

Volume 12, Issue 11 The Windham Eagle.com March 15, 2024 Windham Christian Academy student wins Maine 'Voice of Democracy' contest

By Ed Pierce

For the second consecutive year, a student from Windham Christian Academy has captured the state "Voice of Democracy" contest sponsored by the VFW and qualified to compete in the national "Voice of Democracy" finals in Washington, D.C. This year's winner is Anna Seavey, 18, a WCA senior, and for her winning audio essay, she earned a \$2,000 scholarship for college from the national competition.

Seavey plans to use the scholarship to attend Southern Maine Community College this fall and plans to study early childhood education. She hopes to eventually teach at a daycare or preschool after college.

She said she was inspired to enter the local Voice of Democracy contest sponsored by VFW Post 10643 last fall after knowing several previous students at Windham Christian Academy who have won the contest in the past few years, including Hunter Edson of Windham, who won both the local and state contests last year.

"I was excited by the possible opportunities this contest offered including scholarships, a trip to Washington D.C., and meeting people involved with the VFW," Seavey said.



Anna Seavey of Windham Christian Academy, center, receives a \$2,000 college scholarship during the national 2024 VFW 'Voice of Democracy' contest in Washington, D.C. She was presented the award by VFW Auxiliary President Carla Martinez, left, and the VFW National Commander Duane Sarmiento on March 6. COURTESY PHOTO

Her 3- to 5-minute audio essay was based upon this year's theme "What Are the Greatest Attributes of Our Democracy" and she said when she first heard about the topic, she was very excited to write about it.

The annual Voice of Democracy competition was established by the VFW in 1947 and encourages stu-

dents to examine America's history, along with their own experiences in modern American society and provides students with a unique opportunity to express their own thoughts about democracy and patriotism with a chance to win college scholarship money. The national first-place scholarship prize is \$35,000 and each year more than 25,000 students from across America submit audio essays for the competition.

According to Seavey, she was amazed when she learned that she had won the Maine Voice of Democracy.

"At first, I couldn't even believe that they read my name," she said. "I was immediately filled with joy and excitement when I realized I would be going forward to the national level. I felt incredibly honored that I would get the opportunity to represent my state."

The daughter of Michael and Maureen Seavey of Standish, Anna is the youngest of four children and says her family was excited to find out about her winning the state-level competition, the accompanying college scholarship and the all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. to compete against other state winners.

"They were all incredibly supportive and encouraging to me as I prepared to go to Washington D.C. My parents were able to watch the parade of winners live, and my siblings watched from home on television. I am so thankful for the support they gave me."

The national Voice of Democracy competition was held in Washington see CONTEST Page 16

Country star Michael Ray performs at Erik's Church to raise money for Barbara Bush Children's Hospital

By Melissa Carter

STAFF WRITER

Nearly 300 people gathered at Erik's Church over the course of two days, March 5 and March 6, to take in the inspiring acoustics of Warner Music Nashville recording artist Michael Ray and raise funds for The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital of Portland.

The concert was presented by Country 99.9 The Wolf radio for the third consecutive year and featured special guests Ashley Cooke on Tuesday and Meghan Patrick on Wednesday. The community came together to bring in a jaw-dropping \$38,000 between donations, ticket sales and live auction for tickets to see Tim McGraw in Boston. Kenny Cianchette, the owner of Erik's Church, expressed his gratitude for having a venue capable of giving people a chance to come together for a good cause and experience an intimate night of fun and good music at the same time. Cianchette hosts various fundraising events throughout the year and said it's just one of the reasons that he absolutely loves what he does being in the business. Before taking the stage on March 6, Ray answered a few questions during an interview. His humble demeanor was like talking to an old friend instead

of someone who has traveled the country and played on renowned stages like the Grand Old Opry over 75 times.

Ray said this was not his first visit to Maine, but that he hasn't really had the chance to explore the beauty here like he wants to and hopes to experience the many outdoor recreation opportunities that he loves here like hunting and fishing.

According to Ray, he was inspired by country music since he was a very young boy, having had the influence of his grandfather Amos who played guitar and formed a family country band. It was Amos that taught Ray to play guitar at the age of 9 and he began writing his own songs when he was 11. In describing his creative writing process, Ray had to stop and think for a minute. "It kind of just comes in waves," he said. "When I am touring, I am solely focused on performing, but when I get down time, I find that through conversations, experiences and dreams the words and rhythms just come to me."



home when gets breaks, which is only for about two months a year. On his down time, he enjoys grilling in his backyard and getting outdoors hunting turkey and duck.

He says the best advice he's ever been given is "Trust your gut, trust the process."

When Ray went on stage at Erik's Church, he captivated the audience with his relatable lyrics and stories and showcased such genuine talent. His heartfelt performance and overall realness was something felt by all who attended the show.

Ray expressed his love of this region and of Erik's Church for its hometown feel. He said the outpouring of community support here is evident and there is nothing he loves more than being able to bring people together through music to raise money for a good cause.

He said he has a bank of more than 100 unreleased songs and there is no end in sight.

Ray has performed with many big names in country music but said one of his personal favorite tours was "Higher Education" with friends and Warner Music Nashville recording artist Michael Ray performs at Erik's Church in Windham to raise funds for The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital of Portland. PHOTO BY MELISSA CARTER

idols Kid Rock, Lee Brice, Tim Montana and Billy Gibbons. He said he would love to collaborate with Gary Allen someday as he has looked up to him since his early days of learning to play guitar and that his music always spoke to him.

Aside from playing with Gary Allen, Ray is hoping to become a member of the Grand Ole Opry and to start a family. For now, his basset hound Bo is the one who welcomes him to his Georgia "That is what country music is about," he said, "It's about community, connec-

tion, and giving PRSRT STD back. Playing on U.S. POSTAGE a small stage like PAID Erik's Church is TIME4PUBLISHING a nice change, a chance to just www.TheWindhamEagle.cor kind of 'shoot Local from the hip' and **Postal Customer** be myself." <



If you missed this bit of news last week, a Pentagon study says there is no credible evidence that exists verifying U.S. authorities covered up extraterrestrial life in the form of unidentified flying objects.

This follows decades of persistent rumors that an Unidentified Flying Object crashed near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947 and an alien spacecraft and deceased occupants from another world were quickly removed and covered up by members of the U.S. military there. A 63-page report offered simple explanations for unexplained UFO sightings and what it says are up to 40 percent of Americans who believe the U.S. has been visited by spaceships containing alien beings.

The report also refutes claims that the U.S. government and private companies have been able to access alien spacecraft and use reverse-engineered extraterrestrial technology for top-secret projects.

As a teenager, I spent a lot of time reading science fiction stories and comic books about visitors from outer space and this Pentagon report got me to thinking about what my life and our culture would have been like without the mention of aliens from other worlds. Since I grew up watching television, one of my favorite shows as a small child was "The Adventures of Superman" starring George Reeves. Superman himself was an alien visitor to Earth, sent here by his parents as a baby to escape the destruction of the planet Krypton when it exploded. I later had a subscription to the "Adventure" comic book

> featuring the Legion of Super Heroes who were a group of superpowered alien beings.

Many episodes of sci-fi programs airing in the early 1960s such as "The Twilight Zone" or "The Outer Limits" involved scary extraterrestrial visitors in one way or another. And if I wanted a good laugh, there was "Uncle Martin" the Martian with funny antennae as played by Ray Walston on the comedy "My Favorite Martian."

When "Lost in Space" and "Star Trek" debuted in the mid-1960s, alien characters on television increased significantly. For me, the character of Mr. Spock of "Star Trek" stood out, as Leonard Nimoy portrayed a half-human logical being from the planet Vulcan with pointed ears and green blood. Spock's popularity opened the door for acceptance of alien characters in further television programs and in movies going forward.

