

Summertime in the Belgrades



... Serving the Central Maine Lakes & Kennebec River Corridor

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 5

MIFF at 29: More Films Than Ever!

by Gregor Smith

It's that time again — time for Waterville's annual celebration of all things cinematic. The 29th Annual Maine International Film Festival opens on Friday, July 10 and runs through Sunday, July 19. Back in 1998, when MIFF's founders boldly announced their "first annual" festival and obtained letters of endorsement from the mayor of Waterville, the governor of Maine, and three members of the state's congressional delegation, they could scarcely have imagined that their passion project would still be going strong — stronger than ever — nearly three decades later.

This year, MIFF is proud to present over 100 movies from 44 countries and representing nearly a century of filmmaking. To be precise, there will be 70 feature films and 42 shorts, not counting the student-made shorts to be screened during the Maine Student Film + Video Festival on MIFF's second Saturday.

Festival screenings will take place in the three cinemas on the second floor of the Paul J. Schupf Art Center at 93 Main Street in Waterville and in the adjoining Waterville Opera House. Except where otherwise noted, screenings described in this article will be held in the Opera House during the festival's first seven days.

Highlights of the festival's first week include achievement awards to be presented to three veteran filmmakers, the Maine premiere of filmed-in-Bangor teen drama, the world premiere of a partially-made-in-Waterville documentary about coffee, presentations of two other Maine-related feature films, and screenings of a few neglected classic films.

The festival will open at 6:30 Friday with *Their*

Town, a tender coming-of-age story set and shot in Bangor. In the film, Abby (Ora Duplass) is looking forward to costarring in a high school production of



A Maine original: *Their Town*, filmed in Bangor.



An International Visual Legend: Mandarin-language *Jou Dou*

Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* with her beau, when he suddenly drops out and is replaced by lonely stage-

hand Matt (Chosen Jacobs). During a nightlong ramble through nearly deserted city streets, she and Matt get to know each other and realize that they have more in common than they first realized.

The festival will also premiere three other, new, made-in-Maine feature films — *Downeast Hardcore: Stories From the Kave*, *In Transit*, and *Mallory's Ghost* — as well as two compilations of new Maine short films. Since, however, none of those features or shorts will screen until the festival's last few days, we'll save further discussion of them until next week. In the mean time, there are two Maine-connected features you may want to see.

First is a new documentary that follows fathers of transgender and non-binary children, as they confront their preconceptions of masculinity and fatherhood. Filmed in various locations during a turbulent year, *The Dads* includes scenes shot in Bangor and on Jo Mary Lake, east of Millinocket. Given the recent Supreme Court decision allowing states to bar transgender girls from girls sports teams and the possible referendum on Maine's November ballot to repeal the parts of the Maine Human Rights Acts that ensure that transgender students can play on teams of athletes of their new gender, the film is very timely. It has screenings Sunday at 6:20 in Cinema 3 and Wednesday at 9:40 in Cinema 2.

Second is *The Whales of August*, the 1987, Oscar-winning classic starring screen legends Bette Davis and Lillian Gish as two elderly, widowed sisters sharing a cottage on the Maine coast. Based on the eponymous play and shot on Cliff Island in Casco Bay, the film is being

Continued on page 2



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Continued from page 1

shown in honor of producer Mike Kaplan on Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the Opera House.

Closer to home, local audiences will appreciate "Ikawa: Coffee That Connects" on Sunday at 1:00. Created jointly by students in Waterville, Maine, and Kigali, Rwanda, this 18-minute documentary demonstrates that coffee is not just a warm, comforting beverage, but a source of connection across cultures and continents. Sponsored by Mid-Maine Global Forum, admission to this screening is free. Afterwards, there will be a question-and-answer session with some of the filmmakers and a reception featuring Rwandan delicacies.

This year MIFF will, for the first time ever, present achievement awards to three filmmakers. In the past, the festival has given one, or occasionally two, awards per year. This year's winners are producer Christine Vachon, writer and director Alan Rudolph, and producer and longtime festival supporter Mike Kaplan. Each will be honored in a separate ceremony at 7:00 p.m. in the Opera House. The ceremonies will take place two nights apart, starting with Vachon's on Sunday and ending with Kaplan's on Thursday. A screening of one of the honoree's films will accompany each award presentation, and a reception at a downtown Waterville restaurant will follow. In order, the films are *Past Lives* (2023), *Choose Me* (1984), and *The Whales of August* (1987), and the restaurants are Cushnoc Cantina, Opa, and Amici's Cucina.

Finally, the festival will screen five, unjustly overlooked older films, most of them in sparkling, digital



Oldies: Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn in *Keeper of the Flame*, 1942

restorations. These "rediscoveries" include *Keeper of the Flame* (1942), the second-ever pairing of Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy, in which Hepburn portrays the widow of a war hero who died in a car crash and Tracy his would-be hagiographer (Sat., 12:00, Cinema 1); *Queen Kelly* (1929), the unfinished, silent epic starring glamour girl Gloria Swanson and financed by her then-boyfriend Joseph P. Kennedy, the future father of a U.S. president and two U.S. senators (Wed., 3:00, Cinema 1); and *Nashville* (1975), director Robert Altman's musical love letter to that city, with interwoven storylines and 24 main actors including past MIFF honorees Keith Carradine and Michael Murphy (Wed., 7:00). To learn more about these rediscoveries as well as the other two, *Ju Dou* (1991, China) and *Four Nights of a Dreamer* (1971, France), please consult the festival's catalog or website.

There will be, of course, much more going on at the festival than we could ever hope to describe in one article, or even two or three. Thus, we encourage you to explore the festival's website, www.miff.org, on your own or to read its 68-page catalog, which is available at the Schupf Center and many other places around the area. Even if none of the films described above pique your interest — How could that be possible? — you're bound to find some other festival offering that does. Moreover, except for *The Dads*, all of these films mentioned in this article will be shown only once, so plan ahead to make sure you don't miss something you want to see.

Except where otherwise noted, admission to festival screenings costs \$15 per person. For \$250, you may purchase a non-transferable, full-festival pass, which will admit you to as many screenings as you can watch. If you're less ambitious, you can buy a "10-Pass" for \$125, which is good for ten admissions, up to two per screening, for you and a guest.

All holders of full and ten-admission passes can reserve tickets to any screening by going to www.miff.org, by visiting the festival's ticket counter on the first floor of the Schupf Center, or by calling 873-7000. Reservations are recommended, especially if you want to attend a screening in either of the smaller theaters, Cinema 2 (43 seats) or Cinema 3 (22 seats), where some screenings are bound to sell out. Even with reservations, be sure to arrive at least 20 minutes before the screening starts, or you may forfeit your reservation.



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A Big Tent in the Woods: How Unlikely Allies Are Saving Maine's Wild Places



Too often, when people in Maine hear the word “conservation,” they picture a locked gate and new restrictions: no hunting, no logging, no snowmobiles, no ATVs. They imagine wild places “saved” only by shutting out the families and traditions that have used them for generations.

The High Peaks Alliance was built on a different idea. Since 2007, our membership has included hunters and birders, loggers and hikers, ATV and snowmobile clubs, fly fishermen, Maine Guides, and mountain bikers. These are people who might disagree on plenty at town meeting but who all agree on one thing: the wild places of the High Peaks need to stay wild and open for the next generation.

