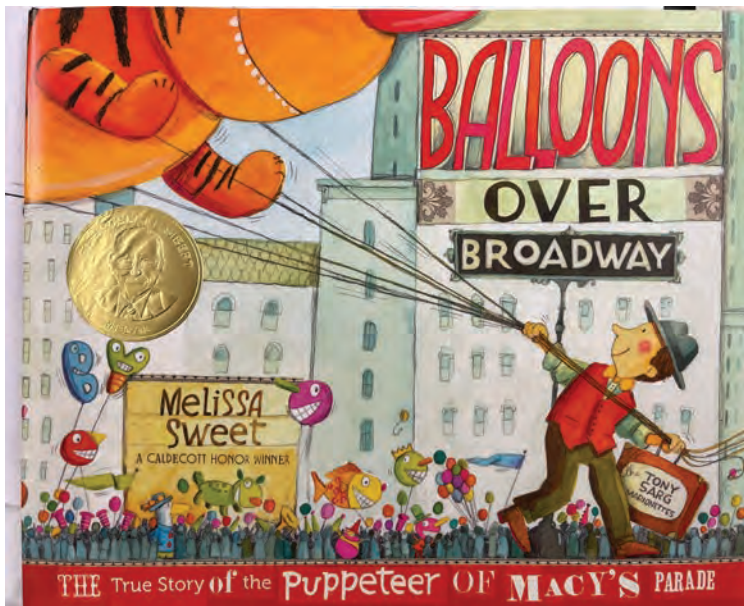
OTES 5th Grade - Kristy St. Peter

After hearing the story

Balloons Over Broadway: The Story of the Puppeteer of Macy’s

Parade, by Melissa Sweet, 5th graders were inspired to make their own balloons for their own school parade. With the help of Mrs. Reesman and her green screen, a video was made of each student’s balloon,

and in the final editing, Broadway was placed in the background. Just like the weatherman uses on TV. 5th graders had a viewing of their parade just before they left for Thanksgiving break.



OTES 5th Graders, led by music teacher Amanda Marquis and Dr. Tuell, visited LMS and the Superintendent’s Office just before the December break. They did a wonderful job singing with so much holiday spirit!

The OTES Learning Garden Grows Cross-Curricular Connections

This fall 3rd grade students from Old Town Elementary School and Alton Elementary School explored Mexican salsa verde and pico de gallo in Spanish classes. Classes learned the vocabulary for the ingredients in salsa, stated their likes and dislikes, participated in a salsa ingredient scavenger hunt in the garden and of course ended the study with a delicious taste test made with fresh garden ingredients!

Volunteer Garden Coordinator Christina Lannan and RSU#34 Community Liaison Jennifer Goodwin

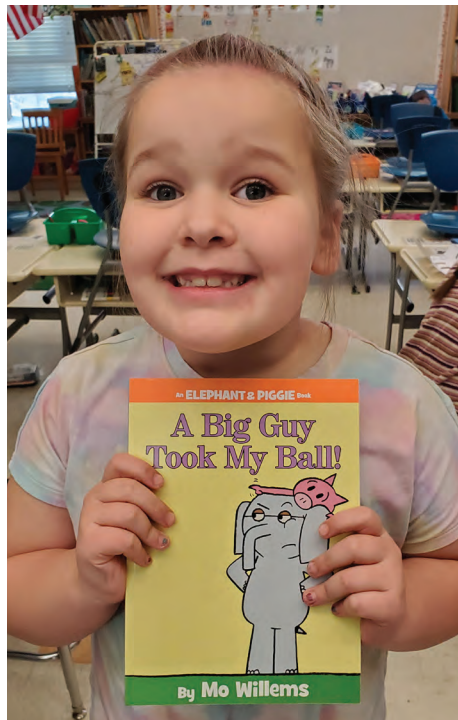
were essential to the success of this unit. They planted a “salsa garden” specifically to make connections with Spanish classes. Students were extremely motivated in their Spanish learning and enjoyed exploring the garden. Some students were even inspired to make salsa on their own after gathering ingredients at the OTES weekly farmstand.



Third graders Jace, Alfonso and Nathan use a molcajete to blend salsa ingredients



Third graders Elena and Marley complete a scavenger hunt for salsa ingredients in the OTES garden.



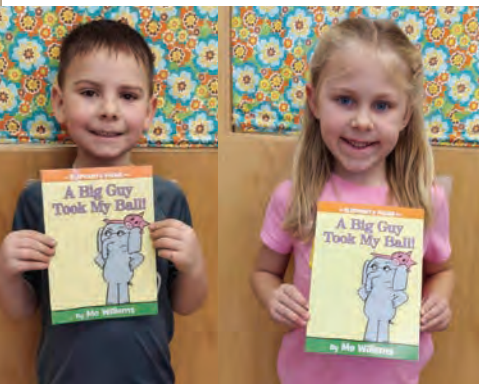
Dirigo Reads

This year Mrs. Reesman and Mrs. Smith signed up OTES 1st graders for the Dirigo Reads program. Our 1st graders will receive one new book every month for the entire school year.

Dirigo Reads is a Maine program with a goal of opening doors to a brighter future for our children by putting more books in their hands.

The program is chaired by Old Town native Dan Cashman, as well as a host of other committee members on the board and made possible by various Maine business community sponsors.

Visit dirigoreads.org to find out more! We are grateful for this opportunity to put more books in our students' hands!



OTES 2nd Graders Celebrate Holidays Around the World!

Throughout the month of December, students "traveled" to each of the 7 continents and studied the traditions and customs from a country while there! During their stay, 2nd graders made a craft, read about the country's traditions, wrote about the reading, and tried a tasty

treat! Our very own Flight Attendant, Betsy Clark helped kick off the Holidays Around the World study with a pre-flight check and in-flight snacks! The Holidays Around the World study is part of the 2nd grade Continents, Holidays and Traditions benchmarks.



Harvest Arts Festival

This fall, we once again had the Harvest Arts Festival. Artists from the school and community shared their talents with students and staff. Here are some of the sessions students participated in.

Students had the pleasure of learning from and watching the Husson Cheer and Dance team. 1st grade students learned a cheer and dance from them, then helped them put on a whole-school performance afterward. Students also got

a wonderful puppet show performance from the Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers.

Throughout the day, various grades had sessions from Penobscot Theatre Company, Next Generation Theatre, Calligraphy with Sayoko Mori, Piñatas with Señora Leopard, Native American Storytelling with John Bear Mitchell, Husson Dance and Cheer team, Celtic Music with Cathy Segee's group and more! Fun was had by all!



Old Town Elementary School Second Grade Students Become Published Authors!

Mrs. Keane's second grade students have become published authors through a national student publishing program. As part of the publishing process, students in 2nd grade planned, wrote, and illustrated their own book through a free publishing program with Student-treasures Publishing. The title of

their book is *The Pollinator's Protectors ABC Book*.

The students of Mrs. Keane's class have been working hard on their books since October. The idea for their book started when they returned from a field trip at Roger's Farm on the Bennoch Road. Second graders also participate in other garden projects at school, such as carrot planting and picking, seed sorting, planting corn and sowing corn seeds in the Spring. All second-grade classes at OTES are involved in the Pollinator Protectors Service-Learning Project. None of this would be possible without the

hard work, help, time, support and resources provided by Master Gardener Christina Lannan and Resource Director, Jennifer Goodwin. To recognize and thank them, Mrs. Keane's second graders chose to dedicate their first published book to these two amazing people! You can "check out" their new book at the OTES library!