In the 1970s, alien characters were everywhere in entertainment. Films such as "Star Wars" in 1977 introduced the world to strange creatures such as Jabba the Hutt, the Wookie Chewbacca, and Yoda, a small and wise centuries-old green Jedi. On television, viewers tuned in to Robin Williams as the alien Mork from the planet Ork on the comedy "Mork and Mindy."

By the 1980s, it was hard to miss the flood of alien characters permeating our world. There was the powerful alien who devoured humans in the movie "Predator," or a lost extraterrestrial who wanted to phone home in director Steven Spielburg's "E.T the Extra-Terrestrial." In the movie "Cocoon," the residents of a Florida nursing home discover an alien fountain of youth in a swimming pool. In "Starman" actor Jeff Bridges played an alien creature who inhabits the body of a dead man from Wisconsin while trying to reconnect with his spaceship.

On television in the 1990s, hit shows such as "3rd Rock from the Sun," or "The X-Files" or "Babylon 5" continued to focus on aliens while defeating alien invaders in popular films such as "Independence Day" and "Men in Black" fascinated moviegoers.

And if you're thinking that the Baby Boomer generation is the only one to be preoccupied by the thought of aliens visiting our world, may I remind you of a story my father told me about when he was in high school in the 1930s and was listening to the radio one evening and a program was broadcast that severely panicked Americans because of its topic.

It was a CBS radio adaptation of an H.G. Wells' science fiction novel by a troupe of actors led by Orson Welles called "The War of the Worlds" about an invasion of Earth by hostile Martians. Some listeners to that broadcast were convinced that an extraterrestrial crisis was unfolding in America as alien spacecraft were landing in New Jersey that night before Halloween in 1938. My father said that broadcast felt so real, he didn't know if he there would be school classes the very next morning.

Now as an adult, I must confess that I am not among the 40 percent who believe that alien spacecraft have visited our planet and I find it interesting that funding was authorized by The Pentagon to determine if the government has any sort of evidence or testimony of aliens or extraterrestrial spacecraft hidden away in storage.

That doesn't mean that I do not wonder if somewhere out in the universe, there is an alien civilization which is like our own. I believe that our basic human desire is to think we are not alone in life, and it has led to the ongoing popularity of television series and films about aliens and space exploration in our culture today.

If the idea of alien existence was not part of our culture, I surely would have pent parts of my life differently. < – *Ed Pierce*



March 15, 2024

In your opinion, what's the most annoying song that other people seem to really like?

"Anything by Jelly Roll." – Tammy Sawyer

> "Hotel California." – Julie Mallett

"Anything by The Doors." – Tommy Matthews

> "Billy Joel songs." – Anne Goodhue

"Every song by Dave Matthews." – Mike Smith

"The song 'Roxanne' by The Police." – Miki Mayberry

"Rap." – Lisa Purcell

"Jessie's Girl." Lisa Copp DeFosse

"Happy by Pharrell Williams." – Jody Waterhouse Burns

"I can make your hands clap." - Julie Leighton Young

> "Gangham Style." - Vickie Hall Clarke

"Macarena, it makes my skin crawl each time I hear it." – Stan Sustmann

"The song that doesn't end -Shari Lewis." – Jay Binnion

"I hate that song from 'Barbie... What was I made for?' A popular radio station plays it every 10 or 20 minutes or so it seems. It's literally on every time I listen." – Brad Saucier

"Bohemian Rhapsody." – Anne Alexander

"People think I'm crazy, but I have never liked anything by The Beatles or the Rolling **Stones."** – Anne Glotchshuk

"Don't Take the Girl by Tim

MARCH 15 44 BC – Julius Caesar is stabbed to death in the Roman Senate house by 60 conspirators.

Today in

1493 – Explorer Christopher **Columbus returns to Spain** after his first New World voyage.

1820 – Maine becomes the 23rd U.S. state.

1906 – The Rolls-Royce Limited Co. is incorporated.

1937 – The first American blood bank in a hospital is opened at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, Illinois.

1938 – Oil is discovered in Saudi Arabia.

1962 – Donald Jackson of Canada is the first person to land a triple lutz ice skating jump in competition.

1973 – Nebraska becomes the first U.S. state to rescind its previous ratification of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

1977 – The popular comedy Three's Company premieres on the ABC Television network.



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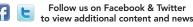


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EDITORIAL POLICY The Windham Eagle newspaper has a mission to be a Positive and Solutions Based newspaper. As a positive and solutions-based newspaper, we are committed to providing our readers with accurate, informative, and constructive news and information that uplifts and inspires. We recognize that certain content may not align with our mission and values, and therefore reserve the right to not publish certain types of content. For complete details about submissions and our letters policy, visit www.thewindhameagle.com McGraw." – Dean A. Smalley

"Any song that Miley Cyrus sings. Yuk." – Benjamin Lee

"Who Let the Dogs Out? Baha Men." – Deirdre Schulte



"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." - Vincent Van Gogh



Student council accepting donations for prom attire

By Lorraine Glowczak STAFF WRITER

The excitement and anticipation of prom is sweeping through the halls of Windham High School. At the heart of this enthusiasm is the annual Prom Attire Drive created by the WHS Student Council.

Set to coincide with the upcoming prom night on May 4, this project aims to offer a variety of dresses, suits, dress shirts, ties, dress shoes, and jewelry, for students free of charge, turning the dreams of an evening filled with glamour and glitter for every student into reality.

The success of this initiative hinges on the generosity of the Raymond and Windham communities, who, through their support and donations, make a significant impact in creating lasting memories for the students. Community members can bring donations to the WHS main office at 406 Gray Road in Windham, during school hours from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This annual donation event began in 2021 as an effort to return to normal high school activities after the pandemic.

"We wanted to find a way to bring the student body together, returning to some sense of normality," said Molly Plati, a WHS junior and a Student Council representative who helped to start the initiative when she was a freshman. "However, we quickly realized that purchasing prom attire, such as dresses or suits, can be expensive and stressful for some

could attend their Ju- SUBMITTED PHOTO

nior or Senior prom feeling confident and excited."

Vanessa Michaud, WHS Assistant Principal and Student Council Co-Advisor, said that prom clothing, shoes, and accessories have increased in cost over time and the donations from the community will help to eliminate possible barriers to student participation.

"The donated prom dresses and suits will provide all students at WHS an equitable opportunity to attend the prom," she said.

Plati agrees with Michaud, saying that the most essential part of the prom drive is that it allows every stu-



people. Our goal as a The WHS Student Council is conducting its student body was to third annual Prom Attire Drive. From left are make this process a student council members Finn GaNung, Sawyer fun and inviting expe- Grendell, Kate Lopes, Molly Plati, Riley Yates, $^{rience\,for\,all,\,Our\,goal}\,$ and Kirsten Mains. Donations can be left at the was to make every WHS main office, 406 Gray Road in Windham, student feel that they between 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. from now until May 3.

dent to feel included.

"It eliminates the stress of finding an outfit and makes prom a positive experience," she said. "We want to enable every student to feel like a superstar on prom night."

Many students in the past have benefited from the prom drive initiative. While it is true that financial obstacles pose challenges for some students, it's essential to recognize that this isn't always the case and Plati shared one story as an example.

"One of my friends ordered a prom dress, and it came in about two weeks before prom," Plati said. "She quickly figured out it didn't fit and hated how it looked. She was devastated. She went to about every store in southern Maine and could not find a dress that suited her. She looked to the WHS prom drive and found her perfect dress in a matter of 20 minutes."

Page 3

Michaud said students have recognized that this initiative bolsters community spirit and provides a sense of unity among the student population.

"This prom drive culminates into an evening that transcends individual experiences," Michaud said. "It becomes a collective gathering, where every student can come together, celebrate a fun high school experience, and revel in a special night of dancing and laughter that unites them."