The Belgrade Lakes region knows this spirit well. Year-round residents, longtime summer people and new arrivals, boaters and anglers, all share the same lakes and the same understanding that this special place only stays special if everyone who loves it helps protect it.

That same instinct lives in the High Peaks, just a little farther northwest. There, too, the mountains, rivers, and trails are the common ground. Keeping them wild and accessible takes a broad coalition willing to defend them against development, neglect, and the quiet loss of access when land changes hands.

Maine has less public land than almost any other state in the Northeast, only Rhode Island has less. Most of what looks wild on the map is privately owned. That tradition of open access isn’t automatic. It has to be earned and renewed by the people who use and love the land.

If you’ve spent summers on the Belgrade Lakes, you already understand what’s at stake. The High Peaks Alliance is doing the same work a little farther up the map, with the same respect for traditional uses and the same focus on keeping places open for the people who cherish them.

The High Peaks Alliance works to conserve land and ensure public access across Maine’s High Peaks region. Visit highpeaksalliance.org to learn more and sign up for our newsletter for updates on conservation, access, and ways to get involved. Learn more at HighPeaksAlliance.org.



Summertime in the Belgrades

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This Land is Your Land

by Brynne Robbins, 7 Lakes Alliance Outreach Coordinator



One of 7 Lakes Alliances' newest properties, the 270-acre Dunn Road Conservation Area

Whether you're visiting the Belgrade Lakes region for the weekend or you're a lifelong resident, there's a good chance you've driven past either a trailhead or areas of conserved land. Maine's lakes region boasts a myriad of conserved land plots, including state-owned, owned by a land trust, or held under a conservation easement, and many are accessible for the public to enjoy.

7 Lakes Alliance is often thought of as a water protection organization, but it is also built on a long history of protecting the land, in addition to the water quality, of the Belgrade Lakes watershed. Conserved land provides a filter for the water running downhill to the lakes and streams. Nutrients and sedi-

ments disturbed by running water are caught by the roots of plants and trees before they can reach the lake, making the water in our lakes cleaner and safer.

7 Lakes Alliance received status as an accredited land trust in 2020, shortly after the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance and the Maine Lakes Resource Center merged to form 7 Lakes Alliance in 2017. Accreditation provides a national standard for land trusts that certifies sound land management and business practices, assuring affiliates and interested landowners of a land trust's reputability. 7 Lakes now manages nearly 6,000 acres of land in and around the Belgrade Lakes region, both under conservation easements and direct ownership, called fee properties. A conservation easement creates an agreement between a land trust and a landowner around a privately owned parcel, assuring its sustainable management or conservation. Each easement is unique to the property it protects, but all aim to permanently conserve valuable natural areas like agricultural fields, working forests, or old growth forests for the benefit of

the public or the environment. The easements and fee properties that 7 Lakes Alliance currently holds, ensures those parcels' sustainable management indefinitely.

So, how can you find this conserved land? The new interactive map on the 7 Lakes Alliance website contains a wealth of information about not only the conserved land we manage and the trails, but also each lake's watershed, invasive plant and water quality monitoring sites, clean water act remediation projects, and more. Many of 7 Lakes' properties, new or old, are open to the public. Wherever you explore, please respect our natural places to conserve them for generations to come.



Belgrade History Beyond Belgrade

Submitted by BHS member Dianne Dowd



At the end of the school year, the fourth graders of the Belgrade Central School were treated to a very special field trip to Belgrade Lakes Village. Sponsored by both the Belgrade Historical Society (BHS) and the Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA), this field trip would give students a glimpse of Belgrade's past and hopes for future conservation. Fellow BHS member, Anne McCandlish and I met the bus at the dam at Peninsula Park. Our tour began with a discussion about water power created by the water

which was a special treat.

Our next stop was Day's Store where the kids learned about early stores and spied on a bit of hidden history left long ago by a previous owner. As our tour progressed, the students learned about historic homes and businesses on Main Street. Many pictures were passed around the group allowing the students to imagine what life was like decades ago. The kids asked many good questions and even a few chaperones proclaimed, "I didn't know that." Toward the end of our walking tour, the students were surprised to hear about the big hotels that once hosted hundreds of guests.

The tour ended at the gazebo at the Village Green where lunch was provided by the Belgrade Lakes Association. Delicious sandwiches made by Day's Store were passed out to the hungry students. While the kids had lunch, they learned about conservation on our lakes by BLA past-president, Bert Lanquet and were educated about loons by local expert, Dick Greenan. Several of the kids practiced their loon calling skills. I hope we will hear those students this summer at the loon calling contest. After lunch, the field trip continued with a stop at the Belgrade Old Town Meeting House to view our displays before heading back to school.

The students sent us Thank You notes with hand drawn pictures of their favorite parts of the field trip. Checkout the ones on display at Day's Store. It was a fun field trip for all and if you want to know some of Belgrade's history, just ask the future fifth graders.

For those who would like to know more history about Belgrade Lakes Village, the Belgrade Historical Society and the Belgrade Public Library are sponsoring a program, "Early Tourism On The Belgrade Lakes" presented by Linda Snow McLoon on Wednesday, July 15 at 6:00 PM at the Belgrade Public Library, 124 Depot Rd.



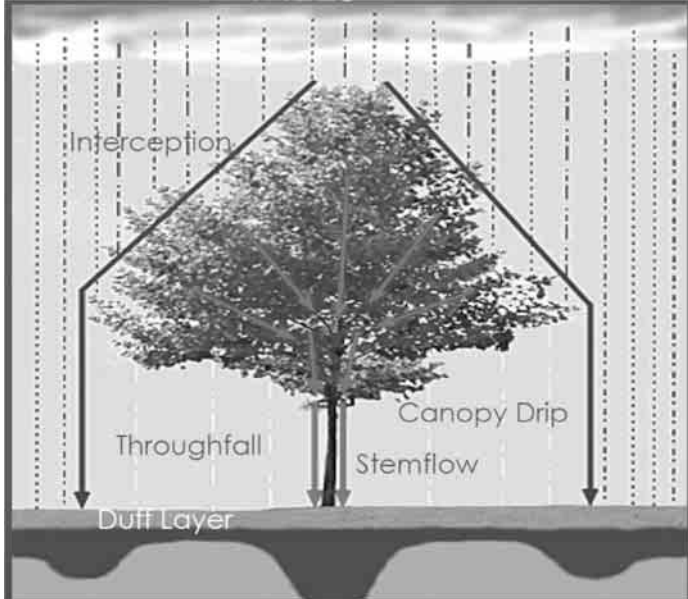
that flowed from the dam, and how this water power could be harnessed to run mills before electricity was available. The early mills included grist mills for grinding grains and corn and sawmills to provide lumber for building homes and other buildings. Later a very successful spool mill was located on the same shore. The students were dismayed to learn that a massive fire in 1908 destroyed the mills. While we were at the park, a couple of local fishermen at the dam kindly showed their catch to the kids



— Take It Outside —

Transpiring, Recyclable, Energy Efficient, Stormwater System (TREES)

By Peter Kallin



Trees dissipate energy, slow the flow, reduce erosion, infiltrate and cool the water, cool the air, and sequester carbon.