About Student-treasures Publishing

For more than 25 years, Student-treasures has helped over 16 million students become proud, published authors. Named the "best free school publishing program," Student-treasures provides engaging, hands-on writing lessons in classrooms across the United States and



Canada. To learn more, visit <https://studenttreasures.com/>.



Pre-K Thanks Local Cub Scout Pack 76

Marion Talon, Pre-K Teacher



This fall the pre-k students were given a wonderful gift for the playground. Our local Cub Scout Pack 76 made two beautiful outside kitchens for the children to play with. The kitchens came complete with sinks, cupboards, knobs and counter space so that we can cook up some great "woodchip meals". The wood and the workmanship was so nice; the children are overjoyed with the kitchens. We have

had several people donate pots and pans and other kitchen utensils to fill the kitchen up with fun. We will continue to fill the kitchen with new items and continue to do some great cooking. Cub Scout Pack 76; thank you for your generosity and hard work. We appreciate your gift and the connection you made with the younger children at Old Town Elementary School.

Oh, Christmas Tree!

It is a tradition each year at OTES for a Kindergarten class to go into the woods behind the school and cut down a Christmas Tree with Dr. Tuell. This year Mrs. Kaye-Schiess' class got to help cut it down! The tree is displayed in front of the school and decorated with lights and homemade, natural ornaments for the holidays.



Sweet Grass OTES

Rachel Sullivan, Gr 4

4th Graders in Mrs. Sullivan's class learned about the significance of sweetgrass to Wabanaki people and specifically, people of the Penobscot Nation. Ben and Charlene Huerth, residents of Indian Island, recently visited the classroom to

teach them all about it. Students learned that it's an indigenous sacred plant and is used as material in baskets and as medicine, and sometimes just for its relaxing smell. 4th Graders learned that it grows in marshes and has tell tale purple roots, but Mr. and Mrs. Huerth explained that they don't

share the spots where it grows plentifully in order to preserve the sanctity of the sweetgrass and to give it the respect it deserves in their culture. Students enjoyed braiding the sweetgrass and connecting the mind, body



Learning to braid sweetgrass



Mr. and Mrs. Huerth (Tadan Paul's grandparents) with Mrs. Sullivan's 4th grade students.

and soul of the three strands. Their classroom smelled delicious for days

as the sweetgrass braided creations dried.

Book Character Pumpkins

Staff and students brought in some fun Book Character Pumpkins in October! Students and staff voted on the winners, and the 1st place

winner was the Minecraft Ender Dragon! The Nightmare Before Christmas and Pikachu pumpkin came in 2nd and 3rd.



Day of Welcome

Mrs. Wilcox (Advisor)

The OTHS Civil Rights Team celebrated the second annual DAY OF WELCOME on Friday November 3rd. The team members greeted people in the morning and read books to classrooms. The students and teachers made welcoming door signs and we had our fifth grade band students and some of the UMaine band members entertain during lunch. The mission of the Civil Rights Team is to make sure everyone feels WELCOME, SAFE and RESPECTED!



OTES Salutes our Veterans

In November, Mrs. Sullivan's 4th Graders learned about the history of Veterans Day and the importance of honoring heroes from all branches of the military. They invited local Veterans to their classroom to learn about their jobs in the military, their reasons for deciding to serve,

and about the lives they live now as Veterans in our community. Mrs. Sullivan's son and Ed Tech at OTHS, Tyler Byther, taught students about his time in the Marine Corps. Bryan Murphy, Scarlett's father and current OTHS teacher, spoke about his service in the Coast

Guard. Randa Boyer spoke about her many years in the Air Force and told cool stories about airplanes. Jeremy Aldrich, current OTHS teacher, talked to students about his years of service in the Army, as well as his involvement with The Summit Project, which honors

Maine's fallen heroes. 4th Graders also sent birthday cards to two Maine Veterans, one of which was turning 103 and the other who was turning 104! Mrs. Sullivan and her students were excited to host these local heroes and thank them for their service to our country.



OTES Partners with University of Maine Pre-Service Teachers for Literacy Night

We were excited to partner and welcome our University of Maine students as pre-service teachers at our Literacy Night at OTES in November. These nights are always filled with excitement as parents and students interact with each other through prepared activities that help to build their literacy skills without even knowing it! The Pre-Service Teachers as part of ERL

319 Literacy Class at the University of Maine develop an engaging activity and teach the activity with K-2 or 3-5 students.

As part of the evening, OTES also uses this opportunity to give parents information about our Title I Literacy and Math programs at school. Many times students go home and talk about their other teachers at OTES that help develop

their literacy and math skills. Parents often are unfamiliar with who these staff members are and how they impact their child. The Title I Staff at OTES are very dedicated to the students in their program. They often have daily interactions with the student in individual or small group settings. This makes their connection and bond with their students very close and personal. The

time the student spends with their Title I teacher can help the student understand difficult concepts or practice needed skills to be successful in the regular classroom.

The Literacy Night was very successful and well attended. We were able to give away many books for families to add to their own book collections in their homes.



Two students work with the University Students on an activity.



Selecting just the right book!



Free books lined the hallways at OTES



Students are treated to a read aloud by Professor Nichols



Three UMaine students display their activity poster boards.

MAKE A MAP!
 1. Pick different places the character went
 2. Put them all over the page
 3. Draw a line between the places
 4. Add any details you want!

BASED ON THE TRUE STORY OF THE SUTELLE PICS!
 told by Steve Jenkins

TACO ABCs
 SORT THE TACO TOPPINGS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Where The Wild Things Are
 by Maurice Sendak
 Create your own Wild Thing
 use paper plate, construction paper, markers, etc.
 Write about your Wild Thing
 what do they eat? Where do they live? What do they do for fun?



Native American Studies



Ms. Friedman's 4th grade class learns more about Maine Native American culture when John Bear Mitchell visited the students as a guest speaker as part of our Native American curriculum. John Bear spoke about oral traditions and shared many beautiful stories that have been passed down through generations. He also demonstrated the craft of drum making. The students enjoyed listening to the drumming and songs that he shared. John Bear also currently teaches Native American studies at the University of Maine.

Growing and Learning with Bots for All Ages

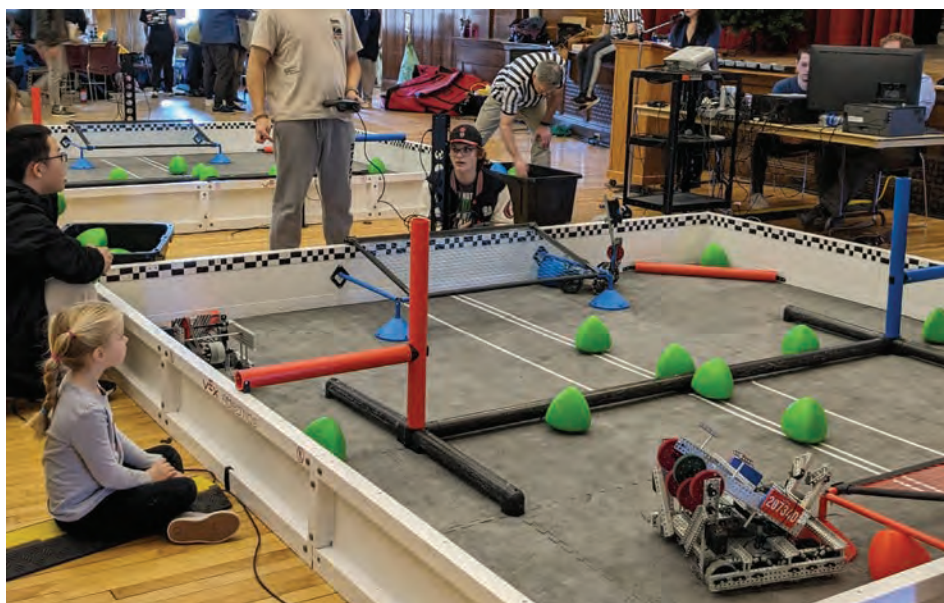
RSU #34 undertook a transformation in 2012, integrating robotics and computer programming into the school-day for every student instead of after-school competitive teams as the only opportunity. RSU #34 students begin in Kindergarten

with "Bee Bots" and over the years progress in computational thinking through use of Dash Dot, Spike Prime, WeDo, MindStorms, Sphero, and VEX Robotics. This "STEM Staircase" ensures all students have the opportunity to learn about

cutting edge technologies that are embedded in their worlds.