Plati said the WHS Student Council appreciates any support from the community and hopes to continue this fun tradition of glamour, creating a night of magic accessible for all students in the years to come.

Clean, gently used, or new prom dresses or suits in all sizes are all acceptable donations. Michaud said that all donated items will be checked by the Student Council students to ensure that they meet the quality and style standards determined by the council.

Donations will be accepted through May 3. <



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Chamber endorses work of 'Walk a Mile in Their Shoes'

cerned about the high number of chil-

dren in state care who suffer abuse and

die at record levels," Mullins said. "We

strongly support the work being done

by Walk a Mile in their Shoes and its

founder, Bill Diamond of Windham.

We want to express our strongest insis-

tence that the Maine Legislature make

the necessary changes to better protect

the children who too often are placed

in unsafe environments by the state."

Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Robin Mullins says that the organization remains committed to fulfill its mission "To foster economic growth and prosperity in the Sebago Lakes Region."

Mullins says that one way to ensure prosperity is to ensure our communities' youngest citizens are well cared for and protected.

"That is why we are so deeply con-

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EMERGENCY COVERAGE AT WARREN AVENUE LOCATION

She said that the Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce encourages the legislators who represent the Sebago Lakes region to stand strong against the continued failures of the child protection system, and it urges other Maine chambers to insist that their legislative delegations also fight to better protect children in state care.

Diamond announced the creation of the Walk a Mile in Their Shoes Foundation in January 2023 and the group is duly filed with the Maine Secretary of State and supported and guided by an advisory board consisting of experts in the field of child protection and welfare.

According to Diamond, the foundation will help prevention of child homicides and the abuse of children who are under the supervision or direct care of the State of Maine or who are or have been associated with the state's Child Protective System.

"Children associated with state care have been dying at record levels, in fact, as recently as 2021 a record number of children died, many were victims of child homicides," Diamond said. "The chilling question is: How many more children must die before we make meaningful changes?"

Diamond said he was first made aware of the issues affecting child homicide in Maine and the state's child protection system in 2001.

"The problems are not partisan based. They are the concern of all of us," Diamond said. "This is the most important thing I've ever been able to do, nothing comes close."

To learn more about the issue, Diamond said he's attended many child-homicide trials and sentencings over the past years and each time he does, he's made aware of the gruesome and sad details of an abused child dying needlessly.

"Each time the fact is reinforced that we have the capabilities to fix our broken child protection system, all we need is the will to do it," he said. "Hence the reason for creating this foundation."

In December, the Walk a Mile in Their Shoes Foundation released a report that found that caseworkers, foster parents, children, and other stakeholders in Maine are left without adequate backing by the Department of Health and Human Services and it examined areas of concern, who is impacted, straightforward solutions, and what success looks like. The report was the culmination of listening sessions and meetings with concerned citizens interested in providing better and safer outcomes for children in Maine's care.

Diamond said it's now up to DHHS to make the necessary changes in their own internal policies and procedures which have been failing children for years and the report offers specific solutions to the problems that we all recognize as serious threats.

"Walk a Mile in Their Shoes (WAM) is extremely proud to have the endorsement and support of the Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce," Diamond said. "They are the first Chamber of Commerce in Maine to publicly speak out about the urgent need to prevent the abuse and deaths of children. The businesses and citizens of the Sebago Lakes region can be very proud of their leadership." <

Pre-K Lottery Registration



Pre-K Program Eligibility Criteria

- Students must be 4 years old by October 15 and are not of kindergarten age
- Submission of a completed Pre-K Lottery Application Form (see rsu14.org for link)



2024-2025

Kindergarten Registration



Kindergarten Program Eligibility Criteria

- Students must be 5 years old by October 15
- Submission of a completed Kindergarten Online Registration (see rsu14.org for link) by May 1, 2024

- Lottery Application Form must be completed and submitted online by April 1, 2024
- In-person screening times for the week of June 17, 2024 will be scheduled with individual families in advance

February 1, 2024 Pre-K Lottery Opens

April 1, 2024: Pre-K Lottery B **Application Due**

April 12, 2024: Pre-K **Admittance Notification**



Pre-K Screening by Appointment in June • In-person screening times for the week of June 17, 2024 will be scheduled with individual families in advance

> February 1, 2024: **Kindergarten Registration Opens**

May 1, 2024: **Kindergarten Registration Due**

Kindergarten Screening by Appointment in June

Questions? Call 207-892-1800 or email: cbertinet@rsu14.org Program forms & info available at: rsu14.org

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Area students care for trout eggs during winter

By Abby Wilson

In the beginning of February, several middle and high schoolers in the region were given a huge responsibility to raise trout from eggs.

Windham Middle School and Jordan-Small Middle School from RSU 14 were among the 20 schools throughout Southern Maine that will take care of these fish for three months.

For over 10 years, the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) and Portland Water District have partnered to help schools raise brook trout. CCSWCD delivers the eggs to schools in the winter, and the students care for the fish as they become fry. Once they are large enough, the students release them into local streams in May.

Chris Loew, District Educator at

CCSWCD, says the program is an "op-

program is an opportunity for kids to get appreciation for local watersheds and rivers." He visits the schools to deliver the eggs but also presents lessons about water quality and the life cycles of the fish to the students.

The program is centered on science and connection to local rivers. It also teaches children about their proximity to freshwater. Within the first few



teaches children about their proximity to freshwater. Within the first few weeks of May, the **Windham Middle School students are caring for brook trout eggs until they can be released in local** waterways. Here they are studying water samples from the Pleasant River, where the fry will be deposited. SUBMITTED PHOTO

students will go out with representatives from CCSWCD and Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to release the trout.

In Windham, the middle school is close enough to the Pleasant River that students will be able to walk there as in previous years.

"Kids may not have otherwise known how close they live to these special water bodies," Loew said. "As we were walking down, we pointed out the things that would impact the health of the water."

About 6,000 eggs have been delivered to schools in Cumberland and York Counties. Middle Schools and High Schools from Saco to North Yarmouth are participating in the program this year.

The project has an obvious educa-> see **TROUT** Page 7



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RSU 14 Technology Director facilitates digital advances, learning opportunities for students

By Ed Pierce STAFF WRITER

Editor's note: This is another in an ongoing series of Windham and Raymond town employee profiles.

For RSU 14's Robert Hickey, continuing advances in technology bring students together while creating opportunities for learning and growth and staying out in front of evolving trends and innovations is something he takes seriously.

Hickey serves as RSU 14's Technology Director and it's a complex position that is much more than just software, data, and computer devices.

"My job is to do everything possible to help technology support the education process," Hickey said. "I supervise an incredible staff which accomplishes technology support of 1:1 computers, iPads and MacBook Airs for all staff and students, plus support financial technology for office users, customized database of data and reports, and a sophisticated network including virtual servers which can support over 3,100 students plus hundreds of staff."

In his role with the school district, he's also responsible for budgeting for resources, researching advanced technology initiatives and trends and works with a collaborative group called the InfoTech Committee consisting of school administrators, teachers, library professionals, tech folks, and many other staff.

"As we move ahead, it is a well-

planned effort incorporating all stakeholders to research and determine which technology trends we should leverage for support of education," Hickey said.

He's worked for RSU 14 for 20 years, having started in 2004 when the newly renovated Windham High School was first opened.

Portland, then grad- servers. SUBMITTED PHOTO

uated from Cheverus High School and went to college at the University of Southern Maine in Portland where he earned two Bachelor of Science degrees in Business Administration and Computer Science.

He says the best part of his job is simple.