The past week has had some really hot days with a few thunderstorms, and I have cooled off a bit out on and in the lake. I spotted one of my neighbors, Matt Lawler out on his dock with his two young sons (5 and 8) who were fishing for a bit before heading out on the lake. Five-year old Luke caught a 16-inch, roughly 3-pound

hit the vegetation, they are broken up into many little droplets that continue to fall towards the ground, breaking up into ever smaller droplets as they hit more layers of vegetation, a process engineers would call “energy dissipation.” The large surface area of the leaves and small branches becomes coated with water that never reaches the ground, a process hydrologists call “interception.” The water that continues to fall to the ground ends up as a fine mist, or slowly moving drops that drip off the lower parts of the tree. This moisture falls gently onto a thick spongy “duff layer” of decomposing leaves and pine needles that comprises the forest floor, soaking in slowly. As the runoff filters slowly through the forest floor, it continues to soak into the sediments below where it enters the groundwater table. A substantial portion is taken up through the roots of the plants and transpires directly back to atmosphere via evapotranspiration from the leaves. Except in very large rain events, very little stormwater actually runs off from a forest.

Contrast this with rain that falls on a plowed field, paved surface, or a dusty camp road. The raindrop hits the ground at high speed, with enough kinetic energy to erode the surface of the soil and splatter up muddy water. This water begins to puddle up and move down the hill, carrying dirt, manure, or other pollutants such as oil or grease along with it. If the surface topography is steep, the stormwater gains momentum and continues to erode, picking up an even higher pollutant load. Typically the stormwater from these developed areas is routed rapidly through ditches and pipes directly to the nearest stream, river, or lake. The turbulent motion generates kinetic energy that allows the flowing water to carry a large load of suspended sediments. When the polluted water eventually reaches a large pond or lake, the velocity will slow and the suspended sediment will settle out. The coarser sediments settle rapidly near the shore forming a delta near the inlet (check out the north end of Long Pond where Rt 27 drains into the lake at Tracy Cove) but the finer sediments (and attached pollutants) move out into the lake, creating turbidity, or cloudiness. These fine sediments settle very slowly, spreading pollutants and nutrients such as phosphorus to the deepest portions of the lake.

Under Mother Nature’s system, thanks to the trees and surrounding vegetation, there is much less water flowing across the land surface towards the water. This water continues to be slowed and filtered by vegetation and rarely develops enough momentum to cause erosion or carry a heavy sediment load. As the flow-

Continued on page 10 ...

Largemouth Bass that was about a third of Luke’s height long. I stopped by the Sanders Hill Parking lot and spotted a large, green van from GreenVans.Com. The van belongs to Alpengirls (<https://www.alpengirlcamp.com/>), a group dedicated to “Inspiring Girls and Empowering Women” through outdoor adventures. This group has a primary center in Bozeman, MT and a smaller operation centered at Camp Runoia. There are two Alpengirl guides stationed at Camp Runoia, Kat and ISA. They guide groups of about a dozen girls ages 8-12, on week-long hikes in central Maine and sea kayak adventures near Acadia. At the van, I met New Zealander, ISA who was out hiking by herself for relaxation on her day off. She first hiked the French Mtn loop and then hiked the Sanders Loop and down the Kennebec Highlands (KH) Trail to the Round Top Loop, up and over Round Top and down to the Round Top Trailhead and then back along the KH to Sanders Hill Trailhead where I met her. Total distance of her relaxing hike was at least 10-miles. I also managed a few mushroom foraging trips for chanterelles and black trumpets. The best mushroom foraging has been in healthy forested areas that are significantly moister and cooler than more developed areas. Two years ago, we purchased approximately 260 acres off the Dunn Rd near Sandy Cove in Belgrade that had been heavily cut over a few years ago that we are in the process of restoring. We have been aggressively reforesting that parcel and are continuing to restore that native trees and shrubs. We also have several other projects where we are planting a lot of trees to improve water quality.



Luke Lawler with 16-inch largemouth.



Alpengirl Guide, ISA, hiking on her day off.

Conserving forested land around the lakes is by far the most cost-effective way to preserve water quality. Recent studies by Portland Water District have concluded that every dollar spent on conserving forested land in the Sebago Lake Watershed saves them ten dollars in restoration and mitigation. Regrowing the trees on our cutover parcel will greatly improve water quality and protect it permanently. A tree is more than just a piece of standing wood with leaves on it. It is actually a remarkable stormwater control system that is better described as the Transpiring, Recyclable, Energy Efficient Stormwater System, or TREES for short. This key component of Mother Nature’s basic watershed design is a wonder of efficiency, and coupled with vegetated wetland buffers, does an outstanding job of protecting the water quality of lakes and streams.

As anyone who has ever taken shelter under a tree during a rainstorm knows, trees do a great job of protecting the land under them. When the large raindrops

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— Calendar —

Through Saturday 7/11 - Clue, 474-7176, Lakewood Theater, Route 201, Madison.

Thursday 7/9 - McGrath Pond-Salmon Lake Association Annual Meeting, featured presentation Lynn Geiger of 7 Lakes Alliance, "The Importance of Watershed Surveys and How to Get Involved," 6-7:30 pm, North Belgrade Community Center, Route 8, Belgrade.

Thursday 7/9-Saturday 7/11 - Skowhegan Log Days, a celebration of Skowhegan's enduring connection to the logging industry and the Kennebec River, parade, riverfront activities, lumberjack show, Water Street, downtown Skowhegan.

Friday 7/10 - Guided Paddle in Mercer Bog, 10 am-12:30 pm, please RSVP 495-6039, meet at Mercer Historical Society, 77 Main Street, Mercer.

Friday 7/10 - Erica Brown and the Bluegrass Connection, original and traditional bluegrass, 2 pm and 7 pm, free and open to the public, air-conditioned, 946-5311, Sawyer Memorial, 371 Sawyer Road, Greene.

Friday 7/10 - Scolded Dogs, Funk Rock Dance Music, Johnson Hall Free Waterfront Concert, 6-7:30 pm, Waterfront Park on the Kennebec River, Gardiner.

Friday 7/10 - The Shizzle, Waterville Rocks, Head of Falls, beer garden opens 6 pm, music begins 7 pm, in case of rain show held inside Waterville Opera House, downtown Waterville.

Friday 7/10 - Sunday 7/19 - Maine International Film Festival, a full line-up of 112 films, tickets and passes available at MIFF.org, screenings at Schupf Center and Waterville Opera House, Main Street, Waterville.

Saturday 7/11 and Sunday 7/12 - Appaloosa Horse Show, open to public, covered arena, concessions, Skowhegan Fairgrounds, Route 201, Madison Avenue, Skowhegan.

Saturday 7/11 - Annual Strawberry Festival, artisans, crafters, music, food, children's activities, farmers' market, 9 am-3 pm, Route 133, Wayne Village.

Saturday 7/11 - Mount Vernon Craft Fair, 9 am-2 pm, Mount Vernon Community Center, Main Street, Mount Vernon.

Saturday 7/11 - Art in the Garden, stroll through some of Gardiner's charming private gardens while artists paint en plein air, 10 am-3 pm, Midsummer Garden Party 2-5 pm, early bird tickets \$25, day of \$30, gardinermainstreet.org, downtown Gardiner.

Saturday 7/11 - The Addams Family, Young Performers Camp production, 10 am, 474-7176, Lakewood Theater, Route 201, Madison.

Saturday 7/11 - Exhibition opening: what could have been, what is, what could be, reception 5-7 pm, Ticonic Gallery, downtown Waterville.