At the high school VEX competition "February Finale" kindergartener Lauren had the chance to see OTHS Robotics in action. In this event alliances of two teams scored points through pre-programmed autonomous mode routines, then through a vigorous human-driven competition where the bots try to place as many cubes as possible under their alliance's net, and earn bonus points through having the robot lift itself off the ground before the buzzer sounds. OTHS fields multiple competitive teams; as of this writing three of the teams had qualified for the state championship tournament through their regular season success, and one team has qualified for this year's U.S. Open of Robotics.

Lauren and the other kindergarteners are starting on a STEM journey filled with opportunity in RSU #34!





Old Town City Manager

The City is continuing to work on some major projects.

By Bill Mayo, City Manager

Llewellyn Estes Bridge (Stillwater Bridge)/Center Street

The Llewellyn Estes Bridge project is in process. The latest bridge activity is constructing the temporary bridge. The temporary bridge should be open for traffic in February 2024. The new bridge construction is scheduled to begin in 2024. The temporary bridge will be 575 feet long, with 2 lanes, and a sidewalk separated with a curb. There will be an approximate 12' x 70' bump out on the upstream side of the new bridge for viewing and displaying information panels on Llewellyn Estes, Old Town, Penobscot Nation, and the University of Maine. The highway portion of the project has been bid separately. The highway portion is the reconstruction of the Bennoch Road / College Avenue and Stillwater Avenue intersections and approaches to the bridge. The project will involve new traffic lights, controls, sidewalk replacement, and ADA-compliant crossings at both intersections. The highway portion has been awarded, is mobilizing and work started this past fall as that part of the project. Please try and stay aware of the message boards by the bridge as they will have updates as to delays or traffic flow changes that will happen over the next several years.

City Brook Pipe

The City had this stormwater line videoed last fall (2022) and it was analyzed for structural integrity and areas to be repaired. The

line begins by the football field at the high school and winds down through the City to an outfall by the Wastewater Plant on Congress Street. This is a 48-inch pipe and carries a large volume of water in the spring. This line was installed around 1965 so it is time to establish the condition of it before there are failures. The City has received in total of \$746,000 in American Recovery Act funds and those will be used to fund this project. There is a section of pipe between Perkins and Pine Street that has failed and will be replaced. The rest of the line is in good working condition currently. The City Council has authorized the contract (\$159,000) and now the project can move forward for replacement during the 2024 construction season.

City Pool

The City has had Weston Sampson conduct a review of the swimming pool. The pool was built in 1968 and there are some maintenance/operational issues that are starting to reoccur on a frequent basis. After a request for qualifications was conducted in May to assist in the location and construction of a pool the Council chose to move forward with Weston Sampson to look at 3 sites in Old Town for the pool to be located. Also, the City is including the University of Maine in this discussion and the possibility of having an additional partner in the potential construction of a new pool in Old Town. During the fall Ballard & King conducted a market study for the pool and the initial draft was reviewed by the

Council. The City continues to work with the RSU and YMCA in maintaining the pool while options are reviewed.

Downtown Traffic Lights

The traffic light project at the intersections of Main / Water Street and Center Street is almost completed. This project took place during the summer and fall of 2023. The final step is the actual poles/mast arms going into place. The foundations are all in place and ready for the poles/mast arms to be attached. The poles have been manufactured /painted and this process should begin in February. The lights/poles were damaged in a fall windstorm in 2018. This project will be a cooperative agreement between MDOT, BACTS, and the City. The project cost is \$944,365 and will replace all traffic poles/lights, controls, sidewalks, and ADA compliance issues at both intersections.

Fourth Street Sidewalk

Engineering and bidding have been completed to build a new sidewalk/drainage from Gilman Falls to the Klitch Community Park (Fourth Street Boat Launch). Versant is going to move power lines/poles from the east side to the west side of the street as part of the project. The project cost is \$623,864.00 and \$408,000 will be paid for with American Recovery Act Funding. Initial groundwork and drainage was started in the fall of 2023 and will resume in the spring of 2024.

College Avenue Extension Culvert Project

The City replaced a large culvert that has been an issue for years. The culvert is located about five

hundred feet from where the pavement begins on College Avenue Extension (North End). This is a 4-foot concrete culvert. The project cost for the new culvert was \$110,000.

Funding for this project came from Maine DEP and American Recovery Act funding.



Bill Mayo

Expanded Archery Season

Old Town has an expanded archery hunting zone that encompasses all of Marsh Island. The consideration of this expanded archery zone started in 2008 and ran through 2010, hunting via permit through the BLIP program (Bowhunters/Landowners Information Program), which is offered through the Maine Bowhunters Association. From 2011 through 2023 Marsh Island is part of the Bangor Area Expanded Archery Zone. Please go to Maine Inland Fishery and Wildlife's website for all applicable laws relating to expanded archery (<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/hunting-trapping/hunting/species/deer/expanded-archery/index.html>) The 2023 season began on September 9 and lasted through December 9. Marsh Island is unique in the expanded archery zone as only bow and arrow can be used, no crossbows can be used to hunt on Marsh Island during the expanded archery season. As with any hunting or fishing trips that are planned, please go to Maine Inland Fishery and Wildlife's web site to be sure all applicable laws are being followed.

City Finance

By Danielle Berube, Finance Director

Happy New Year!

The City's website offers citizens the ability to re-register vehicles, pay taxes and sewer fees, purchase hunting and fishing licenses, and re-register ATVs, snowmobiles, and boats with the online portals.

Upcoming due dates:

- 30-day notices will be mailed in February for any unpaid 2023 sewer fees with liens issued in March
- 2024 Real Estate and Personal Property Tax bills are due March 13, 2024

General Assistance Office

General Assistance is a service administered by the municipality for the immediate aid of persons who are unable to provide the basic

essential necessities to maintain themselves or their families.

The General Assistance office operates by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. General Assistance can be reached by telephone at 827-3991, ext. 107, or by email at otwelfare@old-town.org.

Waste Water Pollution

2024 Billing schedule

Service dates	Due dates
January-March	April 28
April-June	July 28
July-September	October 28
October-December.	January 28



Danielle Berube

Old Town Public Works

Winter has returned and Public Works crews remain ready to keep the City's streets and sidewalks as safe as possible both during and after snow events. Remember that there is an on-street parking ban in effect daily from midnight until 6 am and in the case of larger snow events, additional parking bans may be put in place. Be sure to check the City's website and social media outlets for news and information.

A **curbside collection of leaves and brush** will happen the weeks of May 13th and 20th. Leaves must be in leaf bags and brush neatly placed curbside; crews will be by to pick them up.