"Considering all the technology I deal with, the best thing about my job is the people," Hickey said. "The caring, dedication and positive support for the students, the staff and the community is all a collaborative effort from all RSU staff plus community members. The most important thing I have



ogy is growing at an Robert Hickey is the Tech-Born in Saratoga nology Director for RSU exponential rate and Springs, New York, 14 and has worked for the the current and future Hickey has lived in school district for the past impacts and opportu-Maine most of his life 20 years. He oversees com- nities of things such as and says this is the state puters and tech support artificial intelligence, he loves. He attended amd supervises the districts robotics, cyber securielementary school in datebase and network of ty, and automation are virtually unlimited.

> A common misconception about his work is the assumption that a K-12 School District cannot be that sophisticated.

> "But we're using the same advanced technology that a business with almost 4,000 employees needs to do," Hickey said. "This would include a network with VLANs, remote access, cloud and local data management, customized database reports, helpdesk for students and staff who could have issues with their devices, software, and mobile devices, etc."

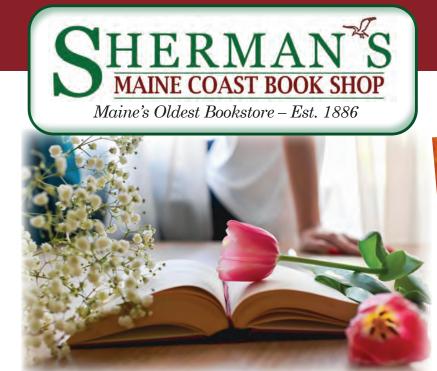
His most memorable moments working for RSU 14 took place during the initial year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It changed everything and evervone. The tech department needed to suddenly begin supporting a large-scale increase of remote access," Hickey said. "RSU 14 remote instruction was spun up by the Curriculum Department working with teachers, technology integrators and many other staff. ZOOM, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams are now common terms and more dependence on cloud-hosted solutions were long term opportunities but were started under the parameters of necessity. The future was thrust upon everyone at an accelerated pace."

Hickey said the public may not be aware that it has really helped him to have a background in technical management, regular programming, programming with web pages, SQL database, and networking to his duties with the school district.

"Although I have a considerable background, I must let folks know that I stand on the shoulders of greatness. I would not be successful without the incredibly talented tech staff, supportive administrators, dedicated teachers and support staff and supportive community members," he said. "And last, but definitely not least, are the students. They are living in the most dynamic time which has ever occurred to any generation in history, and they are doing great things and will continue to do so." <

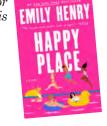
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The Windham Eagle

TROUT Cont. from page 5

tional benefit, but Loew said it is also adding to the aquatic ecosystem as thousands of brook trout are being added to local streams and rivers this spring.

Last year, CCSWCD educated 13 communities and more than 2,100 students at 26 different schools. This includes the trout egg program but also at summer camps and after school programs.

Science education is hands on and allows kids to experience science, Loewe said. Many activities involve problem solving and challenge children to think creatively. Kids complete building projects that pertain to chemical, physical, and biological characteristics in nature.

Recently, students in Windham schools learned the science of healthy water. Loew conducted an in-class activity where students made predictions about the requirements of water health and what fish need to survive.

"Our education program is growing," says Loew. "We are constantly trying to create and develop engaging activities to share with teachers."

The CCSWCD acts a resource to implement science education into the classroom. They write grants, get sponsored by partners, and fundraise for science gear.

"The benefit of us as a resource is that we can supply the materials that teachers can't get access to," Loew said. "For example, the trout program tank chillers can be very pricy pieces of equipment."

When school is out, CCSWCD partners with the City of Portland Parks and Recreation to make regular visits to kindergarten through 5th graders at summer camps.

The youth education catalog includes topics on invasive species, sustainable landscaping practices, soil health, the water cycle and so much more. Science programming also focuses on environmental issues like pollution and climate change.

Educational programs help teachers

bring science to their classrooms, immerse students in natural ecosystems, and engage children in activities that spark curiosity.

"Anytime you can get kids out of the classroom to learn science outdoors, it is a positive thing," Loew said.

Learn more about Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District and their education program at www.cumberlandswcd.org <

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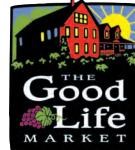


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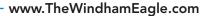
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Page 8

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American Legion seeks Dirigo State high school junior participants

The American Legion Field-Allen Post 148 and the American Legion

Department of Maine are excited to announce that applications are now being accepted for the Dirigo State 2024 program.

This year's Dirigo

State activities will be hosted by Colby College in Waterville from June 16 to June 24. Last year, more than 150 students participated in Dirigo State and American Legion officials would like to double that number this year.

Selected boy and girl candidates from Dirigo State will be offered the opportunity to attend Boys and Girls Nation in Washington, D.C. later in the summer.

Dirigo State is a comprehensive, experiential learning, youth leadership program. It is designed after the Maine State government, where all students come together to create their own town, county, and state governing bodies.

Simply put, Dirigo State is a coed version of Boys State and Girls State, but that's just the start. The American Legion Family redesigned and strengthened both programs into



a unique, first in the nation for the American Legion National Family,

featuring a combined youth government leadership program. The Legion Family feels that combining Boys and Girls State programs provides a better expe-

rience for all students and a more realistic simulation of Maine State government.

Delegates learn the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of franchised citizens. The training is objective and centers on the structure of city, county, and state governments. Operated by students elected to various offices, activities include legislative sessions, court proceedings, law-enforcement presentations, assemblies, bands, and recreational programs.

The Dirigo State program is open to all high school juniors. Windham's Field-Allen Post 148 is looking for junior candidates from local public schools, private schools and the homeschooled community to participate. Individual expenses, except for transportation, are paid by the American Legion Field-Allen post, as well as any local business, parents, the school,



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or another community-based organization that may like to participate can and/or sponsor a student. Par

The Field-Allen American Legion Post 148 will host an information session for interested juniors at 7:30 p.m. April 3 at the Windham High School Guidance Office. Past Dirigo State attendees will also be invited to the meeting to assist in answering questions. Meetings will also be held at the Windham Christian School. For additional info. contact American Legion Post 148 Auxiliary President Pam Whynot at 207-892-4720 or email: pwhynot81719@roadrunner.com or Post 148 Americanism Officer John Facella by email at jafacella@yahoo.com

Applications for Dirigo State are available from your School Guidance Office or you can download and print the information online at https:// mainelegion.org/pages/programs/dirigo-state.php <



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Before the memory fades: Windham's old Province Fort -What did it really look like? Three interpretations

By Walter Lunt

STAFF WRITER

Windham's storied Province Fort (1744 - 1789) has been the topic of legend and lore for well over 200 years. While much is known about the venerable 18th century fortress, built as a refuge from attacks by the local Natives who were aroused by the intrusive cultural practices of English settlers, the precise building design has remained a mystery.

According to Maine Historic Preservation archaeologists, one purpose of the most recent investigation of the fort's site (River Road near the intersection with Anderson Road) was to learn what the ancient fortification



looked like.

One written description exists, contained in an address delivered on July 4, 1839 - the occasion of Windham's 100th birthday - by Thomas Laurens Smith (grandson of the early minister Parson Peter Thatcher Smith): "The fort was fifty feet square, two stories high, with walls one foot thick of hewn hemlock timber, the upper story jutting one foot over the lower with a tier of port holes. There were two watch boxes placed at diagonal corners, two stories high, twelve feet square, with walls one foot thick, each watch box having a swivel gun...so placed as to defend two sides of the fort. The fort was surrounded with a stockade (fence) about 25 or 30 feet from it, made by setting posts ten or twelve inches in diameter, 12 feet long, perpendicularly in the ground, and so near together that "the Indians" could not pass between them."

Laurens Smith, born in 1797, was not old enough to have seen the old fort himself, but may have received first-hand accounts of it from his grandfather. A drawing of the fort by artist Peter Kean, based on the above description, was rendered in 1935 (see figure 1) and included in Frederick Dole's book A History of Windham, Maine - utilized for many years by Windham schools for instruction in 8th grade local and Maine history courses.