Saturday 7/11 - Church Supper, 5:30 pm, suggested donation \$10, Smithfield Baptist Church, downtown Smithfield.

Saturday 7/11 - Dreamcatcher, The Magical Adventures and Wondertales of Native America, with Story Keeper, Lealand Faulkner, 7 pm, for all ages, admission by donation, 779-0660, 3 Borough Road, Chesterville.

Saturday 7/11 - Stan Davis, followed by Open Mic, Union Coffeehouse, 7 pm, refreshments, \$10 donation at door, Union Church, Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Sunday 7/12 - Augusta Marathon, 10K-5K Running Festival, Elks Club in Augusta to Belgrade Lakes gazebo, benefits United Way and Maine Veterans, mesamaineinfo@gmail.com or 694-9184, Maine Endurance Sports Alliance.

Sunday 7/12 - Belgrade Lakes Farmers' Market, 8 am-1 pm, 7 Lakes Alliance, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Sunday 7/12 - Luck of the Draw, to benefit Somerset Humane Society, doors open 9 am, www.shsanimalshelter.com, Poulin-Turner Union Hall, Route 201, Skowhegan.

Sunday 7/12 - Summer Ritual Market, vendors, food trucks, live music, interactive workshops, kids activities, a short walk from Historic Downtown Gardiner restaurants and shops, 10 am-4 pm, along the Kennebec River, Waterfront Park, Gardiner.

Sunday 7/12 - Lynn Deeves Trio, Concerts at Norcross Point Park, 2-4 pm, free, Lake Maranacook, downtown Winthrop.

Sunday 7/12 - The Authenticators, Concerts in the Park, free, 5-6:15 pm, Coburn Park, Skowhegan.

Sunday 7/12 through Thursday 7/16 - Maine Jazz Camp faculty concerts, 8 pm, Gordon Center, Colby College, Waterville.

Monday 7/13 - Blaisdell Trail, 10 am-12 noon, please RSVP 465-6039, meet at Quill Hill parking lot, Drury Lane, north of the intersection of Routes 27 and 225, Rome.

Monday 7/13 - Explore Messalonskee Lake and Its Ecology by Kayak, sponsored by Mid-Maine Regional Adult Community Education, 10 am-12 noon, \$7, equipment provided, must know the basics of how to swim, 465-9134, meet at Maine State Boat Launch, Route 27, Belgrade.



Monday 7/13 - Western Maine Foothills Band, selections from Big Band, marches and other eras, 7-8:30 pm, Meeting House Park, Main Street, Farmington.

Tuesday 7/14 - Kathy and the Goodtime Band, outdoor concert, Turcotte's To Go food truck, M&M's Ice Cream & More, free admission, 5-7 pm, Oosoola Park, Ferry Road, Norridgewock.

Tuesday 7/14 - Northern Hybrid, Rock on the River series, 7-8:30 pm, Grandstand, Water Street, Hallowell.

Tuesday 7/14 - New England Music Camp, Faculty Recital, free, 7:30 pm, snowpond.org, Alumni Hall, Goldenrod Lane, Sidney.

Wednesday 7/15 - Learn About Loons, 10 am-12 noon, please RSVP 495-6039, 7 Lakes Alliance, Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Wednesday 7/15 - 1794 Vaughn Homestead House & Garden Tour, 10 am, all ages welcome, \$10 per person, kids 12 and under free, reservations required, 622-9831, info@vaughnhomestead.org, 2 Litchfield Road, Hallowell.

Wednesday 7/15 - Invasive Aquatic Plant Identification, 1-2 pm, please RSVP 495-6039, 7 Lakes Alliance, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Thursday 7/16 - Art In The Park, weave onto a nine-foot communal loom with artist Bobbie Tilkens-Fisher, 3-5 pm, Castaguay Square, Waterville.

Thursday 7/16 - Saturday 7/25 - A Texas Carol, 474-7176, Lakewood Theater, Route 201, Madison.



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Daily through August 31 –
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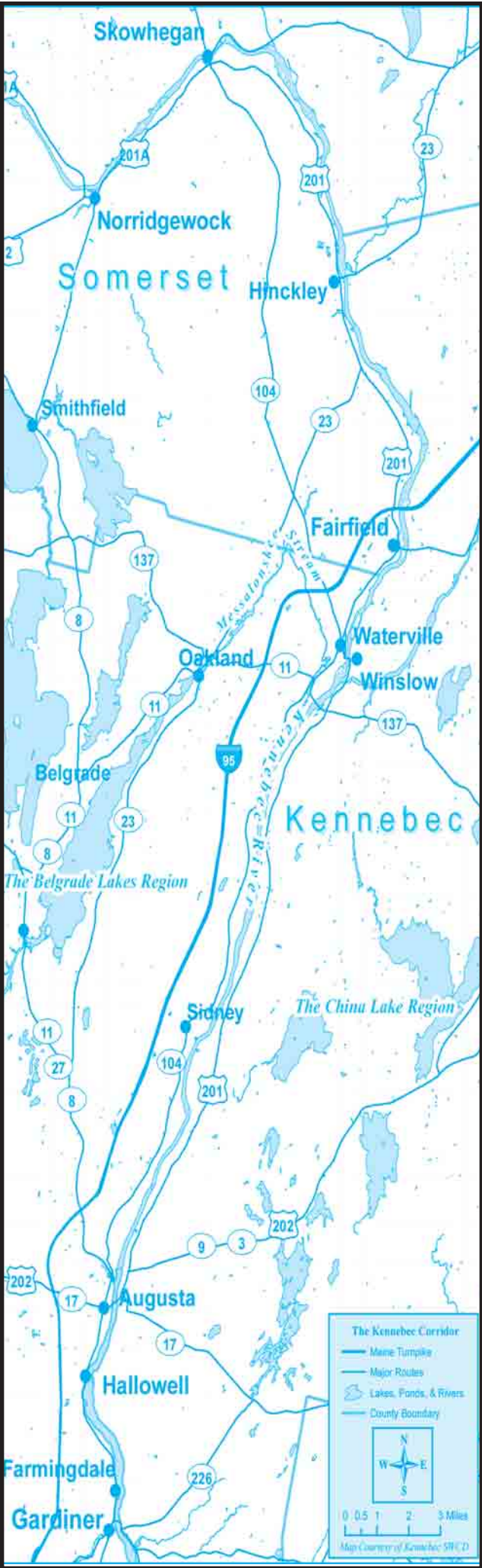
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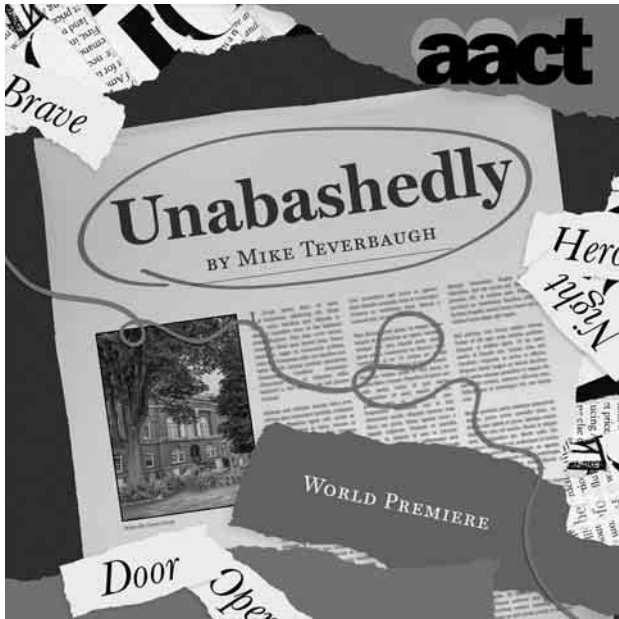
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Waterville Opera House to Produce World Premiere for NewPlayFest 2026



The Waterville Opera House (WOH) is thrilled to announce its selection as a Producing Theatre for the American Association of Community Theatre’s (AACT) NewPlayFest 2026.