Our annual **Household Hazardous Waste and electronics collection** event will happen June 8th from 8:00 am until noon at the Transfer Station on Gilman Falls avenue. Check the city's website for

details.

The annual spring clean up collection will happen the weeks of June 3rd and 10th. Again, check the city's website for details and items to be collected. There will be a discussion during the budget process of possibly changing this to a twice a year operation at the transfer station. In this scenario, residents could bring their items to the transfer station, at no cost, for a week in May and a week in November.

Memorial day typically indicates the official opening of the City's parks, playgrounds and Cemeteries. The cemeteries are open prior to for maintenance of grave sites.



John Rouleau

Old Town Municipal Airport: Dewitt Field

We are in mid-winter and our staff is already planning for the next annual fly-in. June 22, 2024. We are proud to partner up with the Travis Mills Foundation. All proceeds will be donated to this outstanding foundation. Never give up. Never quit. That's how Travis lives his life. Travis is a one-of-a-kind motivator with a larger-than-life personality and has an incredible sense of humor. "The Travis Mills

Foundation supports recalibrated veteran's and their families through long-term programs that helps these heroic men and woman overcome physical obstacles, strengthen their families and provide well deserved rest and relaxation." (from the Travis Mills website)

We are planning on a bigger and better event. We are stepping up the number of planes and cars this year. We have more space, and we

want to fill every inch with these beautiful vehicles and planes. We will have a free concert series throughout the day featuring the Danny Harper Band, Allison Ames, Ray Stafford Band and Em and Company. So, bring your lawn chairs, come out and enjoy a day of music, cars and aircraft. There will be a full day of skydiving demonstrations and for those who want a little adventure you can sign up for tandem jumps. Kustom Woods will be back running our cornhole tournament. Winners will leave with cash prizes. If you come hungry there will be a large selection of food vendors with all kinds of great food. You won't want to miss this event, it's a must see.

Last summer's construction projects were a complete wash, literally. We had planned on having a new taxiway completed before the fly-in event, but the rain prevented that till mid-summer. This year the taxiway is completed and in addition we will have an expanded Apron which



will accommodate another twenty-two aircraft. The airport road continues to develop also. This past year we have added five more lots and filled three already with new businesses.



Lance Farrar

Northwoods Air is gearing up for there new facility this spring which will consist of an aircraft maintenance and storage facility, office space and parking for eight aircraft. January marked their first classes for flight training. Their flight instructor starts off with a ground school and hands on flight training in a Cessna 172.



Old Town City Clerk's Office

Spring is just around the corner!

2024 Federal/State Election Schedule

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary of State - December 6, 2023

March 5

- Presidential Primary
- Democratic Party Primary
- Republican Party Primary

June 11

State Primary Election

November 5

General (Presidential) Election

Maine Political Parties

Maine currently has four (4) qualified parties: Democratic, Green Independent, Libertarian, and Republican. Qualified parties may participate in primary elections. There are two possible changes to Maine's qualified parties heading into 2024:

The Libertarian Party is currently a "qualified" party. They need to maintain 5,000 enrolled voters as of January 2nd, 2024, to remain a "qualified" party.

The Forward Party, the People's Party, and the No Labels Party are currently "qualifying" parties. Each of these qualifying parties will need to file a certification by January 2nd, 2024, with the Secretary of State that they have enrolled at least 5,000 voters to become a "qualified" party. (NOTE: Although some unenrolled candidates choose to designate themselves as "Independent," there is no "Independent" party in Maine.)

Description of the Presidential Primary Election, March 5

This year marks the beginning of Maine's shift to Semi-Open Primaries. If someone is enrolled in a specific party, they may only vote in that party's primary. If someone is unenrolled (has no party affiliation), then they can vote in any ONE party's primary of their choice. This applies to the Presidential and State Primaries.

Each qualified party had until October 1, 2023, to file a certification with the Secretary of State to participate in the Presidential Primary. The Democratic Party and the Republican Party filed this certification and will participate in the Presidential Primary election, but also will hold caucuses for conducting other party-building activities. The Green Independent Party and the Libertarian Party chose not to participate in the Presidential Primary election. They will instead hold party caucuses for voting for the Presidential candidate and conduct other party-building activities. **Description of the State Primary Election, June 11** (for offices other than President)

Primary Elections determine each qualified party's nomination of candidates for federal offices (other than President) and qualified State and County offices. Party candidates who are elected at the Primary qualify to appear on the November General Election ballot. The State Primary Elections are also Semi-Open (see above). Offices included in the 2024

Primary Election are United States Senator, Representative to Congress (both districts), all 35 State Senate districts, all 151 State Representative districts, and the following county offices, which vary depending on the county: Judge of Probate, Register of Probate, County Treasurer, Register of Deeds, Sheriff, District Attorney and County Commissioner.

In order to qualify for the Primary Election ballot, party candidates must gather a specified number of signatures on primary nomination petitions between January 1st, 2024, and March 15th, 2024. The petitions must be certified by the municipal registrar/clerk, after which the party/candidate must submit these petitions to the Secretary of State's Division of Elections by 5:00 pm on March 15th, 2024.

Nonparty candidates who wish to gain direct access to the General Election ballot must gather a specified number of signatures on non-party nomination petitions between January 1st, 2024, and May 28th, 2024. Candidates need to deliver then to the municipal registrar/clerk for certification by 5:00 pm on May 28th, 2024, after which the candidate must submit these petitions to the Division of Elections by 5:00 pm on June 3, 2024.

Description of the General (Presidential) Election, Nov. 25

The General Election is held nationally on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November. In 2024, Maine voters will select

their choice for President, Vice President (this process is called the "popular vote"), and elect one of Maine's two United States Senators, Maine's Representatives

to Congress, members of the Maine Legislature, and certain county officers.

Each party's nomination for President, Vice President of the United States, party candidates who are nominated as a result of the June Primary Election, and unenrolled candidates will appear on the General Election ballot.

The actual election of President, Vice President occurs through the Electoral College. The "popular vote" is used to choose Maine's 4 "electors", who convene at what is called the "Electoral College" at the State House in December to cast their "electoral votes."

All of the information regarding Elections, Marriages, Vitals, and Business licensing is on the City of Old Towns Website www.old-town.org, under Departments/City Clerk.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Best,

Laura Engstrom, City Clerk/Registrar of Voters
Lengstrom@old-town.org
 207-827-3965, ext. 122



Laura Engstrom

Chickens are not allowed in Old Town on Marsh Island



The only zoning districts chickens are allowed is in the R-3, R-3A, Rural Residence Zoning District. The city is seeing a dramatic increase in rat and rodent populations. A large cause of this is due to the illegal keeping of chickens, as the feed is also a source of food for the rats. The feeding of feral animals is another reason for the increase in the rat population, as rats are not picky

eaters. They require and search out any food source available. DO NOT LEAVE OUT ANY FOOD FOR FERAL ANIMALS. Open compost piles are another source of food and shelter for rodents. All composting must be undertaken utilizing an enclosed composting bin. Placing your trash curbside early and not in required trash cans is yet another reason we are facing this challenge. Please place trash curbside the morn-

ing of your collection date and in a trash receptacle.



Assistant City Manager

Travis Roy, Assistant City Manager

An immediate priority is hiring a new Public Safety Director for the City of Old Town. Hiring a new Public Safety Director is a pivotal decision with far-reaching implications for our community. The utmost importance lies in selecting an individual capable of not only leading effectively but also building and fostering trust. In the realm of public safety, trust is the foundation upon which successful relationships with the community, fire departments, law enforcement, and other stakeholders are built. A director with a proven track record in establishing transparency, communication, and accountability is essential. This trust-building capacity is instrumental in creating a safer environment, improving collaboration, and ensuring the public feels secure and supported.