-> see HISTORY Page 11



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The Windham Eagle

→ HISTORY Cont. from page 10

The recent archaeological investigations however were unable to produce any proof that the old fort might have included the two flankers or watch boxes; "...such architectural features leave a distinct signature," but the archaeological dig failed to produce the evidence. Also, the investigators dispute the assertion that the fencing surrounding the blockhouse was palisade, or vertical. The archaeologists noted that bedrock would have prevented post holes deep enough to support the posts. Instead, the evidence seemed to indicate the horizontal stacking of logs.

Archaeologists John Mosher and

Leith Smith speculate that the Windham fort may have a great deal in common with the one built around the same time in neighboring Gorham (then called Gorhamtown) as shown in figure 2 and may also help to explain the discrepancy over the watch boxes.

According to Smith, "There isn't a great deal of difference between the two (fort drawings). Both essentially depict a large blockhouse within a wooden palisade with two corner watch boxes." The Gorham fort image, he maintains, aligns (with the Windham fort) if you view and compare the two from angles different than that shown in the drawings.

Architectural designs of New England forts in the 1700s tended to be

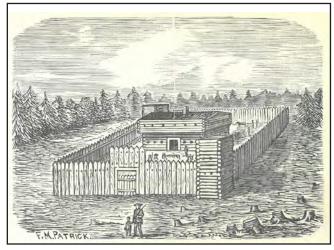


Figure 1: Gorhamtown's Province Fort (1744). May be a closer likeness to Windham's Fort, according to archaeologists. COURTESY PHOTO

only minor changes depending on the unique features of the landscape. Thus, the Gorham depiction is likely a slightly more accurate rendition of Windham's fort. If only someone had drawn a picture of the old fort back in the day when it was still standing. Well, turns out someone did.

standardized, with

Nicholas Anthoine, who settled in

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Windham around 1783, created a map in 1801, showing the late 18th century residential lots along River Road; it featured a rough drawing of the structure situated on lot 34: the Province Fort, many years after it ceased being used for military and defensive purposes (figure 3).

Following the Treaty of Paris (1763) that ended 70 years of on-and-off wars involving the English, French and Native Americans, the settlers of New Marblehead decided to convert the blockhouse into public use. The fencing surrounding the structure was taken down and voters chose to repair the blockhouse and install windows to make it more conducive for meetings and religious services; in effect, the town's first town hall and church.

Anthoine's drawing was a depiction of the blockhouse after its conversion to a public meeting house - archaeologists Smith and Mosher concluded, "Anthoine's ca. 1801 image depicted a two-story, hip-roofed structure with doors and windows on at least one façade, with a chimney offset from center that extended well above the roof peak.

The primary difference between his depiction of the blockhouse and the written versions of (historians) Smith and Dole is that the second floor did not extend a foot beyond the lower in typical garrison fashion. Missing from the illustration are the two watch box-

→ see HISTORY Page 12





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HISTORY Cont. from page 11

es which were separate structures built into the (fencing)."

As stated in the official 2022 archaeologists' report, "The Reverend Peter Thatcher Smith erected a large house and barn adjacent to the fort in 1764-65 and began ordering the remodeling of the former blockhouse to serve as a proper house of worship. One of the flankers was reportedly converted to serve as a school house. By 1790 the fort structures were no longer needed. Abraham Anderson, Jr. acquired the fort at public auction and removed its timbers."

This is the final of a two-part series on the findings of archaeologists from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, conducted over several years, at the site of Windham's Province Fort on River Road, and described in a 378page report released in August, 2022.

The authors summarized and concluded their report this way: "Despite four seasons of intensive excavations at the site, much of the Province Fort remains archaeologically unknown, for it lies outside the (area investigated). Remote sensing, walk-over survey, and random shovel test pitting have identified potential features, including the hypothesized locations of the north palisade, the northeast flanker/schoolhouse, and the main gate. Untested is a broad area of east lawn taken up in part by the (Parson) Smith House leach field and the back and side yards of the house. All told, there is an estimated 5,000 square meters around the house that likely contain activity

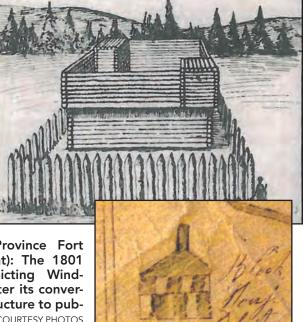
areas associated with the Fort and of the Parson Smith occupation. These deposits await future archaeologists with new questions and new techniques."

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Next time, local tensions that contributed to the outbreak of the French and Indian wars. <

Figure 2 (Above): Artist's 1935 rendering of the New Mar-

blehead (Windham) Province Fort (1744). Figure 3 (Right): The 1801 Anthoine sketch depicting Windham's Province Fort after its conversion from defensive structure to public venue in the 1760s. COURTESY PHOTOS



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TOWN OF RAYMOND, MAINE

PLANNING BOARD **PUBLIC MEETING** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 • 7:00 PM **Broadcast Studio - 423 Webbs Mills Road** and Via ZOOM

The Town of Raymond Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 in accordance with Article 7 of the Land Use Ordinance, Article 2(3) of the Subdivision Ordinance, and 30-A MRSA §4352 for the purpose of receiving public input on

proposed amendments for the following ordinances: • 24-01: Building Construction Ordinance - Chapter 400 Creation of an ordinance clarifying the town's adopted codes. No substantial changes are proposed.

• 24-02: Land Use Ordinance § 300-9.26. - Accessory Dwelling Units Land Use Ordinance § 300-12.2. - Terms Defined Shoreland Zoning Ordinance § 350-6.27. - Accessory Dwelling Units Shoreland Zoning Ordinance § 350-8.2. - Terms Defined

Amendments to maintain consistency with LD 2003, 30-A M.R.S. § 4364-B.

24-03: Land Use Ordinance § 300-4.6. – Commercial District (C) Allow multifamily dwellings in the Commercial District

• 24-04: Land Use Ordinance § 300-13.3 – General Requirements Land Use Ordinance § 300-12.2. – Terms Defined

Creation of an affordable housing density bonus within Open Space Subdivisions

• 24-05: Land Use Ordinance § 300-9.27 – Solar Energy Systems Amendment to provide additional buffering from abutting residential uses.

• 24-06: Land Use Ordinance § 300-3 - Conformance with ordinance Land Use Ordinance § 300-12.2 - Terms defined

Minor amendments to clarify and correct the ordinance.

• 24-07: Land Use Ordinance § 300-2.2. - Land Use Regulation Map Shoreland Zoning Ordinance § 350-2.1. - Districts and Zoning Map *An amendment to the Land Use Regulation/Zoning Map to rezone two specific areas in town.*

Windham Residents **TAX PAYMENT REMINDER!**



All persons liable to pay Property Taxes in the Town of Windham are notified that the second installment of taxes will be due Monday, April 1, 2024.

Failure to pay the tax on or before April 1, 2024 will render the tax delinquent, and interest will be charged at the rate of 8% per annum from the due date. FMI 207-892-2511

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- 2.) Make a payment in Town Office: M/W 7-5, Tues 7-6, Th 7-4
- 3.) Use the drop box at the Town Office, available 24/7
- Online at windhammaine.us under Tax Collection Dept.* *Fees will apply

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TOWN OF RAYMOND, MAINE

PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING Broadcast Studio - 423 Webbs Mills Road

and Via ZOOM

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 • 7:00 PM

You are hereby notified that the Raymond Planning Board will hold a meeting at the Raymond Broadcast Studio and via Zoom on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 7:00 pm on the following matters:

PUBLIC HEARING - SITE PLAN REVIEW

APPLICANT: Allen Solar, LLC LOCATION: Map: 004 Lot: 68 & 68A Zone RR & LRR1 **Roosevelt Trail DESCRIPTION:** Proposed 996 kWac ground mounted solar power generation facility

• 24-08: Floodplain Management Ordinance for the Town of Raymond Repeal and replace the existing outdated ordinance to maintain mandatory compliance.