WOH is one of only six theatres in the nation to receive this prestigious honor. Each cycle, hundreds of playwrights submit original scripts for consideration. Following a rigorous three-tier review process, the Producing Theatres will select one finalist to produce, and the six plays are then announced as AACT NewPlayFest 2026 award winners.

Aligned with AACT’s mission of providing support and resources to community theatres, NewPlayFest addresses the critical need for new, high-quality plays for community theatre audiences worldwide. This unique playwriting competition guarantees that each winning play will be produced as a world premiere by an established theatre and published by Dramatic Publishing Company in an AACT NewPlayFest anthology. The winning plays will receive a full production by the Producing Theatres between June 2025 and December 2026.

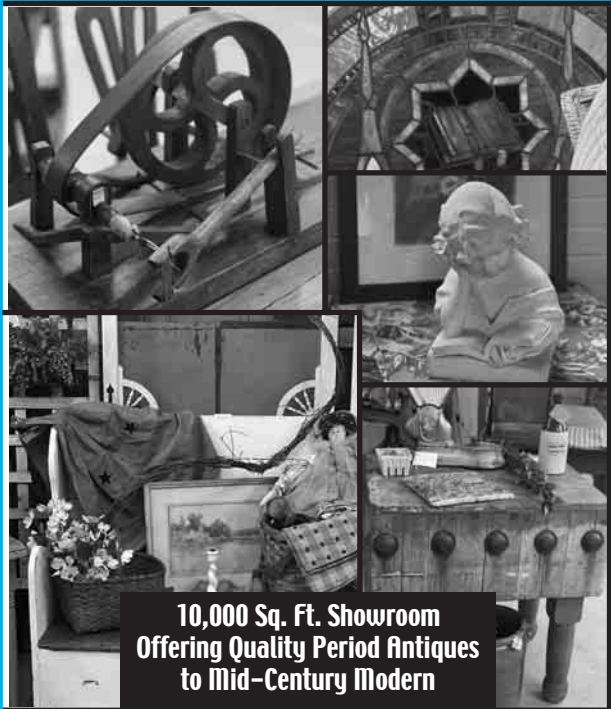
“Theatres rarely have a chance to work hand-in-glove with a show’s playwright during the rehearsal process,” said Debra Susi, WOH’s long-serving stage and intimacy director and theatre educator, who will direct the NewPlayFest world premiere. “This award pro-

vides the Waterville Opera House with the rare opportunity for all creatives—designers, directors, and most importantly our talented Central Maine actors—to work directly with the playwright and play a significant role in the premiere of an award-winning play. It is a unique and exciting experience for our theatre community.”

Since its construction in 1902 to celebrate the city of Waterville’s centennial, the Waterville Opera House has hosted countless events, including plays, musicians, vaudeville acts, dancers, poets, circuses, and more. In 1973, the Waterville Opera House Improvement Association was founded with the mission of maintaining and preserving the space. The association raised millions of dollars for the theatre and eventually oversaw a massive renovation in 2012.

Today, as a division of Waterville Creates, the Waterville Opera House has a thriving community theatre program that produces four mainstage productions, offers three weeks of theatre camp for students, and presents four touring productions for school-aged children. In addition to their theatre programming, WOH also presents nationally touring musicians, comedians, authors, and other live performances, and hosts major screenings during the Maine International Film Festival, a project of the Maine Film Center.

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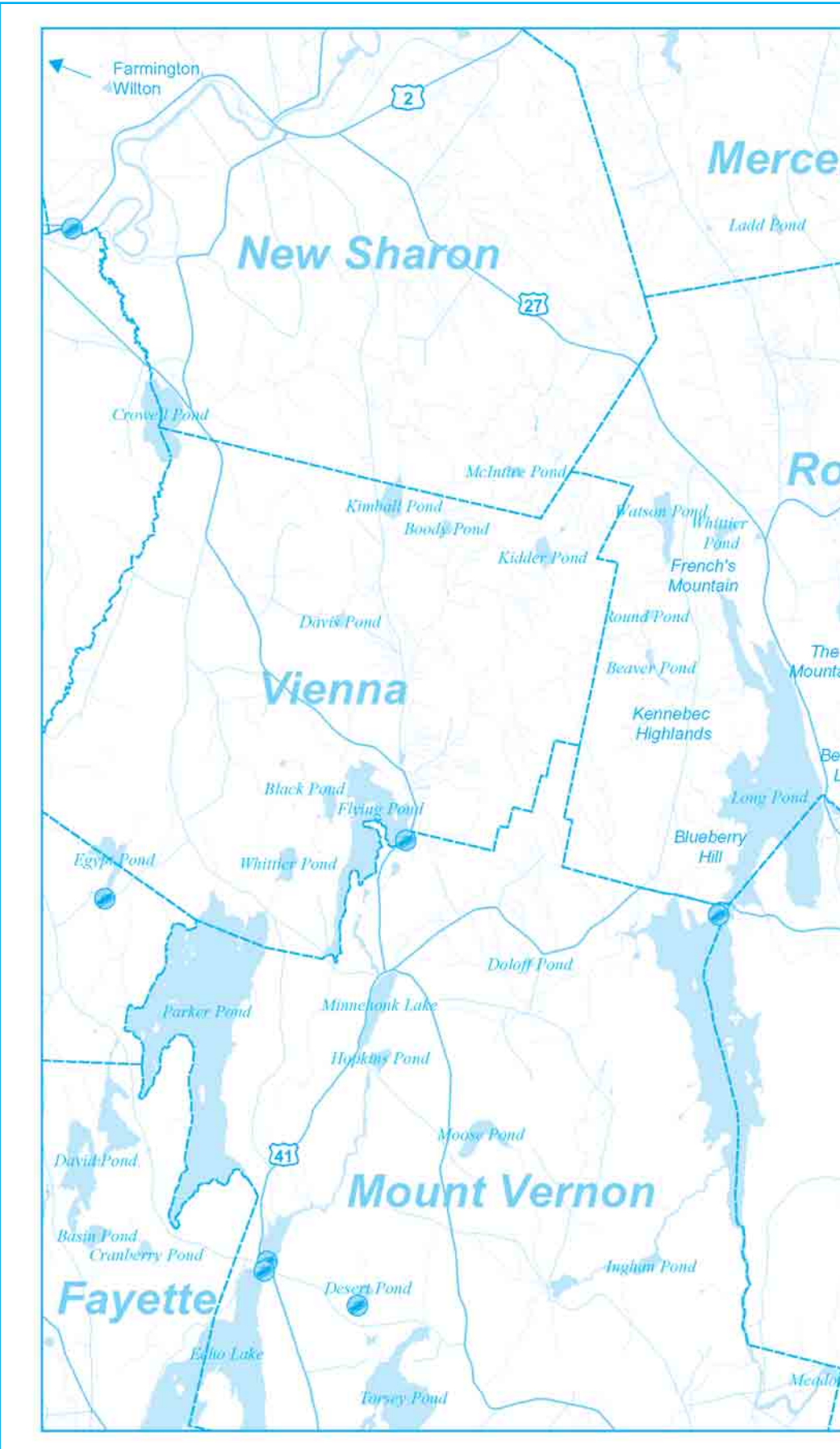
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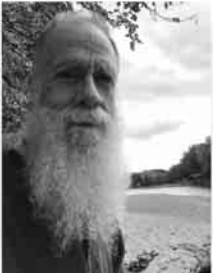