Our commitment to the well-being of the community hinges on selecting a director who can inspire confidence and strengthen the crucial bond between public safety agencies and the people they serve.

Outside of this hiring process and day-to-day responsibilities, my office has three priorities for the

Winter/Spring of 2024.

Review and update City policies, hiring/onboarding practices, and employee engagement/retention.

One of the main responsibilities of my office is to coordinate the review, and update as needed City policies, procedures, and the Employee Handbook. Much of my time this winter has been focused on review of city policies, working with the Finance Director to standardize the City's onboarding process, and review and update the City's employee handbook.

Regular updates to policies, procedures, and employee handbooks are crucial for maintaining organizational agility and compliance with evolving laws and industry standards. As the employment landscape continually evolves, keeping these documents current ensures that employees are well-informed about the latest guidelines, expectations, and legal requirements. Regular updates also contribute to risk management, helping mitigate potential liabilities by aligning policies with changing regulatory landscapes. Additionally, clear, and up-to-date documentation enhances communication, reducing ambiguity

and fostering a transparent work environment. By regularly reviewing and updating policies, procedures, and handbooks, organizations demonstrate a commitment to adaptability, legal adherence, and overall employee well-being, thereby supporting a healthier and more resilient workplace culture.

Hiring practices and onboarding employees is another area that we are working to standardize the processes across all City departments.

Consistent onboarding processes play a pivotal role in fostering a positive and efficient work environment. They provide new hires with a structured introduction to the City of Old Town culture, policies, and expectations, ensuring a smooth transition into their roles. A standardized onboarding approach not only helps in acclimating employees but also contributes to the overall cohesion of the team.

By offering a uniform onboarding experience, organizations can maintain clarity and fairness, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings or disparities among new hires. Moreover, consistent onboarding promotes a sense of belonging and engagement, enhancing employee

retention and productivity. It sets the foundation for a shared understanding of organizational values, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of both individuals and the City as a whole.

Prioritizing employee well-being is the cornerstone of delivering excellent customer service. When employees feel supported, valued, and emotionally invested in their workplace, they are more likely to engage positively with customers. A content and fulfilled workforce translates into heightened motivation, increased job satisfaction, and a genuine commitment to providing exceptional service. Employees who feel well-supported are better equipped to handle challenges, show empathy, and maintain a positive attitude, creating a ripple effect that positively impacts the customer experience. Ultimately, a focus on employee well-being becomes a strategic investment, as it cultivates a service-oriented culture that not only satisfies employees but also delivers unparalleled value to customers.

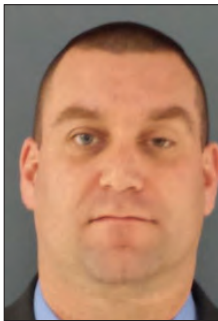


Travis Roy

Old Town Public Safety

Thanks and Good Luck to Scott Wilcox

Scott Wilcox's tenure with the Old Town Police Department, commencing in March 2015, reflects a remarkable dedication to public service. Over the course of eight years, he rose to the esteemed position of Public Safety Director, a role he held until his well-earned retirement on December 15, 2023.



Scott Wilcox

Throughout his tenure, Scott demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to the safety and security of the City of Old Town. His tireless efforts and dedication were evident in the proactive measures taken to keep the streets safe for residents. Scott's leadership played a pivotal role in fostering a secure environment, contributing significantly to the well-being of the community.

Scott Wilcox's legacy is one of unwavering commitment and service, a true testament to his character. His retirement marks the end of an era, and the impact of his contributions will undoubtedly be felt for years

to come. The residents of Old Town owe a debt of gratitude to Scott for his selfless service and dedication to the betterment of the community.

Welcome New Officer Bryce Richards

Bryce Richards, the newest recruit to the Old Town Police Department, embodies a profound commitment to giving back to the community that shaped him. A proud 2020 graduate of Old Town High School and a Bradley native, Bryce's roots run deep in the local area, providing him with a unique understanding of the community's dynamics and needs.



With a firsthand glimpse into the daily challenges faced by law enforcement officers, Bryce is preparing for formal academy training at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy starting January 16th, with graduation expected in mid-May. His decision to become a police officer stems from a genuine desire to contribute positively to the community he calls home.

What sets Bryce apart is not only his dedication but also his infectious

personality, kind heart, and unwavering drive to make a difference. The Old Town Police Department expresses no doubt that Bryce will not only be an exceptional police officer but also an invaluable asset to the department. The anticipation of Bryce's future contributions highlights the confidence the department places in his abilities and character.

As Bryce embarks on this journey, his story becomes an inspiring testament to individuals stepping up to serve their communities with passion and sincerity. The Old Town Police Department is fortunate to welcome such a promising recruit, and we extend our best wishes to Bryce for a successful academy training and a fulfilling career in law enforcement.

Welcome New Deputy Fire Chief Kyle Milan

The City of Old Town would like to introduce the new leader of the Fire Department. Kyle Milan has assumed the role of Deputy Fire Chief, bringing a wealth of experience and dedication to the community.

Deputy Chief Milan's journey in firefighting began in July 2002 when

he enlisted in the Air Force. Having graduated from the Louis F. Garland Fire Academy at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, in June 2003, his commitment to serving others became evident early in his career.

Over the years, Deputy Chief Milan's diverse roles within the Maine Air National Guard Fire Department showcased his versatility. His extensive experience includes leadership roles as Fire Chief, First Sergeant, and Senior Enlisted Leader for the Civil Engineering Squadron. Deputy Chief Milan's service extends beyond borders, having deployed in support of various operations, including Northern Watch, Jump Start, Inherent Resolve, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.

As he takes on the new role of Deputy Fire Chief, the Old Town community welcomes Deputy Chief Milan with open arms, confident that his expertise and commitment will contribute to the safety and well-being of our residents.

We express our gratitude for his service and look forward to the positive impact he will undoubtedly bring to the Old Town Fire Department.

Welcome aboard, Deputy Fire Chief Kyle Milan!



Economic and Community Development

EJ Roach

Global Secure Shipping Receives Award

At this year's Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner, Global Secure Shipping, located in Old Town, received the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Award. (Photo below.) This award recognizes a newer business whose innovation and creativity has succeeded in opening new economic opportunities for our region. The 15,000 square foot expansion at GSS continues and is on track for completion in late spring 2024.

Old Town Selects Gorrill Palmer for Village Partnership Initiative Planning Study

In the fall of 2023, the City of Old Town and the MaineDOT, selected Gorrill Palmer to assist in the planning and feasibility study for Center Street (Route 2A), Main Street (Route 2/43), Gilman Falls Avenue (Route 43), and the encompassing Downtown Old Town. The goal of this study is to provide a fresh and independent approach that will provide recommendations for safety, economic development, mobility, and accessibility improvements to



this defined area with a specific focus on accommodating all modes of transportation. This planning study is part of the Maine DOT Village Partnership Initiative.

Downtown Old Town Becomes Maine Downtown Affiliate

DTOT received word from the Maine Downtown Center on their official acceptance into the Maine Street Affiliate Program. The application process began last year and recently concluded with a site visit in early December of 2023. DTOT is now one of 15 communities throughout the State with this affiliate designation. In addition to these affiliate communities, Maine has 10 nationally recognized Main Street Communities.