• 24-09: Business License Ordinance Amendments to existing Business License Ordinance

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87884881304?pwd=dkUvajdJYVBIS1BKcF NiTGVjK1hidz09 Meeting ID: 878 8488 1304 Passcode: 8TzvmZ

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Meeting ID: 878 8488 1304 Passcode: 529310 Find your local number: https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kWY1VHWRu

The meeting will be streamed in real time from the local Government channel. This live stream is also hosted on YouTube www. raymondmaine.org/content/live-video-streaming), so make sure your computer or router/firewall does not block YouTube content.

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WHS collects art supplies for Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG)

also

By Jolene Bailey STAFF WRITER

Many unfortunate tragedies can happen around us. However, to bring light of hardships in situations, peo-

ple can bring joy passions and to hobbies. To that Windham end. High School's JMG class is hosting an art supply drive in honor of Miranda Travers, the late daughter of a longtime integral JMG employee.

Travers had passed away young

and staff members ployers. COURTESY IMAGE

involved with JMG, the art drive is a way to show appreciation for all that they do and the love for executing that.

Jen Dumont has been a JMG specialist for 10 years, of which eight years have been spent at Windham High School in the position of the 9-12 JMG Core Specialist.

"JMG classes are smaller than typical high school classes. There are 12 to 15 students in each class, JMG 9/10 and JMG 11/12 sections. The foundation of JMG is built on establishing positive relationships," said Dumont. "We focus on a myriad of social-emo-



at the age of 35, JMG serves 12,000+ students in but had a strong all 16 Maine counties with more pursue meaningful passion for art. In than 150 programs delivered in careers. honor of the com- partnership with Maine's public mitment of families schools, colleges, and 500+ em- randa, we are ask-

ing for donations of art supplies for our WHS Alternative Pathways luxury closet. Don't let the name fool you, there isn't anything luxurious about it, but it is certainly a luxury to be able to provide essential items for our students," Dumont said. "This is a shared space in which the teachers of our alternative programs provide much needed supplies for students, including paper, markers, colored pencils, paint, poster board, and journals."

tional and practical life skills that en-

able students to develop leadership,

team building, self-advocacy and

communication skills, all the while

growing in self-awareness and confi-

dence."

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students graduate,

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ary credentials, and

"In honor of Mi-

The majority of supplies that JMG students use on a regular basis are typically purchased or acquired by the teachers themselves throughout

the year. In many cases, these supplies are needed in the middle of the school year as much as at the beginning because supplies can be commonly lost and misplaced.

Windham's JMG class leadership council eagerly initiated this art supplies drive as soon as they heard about it because as a council it is their mission to look for meaningful ways to make a difference.

"The JMG Leadership Council consists of 20 juniors and seniors who have been in JMG for at least two years," Dumont said. "We meet weekly to focus on community service opportunities and civic responsibility. It is a tight-knit group of students who enjoy giving back to the community and fostering positivity here at WHS."

JMG is a statewide nonprofit that works within Maine's public schools to help students reach their fullest potential. There is currently a donation box outside the JMG classroom at Windham High, however donations can be dropped off at the main office during school hours for the JMG Art Supply Drive, in care of Jennifer Dumont. <



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Jordan-Small's student-staff basketball game a fun tradition

By Matt Pascarella **STAFF WRITER**

It's been a tradition at Jordan-Small Middle School (JSMS) in Raymond since 2003 that before February vacation, the school celebrates the end of the basketball season with a friendly student-staff game. This year on Friday, Feb. 16, JSMS staff members, students and coaches gathered in the gym to keep the tradition alive with coed staff teams playing 20- to 25-minute games against the school's girls' basketball team and then the boys' basketball team.

"The purpose of the game is to celebrate the end of the season using the staff game as a culminating event," said John Powers, who helped organize the event as well as teaches sixth and eighth-grade math at JSMS. "The entire school attends and they spend the time cheering on their friends and favorite teachers. We keep score but the game is friendly. It's fairly common for staff or students to give each other high fives when the other team makes a great play. I have personally played in the game every year since 2003 and it's always a ton of fun."

One of the benefits of the games is the whole school

able to attend games during basketball season, this gives them the opportunity to see the results and all the hard work that the athletes put in.

Powers said the game has that oldschool pep rally feel to it. Getting the







Age: 10

Team: Windham 5th grade girls' travel team Sport: Basketball Coach: Chris Sargent Parents' names: Craig and Katie Dickson Reason for selection: Kelenese is the leader of the Windham 5th Grade girls' travel basketball team. She's an elite scorer and a very aggressive player. She works very hard and always has a smile on her face. She is well-liked by her teammates and coaches because of her exceptional team spirit and willingness to listen and efforts to improve. Kelense is a born leader who plays tough defense and wants to win.



getting to see (L to R) Jordan-Small Middle School sixth and eighth grade math teacher John Powers their athletes in dribbles past a student opponent in the student-staff basketball game on Friday, Feb. 16 at action. As not Jordan Small Middle School in Raymond. Eighth grader Brooklyn Roy races to the basket. every student is Eighth grader Sean Lebel travels toward the hoop. PHOTOS BY GARY HARRIMAN

> entire school together for a friendly competition is a great way to spend the final hour before February vacation, he said.

> He grew up playing basketball through high school and always enjoyed it. He's been coaching at JSMS for many years and says while it's fun for the adults to compete against the students, it's also fun to be on a team with colleagues doing something they often don't get to do.

> One of the highlights for Powers this year was JSMS eighth grader Sean Lebel, who made a deep three-pointer from just over half court. The crowd went wild and everyone on the court celebrated with high fives.

> "As a student-athlete playing in the game, I was just trying to score on the teachers as much as possible," said JSMS graduate and boys' basketball coach Andrew Wing. "You really wanted to beat the

staff because it has never happened before. As an alum-coach playing in the game, you are simply trying to not get embarrassed by the talented young student athletes and you also don't want to be the students."

According to Wing, the game is important not only because it's a tradition, but it's fun for the student athletes.

For Wing, playing with the teachers instead of the students was a nice full-circle moment.

The games were also meaningful for the student athletes.

The thing that I like most about the game is that you are able to play against teachers and staff members that you have formed relationships with over the past few years," said Sean Lebel. "The student-staff game gives you an opportunity to have fun and bond with the people and players around you. It is a great experience to have the whole school watching you while you play basketball. Everybody in the crowd cheers both teams on and always stays positive even if somebody makes mistakes." <



first staff team Students and staff high five each other after the that loses to the student-staff JSMS basketball game.



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The Windham Eagle

Page 15

Senior Perkins signs to play lacrosse at Coast Guard Academy

By Matt Pascarella

STAFF WRITER

There was a big turnout of support at Windham High School on Tuesday, March 12 for senior Tobias Perkins' commitment signing to attend the Coast Guard Academy where he will major in business management and leadership and play college lacrosse. Everyone who spoke about Perkins emphasized the fact that he is a leader on and off the field.

"It means a lot," said Perkins. "Seeing teachers all the way from Primary School to now and to see how many people have impacted me throughout my life to get to this point is amazing. It shows hard work pays off and definitely shows how important the academic side of things are. When you do well in the classroom it's another example of what a good outcome can be."

Perkins loves contact sports and says he began playing lacrosse in the third grade. He wanted to stop playing T-Ball because it wasn't exciting enough and asked if he could play lacrosse. His father signed him up and Perkins would watch the high school lacrosse players practice and play when he was in the sixth grade. Since then, every spring he's looked forward to taking the field and the memories he's made on every single team he's been a part of have been incredible.