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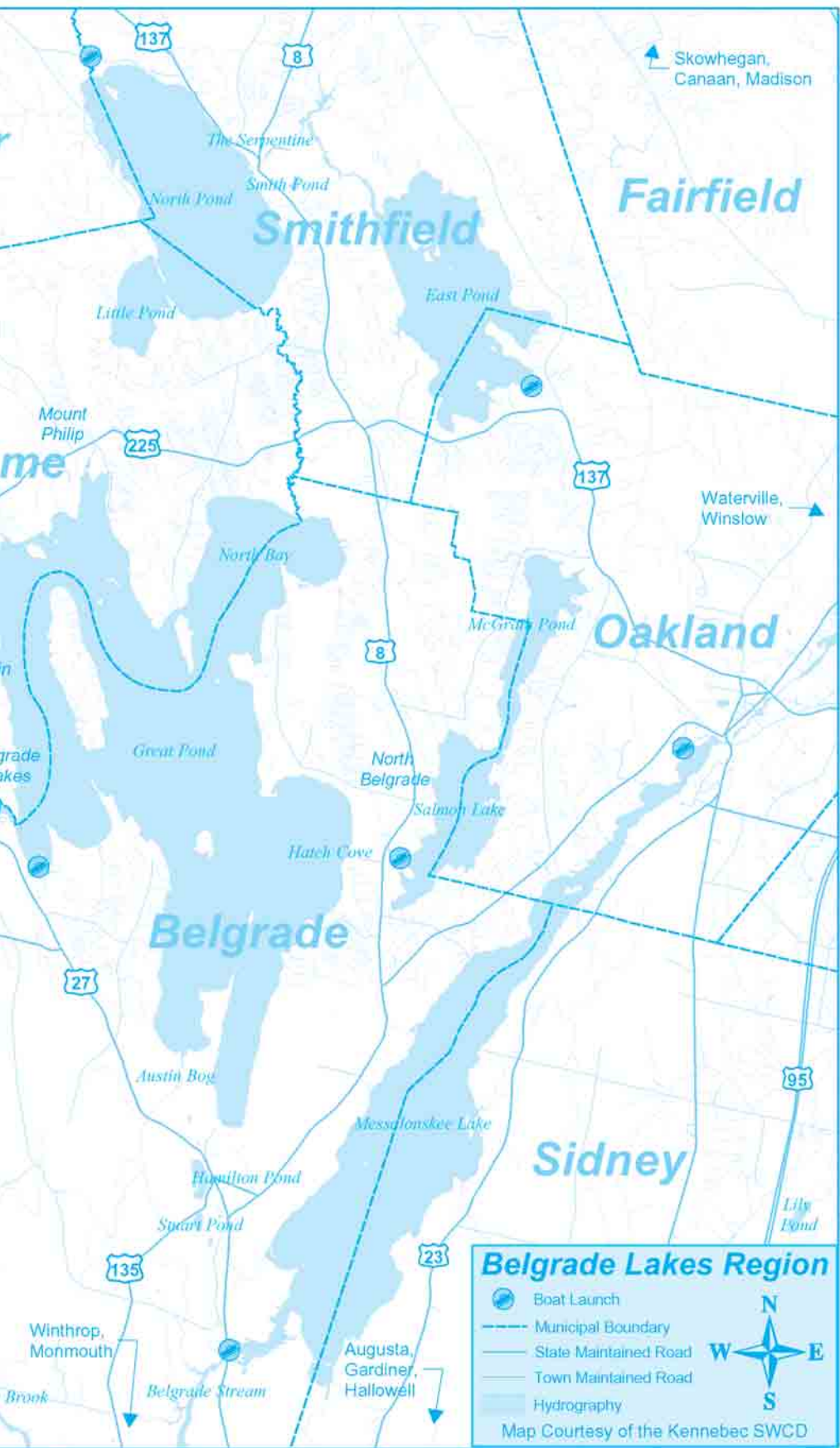
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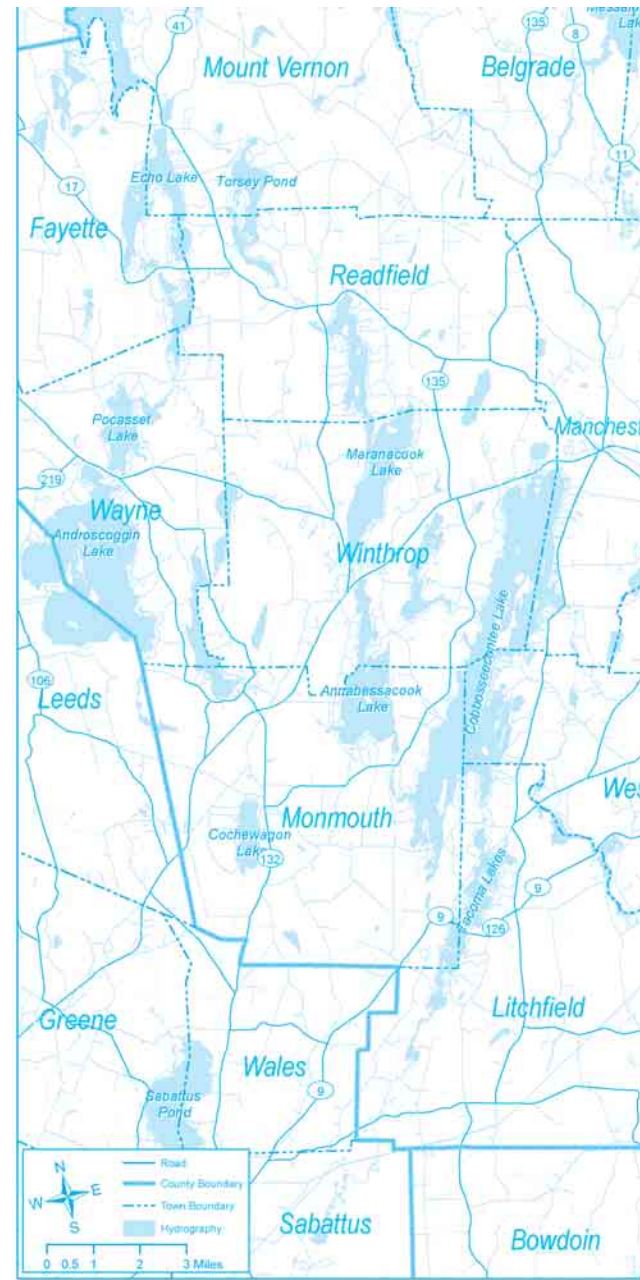
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Coffee Connects Across Continents



A new, student-made documentary, “Ikawa: Coffee That Connects,” will premiere at this year’s Maine International Film Festival. The 18-minute film explores how a cup of coffee can create surprising connections between Waterville, Maine, where the cup is sold, and Kigali, Rwanda, where the beans are grown, harvested, and distributed globally.