The Maine Downtown Affiliate (MDA) program helps communities build an appropriate organizational and funding base for an effective downtown/neighborhood commercial district revitalization effort and introduces them to the fundamentals of the Main Street Four-Point Approach. MDA members learn about best practices in the field, network with peers from around the state, and access training by state and national downtown revitalization experts. Participation in the MDA program is a prerequisite for becoming a nationally accredited Main Street Maine community. More information about the programs offered by the Maine Downtown Center can be found on their website. <https://www.mdf.org/program-partnerships/maine-downtown-center/>

DTOT continues seeking volunteers

If you live, work, attend school, own a business, or visit Old Town often and have an interest in seeing our Downtown develop and grow, please contact EJ Roach, Director of Economic & Community Development and Co-Chair of DTOT at eroach@old-town.org or (207) 827-3965.

DTOT hosts 2nd annual Fire & Ice Event

Fire and Ice 2024, planned and hosted by DTOT, consisted of two days of activities. Activities included a sledding hill, warming fires, food trucks and food from local non-profit organizations, UMaine Hockey viewing on the big screen, ice carving demonstration and ice bar, live music,

and fireworks.

We want to thank the following non-profit organizations for participating in this year's event.

Old Town Orono YMCA, Leonard Middle School Student Council, Old Town High School National Honor Society, Old Town High School Project Graduation, Old Town Little League and UMaine's Office of Student Involvement. For a second year we were able to raise money for the Penquis Heating Assistance Fund. Fire and Ice 2025 will be held Friday January 24th and Saturday January 25th.

Riverfest 2024 Dates Announced

Riverfest 2024 will be held Friday September 27th and Saturday September 28th. If you are interested in helping with the planning of Riverfest or you would like more information, please contact the planning committee via email at riverfestoldtown@gmail.com. We are always looking for partners, volunteers, and sponsors to help make this memorable event happen each year. Riverfest is always the last full weekend in September.



EJ Roach



Photo Credit: Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce



Old Town Assessor

April Buchanan, City Assessor

The assessing office is located on the first floor of the City Hall building 265 Main St. We welcome visitors with questions/concerns. If you don't have time to stop by, feel free to email me at abuchanan@old-town.org or call at 207-827-3965 ext. 118.

The assessing office would like to thank everyone for their patience during the previous months. I have been busy updating our property record information with the information provided by taxpayers. If you have not heard back from me, feel free to reach out for an update on your inquiry.

In the upcoming months, I hope to have the time to take updated photos of the properties in Old Town as they have not been updated since 2007 (in most cases).

The City of Old Town's website (old-town.org) has a selection under the "Departments" heading for the Assessor's page. This page contains the following information/links/documents:

Property Card Information Request – This section offers a fillable form

to provide your email address, the address of the property you are requesting information for, name of the requester, and contact phone number. Once you fill in these areas and click submit, it will send an email to the assessing office. We do our best to monitor these emails and respond in a timely manner during office hours.

GIS Mapping – After clicking on the GIS Mapping link the user is taken to the AxisGIS system for the City of Old Town. A user can search in this area by address, map-lot (parcel number), or owner's name. This area gives some of the approximate site dimensions on the map as well as links to look at the sketch and on-line property card information. This is updated as often as possible but is not always the most up-to-date information. For the most up-to-date information, choose the Property Card Information Request section.

Tax Maps – Here you will find a link to the AxisGIS page, Tax Map Index, and each of the individual tax maps. These are in PDF format.

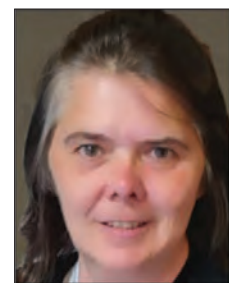
Commitment Books and Tax Bills – The commitment book is a document containing the value, tax due, and official documents related to the property in a municipality. The assessor is responsible for assembling the commitment book every year, with property valued as of April 1. (from Maine Revenue Services Property Tax Division Bulletin No. 15) This section of the website has links to the current Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Tax Commitment Books, as well as previous years Tax Bills. Some of these are large files, which can usually be searched by clicking in the document and then holding down the "Ctrl" key and the "F" key simultaneously. A box should come up and you can type in what you are searching for (i.e. owner name, address, etc.).

Exemptions and Tax Assistance Programs – This area has links to the different types of exemptions available in the State of Maine. The applications and instructions can be found when clicking on the different PDFs. The potential exemptions are: Blind Exemption, Homestead

Exemption, Paraplegic Veteran Exemption, Veteran Exemption, and Exemption for surviving spouses, parents, or minor children of deceased veterans. If there are any questions or clarifications needed on these programs, feel free to reach out to me, April Buchanan at 207-827-3965 ext. 118.

Valuation Updates and Abatement Information – Here you will find answers to some Frequently Asked Questions; Assessing Updates; Abatement Appeals Procedures; and Application for Abatement of Municipal Property Taxes. Taxpayers have the right to request an abatement for errors in their assessment within 185 days from the date of commitment. Commitment was completed on August 29, 2023. The deadline for filing an abatement is March 1, 2024.

It has been a pleasure to serve the community of Old Town and look forward to the upcoming year.



April Buchanan

Old Town Code Enforcement

With 2024, already here, it's probably time to start thinking about any projects you may want to do this spring and summer. In fact, if you are planning any sort of projects that will require professional trades people, you will need to start lining them up now as most contractors are booked months in advance. Below is a follow-up on projects that were ongoing this past fall.

The conversion of the old Jefferson Street School into a twelve-unit apartment building. The contractors are wrapping things up and this building should be ready by spring for rental opportunities. The owner of this property, Andy LeClair, is doing an exceptional job with this renovation, repurposing project. I look forward to every inspection, or impromptu visit I make.

There are four new dwellings in various stages of construction on Poplar Street. (Two new modular homes are done, one dwelling is completed and one home is now being built.)

A new dwelling is being constructed on Woodland Ave. (Should be ready for spring occupancy.)

A project that was site developed a number of years ago has been sold

to new owners. This project is still ongoing with four buildings now occupied and another six building in various stages of construction.

A new 15,000 square foot building, owned by the City of Old Town is under construction at 122 Penny Road. This is a manufacturing facility being built to house Global Secure Shipping as they are ramping up their capabilities and subsequent demand for production.

With the afore mentioned and all of the unknown projects that are sure to begin this spring and summer, I will continue to stay busy.

So, if you are in the early stages of planning a project or want to have your project shovel read for this spring and summer or even next fall's construction season, please contact me with any questions you may have. I would like to reiterate the same advice once again as I offered in the last quarterly. While this information may seem redundant, I feel it is important to remember:

I always suggest that you give me a call before you get to far along in the planning stages to determine whether a permit is required and if your project is even feasible/allowed. I pride myself in 99% of the time finding a way for your dream

to become a reality. For some construction projects, such as siding, roofing, and fences there are no permits required. However, do you know if the siding you are going over is asbestos, or how many layers of shingles are permitted to be shingled over? Do you really know where your property line is and if it is true that you must put the good side of the fence facing your neighbor's property? What size does my new bedroom window need to be to meet egress standards? How high does the railing on my new deck have to be and do I even need a railing on it? Is a permit for a deck or a shed required? The list goes on and on. Most accessory structures, decks, sheds, and garages require a building permit. Set back distances from property lines vary between zoning districts and upon an accessory structure being attached or detached to the primary structure. These are important items to find out before venturing too far into a project.