Athletics has taught Perkins a lot of life lessons like hard work, perseverance, humility, how to battle through adversity and how to be a leader. For him, playing three different sports with



Tegan Perkins (left), Matt Perkins, Windham senior Tobias Perkins and Melissa Perkins gather at Windham High School on Tuesday, March 12 as Tobias signed a commitment letter to attend the Coast Guard Academy and play lacrosse while majoring in business management and leadership. PHOTO BY MATT PASCARELLA

While Perkins is unsure of what he would like to do with a business management and leadership degree after college, he would like to be involved with stopping human and drug trafficking.

His advice to anyone who wants to someday be a part of a college commitment signing is to do the best you can in the classroom, work hard on and off the field and doors will

different skill levels makes you adjust your leadership style.

"It's Tobias who has spoken for years about what to do and how to do it the right way," said Windham varsity lacrosse coach Peter Small. "When I think back to Tobias coming up to the lacrosse field as a middle school kid and watching and learning and playing and leaning right into lacrosse, there's an innate leadership ability within Tobias ... he sees the good, he sees the bad, he analyzes it and says this is how we then carry it forward. Watch what people do when they're off-ball, or not highlighted, and that's the true character of Tobias; he's lifting everybody up around him. It's a model for what we want of student athletes."

During past summers Perkins has been playing in a variety of lacrosse showcases and tournaments and has been talking with different coaches. When he was in Pennsylvania, he introduced himself to an individual and they got to talking and Perkins was unaware this was the Coast Guard Academy's lacrosse coach.

That coach wanted to attend some of Perkins' games and liked what he saw. He then saw Perkins play in a tournament and invited Perkins to visit the Coast Guard Academy, as serving in the military has been something he's always wanted to do. open.

"He's definitely a leader," said Windham senior and teammate Finn Smith. "I've looked up to him all my sports career; he's always trying to get the best out of you. I've become a better lacrosse player because of him. It's a privilege to have him as a teammate."

According to Smith, Perkins will bring skills and goals to the Coast Guard Academy lacrosse team. Perkins will definitely have a leadership role and his teammates will look up to him.

Perkins said he would like to thank his friends, family, teachers, coaches and most importantly his parents. <



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CONTEST Cont. from page 1

from March 2 through March 6 and Seavey's parents accompanied her to the event.

"I learned so much from this trip. The most important thing that I learned is to not be afraid to try new www.TheWindhamEagle.com things," Seavey said. "Submitting my essay to this contest opened the door for an incredible, life-changing experience that I will never forget. I was also able to learn incredible things about our nation's history by visiting memorials in Washington D.C." ship she earned Seavey received winning the M racy and she also from the Wind at the local leve She said she'

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WON'T LAST LONG! Contact Leasing Agents Erin Levesque & Jillian Gumb Real Estate 2000 ME/NH 207-503-8933 • rentals@realestate2000menh.com ship she earned at the national level, Seavey received a \$750 scholarship for winning the Maine Voice of Democracy and she also earned a \$200 check from the Windham VFW for her win at the local level last November.

She said she's considering using the scholarships she received for further education after she graduates from Southern Maine Community College.

VFW Post 10643 Commander Willie Goodman said he is impressed by how well Seavey represented Windham in the state and national competitions and very proud of what she has been able to accomplish.

"This year our VFW Post 10643 was thrilled to have chosen Anna Seavey to represent our post and move on



to the district level. Anna then won at that level which meant she moved on to compete at the state level," Goodman said. "We were ecstatic that Anna won, which meant she would be representing the State of Maine in a fourday all expenses paid trip for her and her parents to Washington, D.C."

Goodman did not attend the festivities in Washington earlier this month, but said he watched it online and was impressed watching Anna march in with Maine's VFW State Commander.

"Anna is a delightful young woman with an engaging personality and I'm sure this was an experience of a lifetime for her and her parents," Goodman said. "They must be so proud of Anna, the person she is, the essay she wrote and in her delivery. Clearly, Anna is on her way to an extremely bright future and our post thanks her for her participation in our annual essay contest and allowing us to be a part of this incredible journey." <

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Tech trends: Reshaping real estate

By Lisa DiBiase special to the windham eagle



Buying a home today looks very different than how our previous generations used to buy their houses. Nowadays, most people probably start

- Lisa DiBiase, Broker/Owner Landing Real Estate their search on-

line and get pre-approved online. They might even view the home online and close remotely.

The power of data in real estate

Easier access: Previously, accessing real estate data often required physical visits to real estate offices or reliance on printed listings in newspapers or magazines. Today, real estate data is widely accessible online through various platforms, including real estate websites, mobile apps, and property listing portals. This increased accessibility has empowered consumers to research

properties more easily and make more informed decisions.

More information: In addition to basic property information such as price, size, and location, today's real estate data includes a wide range of additional details, such as property history, neighborhood demographics, school ratings, crime statistics, and even environmental factors. This wealth of data enables buyers, sellers, and real estate professionals to conduct more comprehensive analyses and evaluations.

Other technology: Real estate data is increasingly being integrated with other emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and drones. VR and AR technologies allow buyers to take virtual property tours and visualize properties in immersive 3D environments, while drones enable aerial photography for property inspections and site surveys. These technologies enhance the marketing appeal of properties and provide stakeholders with new perspectives for decision-making.

Impacts of VR technology

Technology has changed the real estate industry, reshaping traditional practices and introducing different solutions that enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. One in particular and widely used in today's listings are virtual reality (VR) tours which stand out as transformative tools with profound impacts on how properties are viewed and ultimately bought and sold.

Virtual reality tours have redefined the property viewing experience. Prospective buyers can now explore properties from the comfort of their homes, immersing themselves in virtual environments that offer a walk through experience of the space. This not only saves time and travel costs but also enables buyers to envision themselves living or working in the property be-

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fore making a physical visit. Real estate agents benefit from VR tours by reaching a wider audience and providing more engaging presentations of their listings.

Recent real estate journey

Last week I sold a home to an outof-state couple which marked a departure from the traditional real estate process. It began with the couple viewing property listing online through our automated email search system, instantly captivated by the property and location. Despite residing miles away, their interest was piqued, prompting them to delve deeper. There was an open house that weekend which initiated showings, including a deadline for offers the following week. With great anticipation that this was their perfect home, they flew to Maine to view the property. Instantly they knew this was

→ see **REAL ESTATE** Page 20

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Ed's Amazing Chicken Barbecue Sandwich

Here's a perfect and simple meal that the entire family can enjoy for lunch or dinner. It's a snap to prepare and requires little cleanup afterward. The ingredients are not expensive and may already be in your freezer, kitchen cupboard and refrigerator. This recipe makes for a tangy and tasty sandwich that can be prepared quickly or in advance if you're busy, getting ready for a day's work or entertaining guests on a weekend. The crockpot does all the cooking, and all you have left to do is sit back and enjoy the delicious results.

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds of boneless and skinless chicken breasts 1 cup of your favorite barbecue sauce 1/4 of a cup of Italian salad dressing

1/4 cup of brown sugar 1 tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce 1 package of sandwich buns

INSTRUCTIONS

Season chicken breast lightly with sea salt and place in bottom of crockpot. In a mixing bowl, blend the barbecue sauce, Italian salad dressing, brown sugar and Worcestershire sauce and stir thoroughly. Pour the mixture over the chicken in the crockpot, cover and cook on low temperature setting for 6 hours. Remove chicken from crockpot and place in mixing bowl. Shred chicken and then return it to crockpot and stir with a wooden spoon in crockpot. Cook shredded chicken in barbecue sauce in crockpot on high temperature for 15 minutes.