Fittingly, “Ikawa” is an international co-production, a collaboration between the Maine Film Center, Mid-Maine Technical Center, and Rwanda’s Mashariki African Film Festival. Two distinct crews of student filmmakers, one in Waterville and one in

Kigali, worked concurrently to plot the global journey of the coffee and the dozens of people. The film “beautifully reflects what happens when art, agriculture, culture, and community come together,” said Churchill Elangwe-Preston, who is featured in the film. Elangwe-Preston grew up in a coffee-growing community in Cameroon before moving to Maine and founding Mbingo Mountain Coffee, an importer and roaster of ethically sourced African coffee beans. “It tells a story that begins with farmers at origin and continues here in Waterville, reminding us that true collaboration can turn a local cup of coffee into a global conversation,” he continued.

Mid-Maine Tech and Waterville High School Class of 2025 students Brenden Beckwith, Ally Dorval, and Louis Williams composed the Waterville team. Under the guidance of media instructor Dave Boardman and with support from the Maine Film Center, the trio made some unexpected discoveries about the world and their hometown’s place in it.

“Supporting a local operation means supporting all the people who put work into it,” said Beckwith. “This is their life. I didn’t understand the whole story myself until we put it together. It was surprising seeing how people can connect through coffee. In the film, we see the different lifestyles of farmers, shipment workers, familiar faces here in Waterville, all connected.”

In Kigali, Rwandan student filmmakers Fabrice Imanizabayo, Delice Ingabire, Cedric Shimwa, and Mudjahid Simpenzwe worked with Mashariki African Film Festival founder Trésor Senga to spotlight their local community’s role in the global framework.

“Through coffee, ‘Ikawa’ tells a much larger story about Rwanda: resilience, craftsmanship, community, and the people whose lives are connected through every cup,” said Imanizabayo, cinematographer of the Rwanda unit. “My hope is that audiences in Rwanda feel pride in the country’s coffee heritage, while audiences in the U.S. gain a deeper understanding of the labor, artistry, and lives behind each cup. The film invites people to slow down, listen, and recognize coffee not just as a commodity, but as a story of human connection.”

In November 2025, Beckwith, Dorval, and Williams traveled to Rwanda with Boardman and Maine Film Center executive director Mike Perreault to meet their filmmaking partners and screen a work-in-progress cut at Mashariki. This festival also presented the first opportunity for the two filmmaking teams to finally meet up in person, after nearly completing the film as distinct creative units.

“Working on a film with people I’ve never met and that live thousands of miles away was a bit of a challenge,” Dorval said. “The main thing while putting the whole film together was making sure that we didn’t take any creative freedom away from the other group. What makes this project special was the fact that it was made by two separate groups, living across the globe, and we never met each other until the premiere. Having our documentary premiere at an international film festival was such an incredible opportunity and I will be forever grateful to everyone that played a part in helping it happen.”

The Maine International Film Festival will present the world premiere of the completed film at the Waterville Opera House at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 12, 2026. Sponsored by the Mid-Maine Global Forum, admission to the screening is free. A reception with the Waterville filmmakers, Senga, and other guests — plus plenty of coffee — will follow the screening.



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...Continued from page 5

ing water approaches a stream or lake, it typically flows into a heavily vegetated wetland buffer that acts as a large sponge to absorb the water and further slow the flows, allowing suspended sediments to settle. Some of the fine sediments adhere to the surface of the plant stems in the water column, a process known as “adsorption.” The end result is that the water finally reaching the lake is clean and clear.

Another important and often overlooked advantage to Mother Nature’s system is that much of the water entering the lake or feeder streams comes not over the surface of the land, but infiltrated through the ground. This not only filters and cleans the water but also chills it to the groundwater temperature, which around here is about 50° F (10° C). Contrast this to water running off a hot asphalt road or parking lot in the summertime, which can easily exceed 80° F. The cooler water is much healthier for the lake, enabling higher dissolved oxygen levels and much happier fish, especially trout and salmon. The standing biomass of trees sequesters carbon, including much of that in the roots.

So, how do we protect our watershed and maintain high water quality? One way is to protect as much forested land as possible within the watershed. This is one of the main drivers for 7-Lakes Alliance’s land conservation programs. 7 Lakes Alliance has recently been approved for an LMF grant to purchase several parcels that will help create a conservation corridor linking Mt Phillip to the Kennebec Highlands and protecting Robbins Mill Stream, which drains into Great Pond. We have closed on two of these parcels but actively seeking matching donations to close on the Robbins Mill Stream Project to bring this project to fruition. Please contact Laurie Raleigh at <https://www.7lakesalliance.org/> (496-6039) and tell her you want to contribute to the Land Conservation Fund. If you just want to become involved more with our tree planting projects, Please contact Dan Woughter, the 7-Lakes Stewardship Coordinator at 495-6039.





Notebook

Belgrade-Inspired Authors to Talk at Bowdoin 7/16

• From the Wild to the Words: How Living in a Positive State Makes For Good Storytelling. Ernest Thompson and Jennifer Finney Boylan will discuss the ways Maine has shaped their lives and stories in a presentation at Bowdoin College in Brunswick on Thursday, July 16 at 7 pm. Thompson is the Oscar-winning author of On Golden Pond and is currently on tour with his new novel Out Clause; Boylan is the author of She's Not There and co-author (with Jodi Picoult) of Mad Honey. The presentation, sponsored by Freeport Speech, will take place at the Kresge Auditorium, 239 Maine Street. For tickets - eventbrite.com

Mid-Maine Fish-Off: Get Hooked on Summer Fun

• From Saturday, July 18 to Saturday, July 25 the Mid-Maine Fish-Off is the invitation to a fishing adventure for all ages, including kids under 12 fishing alongside a registered adult. Fish where and when you want (catch-photo-release) - it's a great opportunity to explore the lakes, ponds and rivers of central Maine - submit your catches in the app, and compete for daily random prizes. For instructions and eligible species categories register on [FishDonkey.com/app](https://fishdonkey.com/app)

Skowhegan: Litter League Heroes

• Sponsored by Skowhegan's Variety Drug, the

Litter League of community volunteers removes trash from local areas, tackles projects all summer, and makes the community more enjoyable... So far this season the league has cleaned up the River Trails and Coburn Park. On Friday, July 10, they will work on the Skowhegan Downtown Rotary. Variety Drug provides unlimited gloves and trash bags and limited grabbers. Cold water is supplied, too.

Hallowell: Climate Action Celebration

• Celebrating community achievement and prioritizing future climate actions are the topics of the Hallowell Climate Action Celebration & Community Engagement on Thursday, July 9, 6-8 pm at the Hallowell City Hall Auditorium. There will be live music by Belmont Radio duo, heavy hors d'oeuvres and valuable door prizes. The celebration is hosted by Hallowell Climate Action a project of the Hallowell Conservation Commission. Climate projects in the works include ordinances for extreme weather and riverbank stabilization.