Our permit fees are very reasonable and are assessed based upon the type of construction you are doing. For instance, remodeling fees, with no additional square footage added are based on the following:

- <\$1,000 of construction costs =

- \$25.00
- \$1,000 - \$4,999 of construction costs = \$35.00
- \$5,000 - \$9,999 of construction costs = \$50.00
- \$10,000-20,000 of construction costs = \$65.00
- Over \$20,000 of construction costs the fee is \$4.00 per thousand of cost.

Permit fees for additions and accessory structures are based on the square footage of the addition/structure. We also require and issue both internal and external plumbing permits, electrical permits, sign permits as well as permits for all commercial applications.

As you can see it is an easy one stop shopping department for all your permitting needs. Please do not hesitate to pick up the telephone and let me help you get your project under way. I look forward to lending you any assistance you may require.

David C. Russell, Code Enforcement Officer
Tel: 207-827-3965 x 205 Cell: 207-570-6798 Fax: 207-827-3966
drussell@old-town.org



David Russell

Old Town Public Library

Spring is just around the corner, and with it, more opportunities for outdoor activities! This year a total solar eclipse will be happening on April 8th, and the library will have eclipse glasses to hand out. We will have Maine State Park and Botanical Garden Passes available to check out with your library card. The Story Walk in the garden around the library is updated monthly during Spring, Summer, and Fall, so be sure to stop by and

see the new story. Our Library of Things collection is circulating! We have ukuleles, Giant Jenga, Yardzee, and several other indoor and outdoor games and things available to check out with your library card. We also have two Old Town Canoe kayaks available to borrow starting late May through early October. Visit the library for more details.

Our hours of operation are Monday & Tuesday, 10am-7pm, Wednesday-Friday, 10am-5pm, and Saturday, 10am-1pm. Feel free to come in and browse the collection or use our public internet access computers. We are still offering curbside pickup service for those who would pre-

fer it. Utilize our catalog to request items, or give us a call, and we would be happy to help with your selections (207-827-3972).

Our Children's programming has been very busy in our downstairs meeting rooms. Toddler Time, intended for children ages 1-3, is on Mondays and Thursdays at 10:30am. The after-school Club Library will be continuing through the end of the school year and is held from 2:30-4:30 on Wednesdays (PreK-2nd grade) and Thursdays (3rd-5th grade). Also, back by popular demand, Lego Club (for children K-5th grade) is held from 3:00 - 4:30 on the 3rd Monday of the month during the school year. Contact Ms. Cindy at the library for more details on children's events.

For our adult events, we will be having a Beginner Quilting Series starting Feb 24th and will be held every Saturday from 10-1 until April 27. Registration begins Feb 12th, with room for only six people. Tuesday Forum will be held on Feb 27th, March 19th, and April 23rd. We also have a Sit 'n Stitch group that meets from 1-3 on Thursday

afternoons for knitting, sewing, and other handicrafts.

Our adult book clubs, Who Dunnit and Fluffy Fiction, will be meeting until early Summer. We are also going to try a Seed Swap this year, date TBD. Check our Facebook and website for more adult programs.

Our "Virtual Branch" is still available to find video streaming, eBooks and e-Audiobooks, online learning, genealogy and other data base resources, tickets to theatre events, and more. For more information on any of our events, be sure to check our website for more information about what's going on at the Old Town Public Library (old-town.lib.me.us) and follow our Facebook and Instagram accounts for reading recommendations, lists of new items added to our collection, and upcoming programming announcements.

207-827-3972 • otpl@old-town.org
<http://old-town.lib.me.us>



Cassandra Pool



Old Town Pollution Control

Winter months are a good time for the staff at the Pollution Control Facility to perform maintenance and repairs at the Wastewater Facility and our seven pump stations. This winter however has been a challenge for us. The Old Town area has received three major weather events so far this winter. The weather events, especially the ones with a lot of rain results in a large amount of excess flow for us. The excess flow impacts every aspect of our treatment process. From the pump stations to the treatment plant. Even with the pump stations working overtime, staff has successfully performed the general maintenance

on our equipment. There are a few maintenance items that will have to wait until dry weather as tanks will need to be pumped out and cleaned.

Staff has also been actively performing flow monitoring on the 25 miles of sewer mains within Old Town.

We have 5 portable flow meters throughout the city. The purpose of the flow monitoring is to try to find areas where the excess flow is coming from. A few areas have been identified and addressed. Staff will be monitoring flow throughout 2024.

The Pollution Control Facility is working with the DEP on finalizing

our discharge permit renewal. Everything is in place for the renewal. The DEP has us operating under the old permit until the new one is renewed. The fourth year of the permit cycle starts in July. This is when we are required to have priority pollutants and toxicity testing done on the water that is discharged from us. These tests are contracted out to a third-party laboratory and are scheduled for July 2024.

As always, the Pollution Control Staff is asking everyone to not flush things that should not be flushed, including "flushable wipes." These items include but not limited to baby wipes, Clorox wipes, paper

towels, etc. These items should never be flushed as they only cause problems in sewer lines and could cause a sewer blockage and backup into a homeowner's basement. Also please do not pour cooking oil or grease down the sink. These items also cause problems in sewer lines.



David Smith

UMaine alum Jon Doty receives award from College of Education and Human Development

January 29, 2024 - Reprinted with permission from University of Maine Division of Marketing and Communications

Jon Doty, assistant superintendent of RSU 34, the school district for Old Town, Alton and Bradley, received the inaugural Robert A. Cobb Award for Extraordinary Service to the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Maine. The award was presented at the college's Pinning and Recognition Ceremony on Friday.

Doty received his bachelor's degree in elementary education with a concentration in natural sciences from UMaine in 2000. He went on to earn three more degrees from the university: a master's in education

with a concentration in instructional technology in 2004; a certificate of advanced study in education with a focus on gifted and talented education and educational leadership in 2006; and a Doctor of Education in educational leadership in 2018.

He has served RSU 34 in a variety of roles, including technology education teacher; middle school math and science teacher; coordinator of gifted and talented services; director of curriculum, instruction and assessment; and currently assistant superintendent. Doty's love of community and outdoors is reflected in

his past work in Maine's whitewater rafting industry, emergency medicine, directing youth summer camps and currently as a leader of the local Cub Scouts.

Among the initiatives that Doty has spearheaded is an educator accelerator program that engages preservice teachers from UMaine, Eastern Maine Community College, Husson University and the University of Maine at Augusta's Bangor campus to work in RSU 34 schools as paraprofessionals and substitute teachers. Doty serves as president-elect of the Maine Curriculum Lead-

ers Association and as treasurer of the Rural Futures Fund. He is also an adjunct instructor and regular classroom guest speaker at UMaine.

The Robert A. Cobb Award is named for the former dean of the College of Education and Human Development from 1977 to 2007. At the time of his retirement, he was the longest tenured dean of a college of education in the United States. Cobb passed away in 2022. Members of the Cobb family plan to be in attendance for the ceremony.



Recognition ceremony photos courtesy Casey Kelly



Maine's largest teacher education program.

Offering undergraduate programs leading to teacher certification in elementary education, secondary education, early childhood education, and kinesiology & physical education.

Graduate degrees in educational leadership, special education, curriculum, assessment & instruction, and more.

Ask about our fall 2023 schedule of enhanced tours: coehd@maine.edu.