SERVING

Scoop shredded chicken out of crockpot and place in large bowl. Spoon the shredded chicken onto sandwich buns and serve with a side dish of rice, coleslaw or potato chips and a bowl of fresh fruit. Serves 6

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It's a magical time of year for Hilltop Boilers Maple Syrup in Newfield and as the popular business gets ready for their annual Maine Maple Weekends™ starting this Saturday, there's never been a better time to experience what the award-winning business has to offer.

Owned and operated by the Bryant Family, Hilltop Boilers at 159 Elm Street in Newfield takes pride in its exceptional maple products and making it worth your while every time you visit. Its unique sugarhouse is worth the drive and until you've tasted genuine maple syrup produced by Hilltop Boilers, you're missing out on one of the sweetest tastes in Maine.

"When we were teenagers, we started tapping trees along the roadside," said Michael Bryant, one of the co-owners of Hilltop Boilers along with his brother Mark Bryant and their wives. "Neither of us had a license to drive but we pushed a hand dolly up and down the road with a little sap tank on it. We built our first sugarhouse in high school and added on to it in the late 1990s. In 2017, we flattened that sugarhouse and built a new modern one. Since we moved into that building, we have grown unbelievably and aren't sure what we are going to do next. Our sales tripled in 2023 from what they were the year before COVID. We desperately need a bigger sugarhouse and more space."

It's truly a family business as Michael and Mark's brother, Matthew,

*Online



also works a lot of hours for Hilltop Boilers. Michael's wife Jen works full-time for the business and Bryant kids, John (17), and twins Thomas and Julia (14) work as much as they can outside of school for them.

"We are a sugarunlike any farm store COURTESY PHOTO

you will find in Maine with high end cabinetry, a model train, heating and air conditioning, high ceilings, and awesome décor," Michael Bryant said. "We see tens of thousands of visitors through our store each year. We also deliver syrup to restaurants in southern Maine, some well-known ones too. Places like Becky's and the Miss Portland Diner get regular deliveries. We work with Goodwill stores and have maple booths in all of their southern



house that provides Hilltop Boilers in Newfield our customers with is an award-winning maple Box of Maine, The all things maple. We destination for Maine maple Scone Goddess, and have a retail store that fans around southern Maine. Coastal Maine Pophas been voted 'Best They have four free event corn, to supply them of the 207' for two days happening this month with maple products years in a row. It is with something for everyone. as an ingredient for

their products. We have a large online presence and ship maple products all over the United States with California, Florida, and Texas being our three largest states we ship to, outside of Maine."

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What sets Hilltop Boilers apart from other Maine maple producers is its year-round presence, highly competitive prices and an amazing sugarhouse store.

"Until you have been there, it's just really hard to imagine how nice it is,"

Bryant said. "The atmosphere and building are just beautiful. The scent of maple in the air, the cows in the pasture, it leaves you begging for more. Everyone cares and will work hard to see that you have a positive experience."

Online reviews are fantastic.

"Quality and service are absolutely the best!!!" Dyanne Brewster

"Wonderful setting, friendly folks, delicious products. Don't leave without some syrup, whoopie pies and maple mustard. You'll see why they are award winners!" Bev Giddens

"Everything they do is done 'just right' with a personal touch. High quality products created by a high-quality Maine family. I highly recommend Hilltop Boilers!" Nancy Marshall

The First Maple Event Day will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 16, with hours on Maine Maple Weekend from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 23 and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, March 24. Another Maple Weekend will be offered from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 30. Plenty of quiet store days for those who just want to browse and shop in the Maple Store are generally from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays and noon to 3 p.m. Sundays, with the exception of Maine Maple Weekend and on Easter.

To learn more about Hilltop Boilers Maple Syrup, visit www.hilltopboilersmaplesyrup.com or call 207-793-8850. Find them on Facebook under Hilltop Boilers Maple Syrup. <



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REAL ESTATE Cont. from page 17

the property. With intentions and a strong offer, they went under contract.

Despite the geographical distance, the couple remained undeterred in their pursuit. Through the convenience of current technology, they embarked on a journey of remote negotiations and virtual inspections. Each pixelated image and video call brought them closer to their dream of owning this piece of paradise.

As the transaction progressed, there may have been an absence of physical presence, however it was replaced by a digital thread weaving through emails, documents, and electronic signatures. The once-familiar rituals of sitting across the closing table, customary handshakes and exchanged keys and sharing aspirations were not exchanged. Instead, in the comfort of their home state, the couple finalized the deal and signed remotely. Despite departing from the traditional route, all parties involved expressed satisfaction with the collaborative effort that led them to the closing table.

Although there was the absence of a physical closing, the journey was rich with shared determination and mutual understanding. As the out-of-state couple officially became the new owners of their dream home, they were reminded that in today's world, distance is no match for dedication and collaboration. And though they hadn't sat together at a traditional closing table, the bonds forged through this unconventional process were just as strong, carrying the promise of future adventures in their new home.

As technology continues to advance, its potential to revolutionize the real estate industry further remains limitless, promising a future where buying and selling can be more efficient, accessible, and innovative than ever before.

As I have said before, please call a local REALTOR[®] for all your real estate needs no matter how big or small. We are trained professionals here to make your life easier. It's best to surround yourself with the right team of professionals that can continuously give you the right advice for all your circumstances.

This article was brought to you by Lisa DiBiase, Broker/Owner for Landing Real Estate. She and her company represent buyers and sellers in the Greater Portland area and surrounding areas. For all your real estate needs reach out to Lisa at lisa@landinghomesmaine.com or call 207-775-SOLD. < Celebrating a century



State Rep. Barbara Bagshaw recently recognized Connie Parisi for reaching her 100th birthday. Parisi lives in Windham with her daughter and son-in-law. The public recognition came in the form of a Legislative Sentiment from the 131st Maine Legislature and the People of Maine. It was sponsored by Rep. Bagshaw and co-sponsored by State Rep. Pringle (D-Windham). 'Connie Parisi, who lives on Little Sebago Lake, turned 100 the same year the Little Sebago Lake Association is celebrating its 100th year anniversary,' Bagshaw said. 'I am so pleased that the Legislature and people of the State of Maine chose to recognize her for reaching this milestone.' SUBMITTED PHOTO



BRIEFS

St. Patrick's Day Dinner

The American Legion Field-Allen Post 148 is hosting a St. Patrick's Day Dinner from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, March 16 at the Windham Veterans Center to support the post's youth programs. The meal includes corned beef, cabbage, ham, potatoes, onions, carrots, rutabaga, desserts and beverages. Admission is \$10. Kids under 12 eat for free. FMI, call 207-892-1306.

Anime Club

The Anime Club for students ages 12 and up will meet from 3 to 5 p.m. Tues-

day, March 19 at the Windham Public Library, 217 Windham Center Road. Participants will watch and discuss anime and make a craft. No advance signup is necessary. Project supplies are on a first-come, first-serve basis. FMI, email: Cassandra at cclull@windhammaine.us

Land Use Workshop

Raymond residents are invited to participate in a Future Land Use Workshop sponsored by the Comprehensive Plan Committee at the Public Safety Building, 1443 Roosevelt Trail from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 19. FMI, 207-655-4742.

Blood Drive

The American Red Cross will conduct a blood drive from noon to 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 20 at the Windham Veterans Center, 35 Veteran's Memorial Drive in Windham. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767.

Pie Supper

The Casco Village Church, United Church of Christ will host its "Pie" Saturday Night Supper from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on March 23 at the church, 941 Meadow Road in Casco. Dinner will feature all pies including pizza, chicken, pork, beef, spaghetti, and Shepherd's. There will also be salads and desserts and more pies. Cost is \$12 for adults, and \$5 for children ages 8 and under. FMI, call 207-627-4282.

Thrift Shop

The North Windham Union Church UCC Thrift Shop at 723 Roosevelt Trail in Windham across from the fire station is open from 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Come shop and find bargains on clothing, sheets, fleece fabric, household items, children's items, books, puzzles, and more.







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