A Community of Care.

umaine.edu/edhd



UMaine Student Spotlight

Old Town High School Alumni, Josh Hamilton

Text and photos reprinted with permission from the University of Maine

We continue with our series featuring the nine graduate students who received research fellowships to focus on research last summer. Joshua David Hamilton, a biomedical engineering Ph.D. student advised by Andre Khalil, received funding for a project titled “Breast cancer case-control pilot study on patient-matched mammograms and histological tissue slides for NCI grant renewal proposal.” He took time to answer a few questions about the impact of the award, his experience at UMaine and plans for the future.



What led you to UMaine and to your major?

My home town is Alton Maine and I learned about UMaine from my teachers at Old Town High School who directed me to an internship opportunity to conduct paid research over the summer at UMaine through the Maine EPSCoR internship program. I participated both my Sophomore and Junior summers of high school, first within the Chemistry department under Dr. Barbara Cole and then within the Chemical and Biomedical Engineering department under Dr. Douglas Bousfield. This ignited a passion for research and I discovered the Biomedical Engineering undergraduate program during this process. This led to me applying to an undergraduate in Biomedical Engineering at UMaine, participating in research all four years of my undergraduate, conducting a research based Honors Thesis, and being accepted into the 4+1 Biomedical Engineering program to obtain a one year Masters degree working under Dr. Andre Khalil and Dr. Karissa Tilbury. During my Masters I researched collagen organizational changes in relation to pancreatic cancer which has direct meaning to me as my step dad lost his battle to pancreatic cancer before my Sophomore year of college. I was extremely invested into my Masters research and had a conversation about staying in the lab for my PhD which resulted in where I am at today, a second year Ph.D. student in Biomedical Engineering through the Graduate School of Biomedical Science and Engineering.

What is a short description of the research project you are involved in?

I am currently researching organizational changes in the tissue micro environment to develop new diagnostic metrics and risk tools for clinicians as well as to help our

understanding of how tissue organization impacts cancer growth. More specifically, my research has currently focused on developing novel wavelet and fractal based computational analysis techniques both on breast histological slides and mammograms.

How did the IoM fellowship make a difference?

I was under a TA-ship for my first year and there was no summer funding available for me. The IoM fellowship guaranteed I could continue my research which directly led to me presenting three posters from my work they helped fund. I presented at the International Breast Density Workshop in Hawaii, the Biomedical Engineering Society Annual Meeting in Seattle, and the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in Texas. I am very thankful for these opportunities to both share my work and learn more about the research world around me.

What are some of your research tasks?

I help update, develop, and propose quantitative analytic methods based of hypotheses on how the underlying tissue organization could impact benign vs malignant tumors. This involves management of large image datasets, programming in multiple languages such as C++, R, Python, and TCL as well using an in-house lab program known as Xsmurf.

What were some exciting, rewarding moments, and some setbacks?

I proposed running what we call the “Anisotropy Factor” which is a quantitative measure of organization within an image on histological slide images from patient biopsies due to their immediate clinical relevance. We had never run this method on this type of image but I suspected the additional cellular information would be beneficial, whereas before we were analyzing images of just collagen taken using

advanced microscopy techniques. The method works really well on the slide scans and finds differences in organization between malignant and benign breast tumor cases and now I am working on separating different cell types and underlying tissue types to create a more robust approach.



Alumni Career Award

Jim Dill named one of the 2024 UMaine Alumni Award Honorees

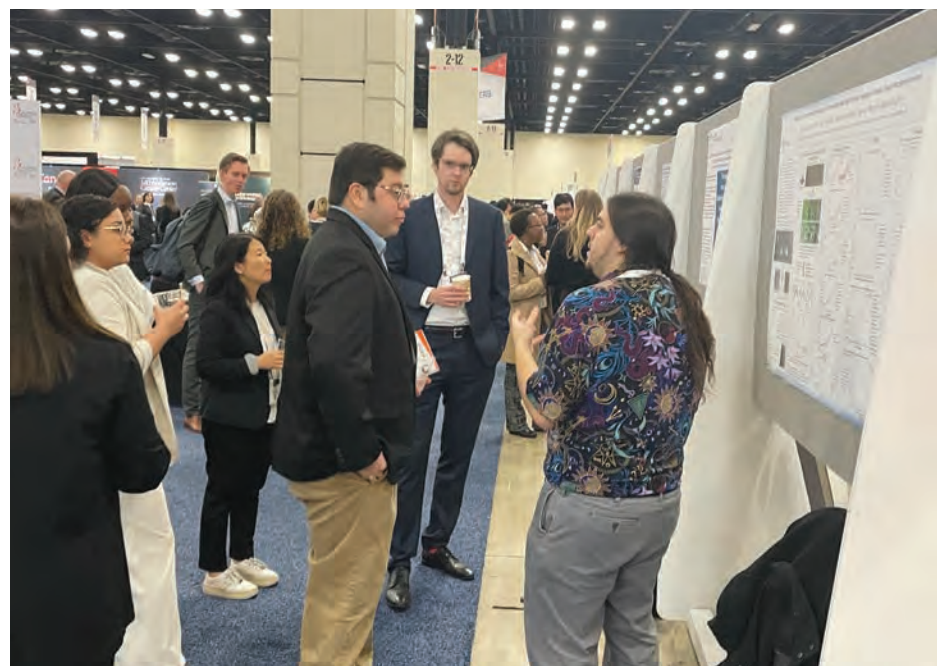
Text and photo reprinted with permission from the UMaine Alumni Association



The brilliant UMaine entomologist and community servant was among an impressive class of honorees that will be recognized by the University of Maine Alumni Association at our Alumni Achievement Awards Dinner in April.

From his twenty years of serving on his local school board to his twelve years of serving as both a State Representative and a State Senator in the Maine Legislature, entomologist Jim Dill '72, '74G has been chosen to receive the Alumni Career Award, the UMaine Alumni Association's highest alumni honor. Dill has led the life-saving UMaine Cooperative Extension Diagnostic and Research Laboratory, more affectionately called “The Tick Lab,” in investigating ways to reduce the incidences of Lyme disease and other vector-borne diseases not only in Maine but throughout our country. Jim's work with Integrated Pest Management is well known and highly respected, as he has been the UMaine Cooperative Extension

pest management specialist since 1981. In his more than 40-year career, Dill has been instrumental in growing and developing Maine's pest management and pesticide safety education initiatives, serving as an extension professor. Jim is currently serving in the Maine House of Representatives representing Old Town and neighboring communities. He currently serves on the Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and Marine Resources committees in the 131st Maine Legislature.



Programming always can have tons of setbacks and mini victories with highs and lows almost every day. Research wise, we had fewer benign patients than we had hoped from our collaborators, but we still have found statistical significance suggesting we are on the right track and should pursue a larger histological dataset.

Would you like to recognize one or more faculty members, advisors, or administrative staff for their help?

I would not be doing any of the work I am without the mentorship of both Dr. Karissa Tilbury and Dr. Andre Khalil. They helped pull me from a low point in my life over the pandemic and have continued to support and offer me many opportunities and experiences I never thought I would have coming from rural Maine.

Can you see this research con-

tinued by others?

Absolutely, the goal is to release these tools to the wider research community and help direct researchers to using multi-scale wavelet and fractal techniques to further develop our understanding of cancer biology.

Will it have clinical applications?

Yes, currently some of our lab's work in mammogram analysis is being transferred to clinicians under a startup company called Waved Medical under the guidance of a recently graduated CompuMAINE lab member, Dr. Kendra Batchelder. My current research on histology slides could one day be transferred directly into pathology workflow helping to ease their large workloads. In fact, the data I am using is on human patients from clinical collaborators and our lab is probably the largest clinical breast cancer project in the state of Maine.