Smithfield: Suppers and More

• On Saturday, July 25th the Smithfield Baptist Church is sponsoring a Loon Call 5K and Fun Run with registration at 7:15 am; races at 8 am. The course goes along the shore of North Pond; entry fee is \$5.00. For more details go to [smithfieldbaptistmaine facebook](https://smithfieldbaptistmaine.facebook.com). Supper on the 25th will include a performance by Vintage Steel, a steel pan/drum band based in August that includes a few local musicians. Supper is at 5:30 pm, suggested donation \$10.

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Day's Store, 8 am-8 pm, 182 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes Village, 495-2205, www.daysstore.com

INSURANCE

Allen Insurance and Financial, 51 Main Street, Waterville, 1-800-244-9046, AllenIF.com/Waterville

KITCHENS

Hammond Lumber Company, at 34 locations: Auburn, Bangor, Bar Harbor, Belfast, Belgrade, Blue Hill, Boothbay Harbor, Brunswick, Bucksport, Calais, Camden, Cherryfield, Corinth, Damariscotta, Dover-Foxcroft, Ellsworth, Fairfield, Farmington, Kingfield, Livermore Falls, Greenville, Greenville-Lily Bay Road, Machias, Madison, Mexico, Old Town, Palmyra, Portland, Rochester, N.H., Rockland, Skowhegan, Waterville, West Enfield, 866-HAMMOND, www.hammondlumber.com

LAKE ASSOCIATIONS

Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA), Long Pond and Great Pond, PO Box 551, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, 512-5150, www.belgradelakesassociation.org
Friends of Messalonskee, Snow Pond/Messalonskee Lake, PO Box 532, Oakland, ME 04963, 618-8723, www.friendsofmessalonskee.com
McGrath Pond - Salmon Lake Association, Stewards of Our Belgrade Lakes, <https://www.mcgrathpond-salmonlake.org>

LAND AND LAKE CONSERVATION

7 Lakes Alliance, PO Box 250, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, (207) 495-6039, www.7lakesalliance.org

LANDSCAPING

Gagne & Son Concrete Products, patio setups, stone, masonry products, complimentary outdoor heating, lighting, furniture, 1583 Augusta Road, Belgrade, 495-3313, gagneandson.com
G&L Contracting, 116 Lakeshore Drive, Belgrade Lakes, 215-7951, 495-9009, 233-7408, gandlcontractingmaine.com
Lynch Landscaping, 78 Maple Street, Norridgewock, 474-2420, 405-0880, www.lynchlandscaping.com



LODGING

Alden Camps, American Plan cottages, boat rentals, 3 Alden Camps Cove, Oakland, 465-7703, www.aldencamps.com

MAILBOAT RIDES

Great Pond Mailboat Rides, calm days are the best, maximum number of riders is 4 small adults, \$20 each, 2-hour ride, leave 9:20-9:40 am Belgrade Lakes Post Office, Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, to reserve text 592-1537

PATIO SETUPS

Gagne & Son Concrete Products, stone, masonry, outdoor lighting, furniture, 1583 Augusta Road, Belgrade, 495-3313, gagneandson.com

PHOTOGRAPHY

Kevin Couture Photography, HS Seniors, Weddings, Families, Aerial drone images, 474-0754, 858-5382, www.kevincouturephotography.com

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Dockside Physical Therapy, 212 Depot Road, Belgrade, 660-2546,

PIANO LESSONS

Dianne Gorman, 191B Bartlett Road, Belgrade, 495-3222, Gorman3366@roadrunner.com

REALTORS

Coldwell Banker Plourde Real Estate, 143 Silver Street, Waterville, 660-4001, 872-7650, cbplourde.com

Ellen Wells, Coldwell Banker Plourde Real Estate, 649-147, cbplourde.com

John Blouin, Laer Realty Maine, 103 Water Street, Suite 202, Hallowell, 446-7708, <https://www.laerrealty.com/agents/118618-john-blouin>

Liz Fontaine, Lakehome Group Real Estate, 75 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, 495-2500, lakehomegroup.com

Dan McCarron, Portside/Lakepoint Real Estate, 221 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, 495-3700, 888-495-3711, www.belgradelakepoint.com

Trisha Cheney, Portside/Lakepoint Real Estate, 716-6494, trisha@belgradelakepoint.com

Stephanie Yeaton, Portside/Lakepoint Real Estate, 495-4046, 592-5577, stephanie@belgradelakepoint.com

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE AND TRAILER STORAGE

Belgrade Lakes Marine & Storage, 366 Augusta Road (Rte. 27), Belgrade, 495-2378, www.belgradelakesmarine.com

ROAD REPAIRS

NB Earthworks & Forestry, gravel roads and driveways, DEP certified, Sidney, 458-3193, nbeearthwork@gmail.com

SURVEYING

Acme Land Surveying, 108 Fairbanks Road, Suite 5, Farmington, 778-4081, 800-778-408, www.acmelandsurveying.com

WINDOWS

Hammond Lumber Company, at 34 locations: Auburn, Bangor, Bar Harbor, Belfast, Belgrade, Blue Hill, Boothbay Harbor, Brunswick, Bucksport, Calais, Camden, Cherryfield, Corinth, Damariscotta, Dover-Foxcroft, Ellsworth, Fairfield, Farmington, Gorham, Greenville, Greenville-Lily Bay Road, Kingfield, Livermore Falls, Machias, Madison, Mexico, Old Town, Palmyra, Portland, Rochester, N.H., Rockland, Skowhegan, Waterville, West Enfield, 1-800-HAMMOND, www.hammondlumber.com

WORKSPACE/TECH COACH

Winthrop Workspace, shared office space, classes, workshops, support, 117 Main Street, Suite 10, Winthrop, 395-5019, www.winthropworkspace.com



Call of the Loon

The Loon Influence



When I joined the Loon Project as a summer intern, I was extremely excited about the chance to spend the most beautiful time of the year in Maine. Nothing sounded better than getting to be on the lakes every day and escaping my Pennsylvania hometown's humidity. After a month of being here, I can confirm it is exactly what I hoped for. There's something special about watching a loon up close when the lake water is perfectly still and mirrorlike. As the weeks go on, I feel like I'm starting to



2026 Colby Loon Interns, L to R, Katie Lutz and our author, Alie Forker

understand the loons more, learning what different behaviors mean and anticipating their actions.

During my off hours, I've been getting to know the local area, but loons have still been in the picture. I quickly noticed the culture surrounding loons here. Loons are the poster child of Maine lakes, popping up at every local shop. I was at an antique mall the other day and lost track of how many loon trinkets I saw. I've also spotted multiple businesses with the bird as their logo. I find it heartwarming how much the region seems to cherish loons.

I can't say I was surprised to learn that loons are the face of a Maine summer. They are incredibly unique and beautiful birds with their piercing red eyes against striking black

and white plumage. While working, I've noticed lake goers find them hard to ignore. Many people stop to listen to their haunting call or watch the adults feed their chicks.



The best part about loon culture in the Belgrade Lakes region is the community that comes together to support our conservation efforts. I have already met so many kind people, excited to hear about our loon findings each day. It's always fun to receive a detailed message about a loon sighting from a community member who took time out of their day to care about the birds. To me, loons represent a reason for people to come together, resulting in the continued health and happiness of the lake ecosystem. Whether it's lending us interns kayaks, keeping a watchful eye on a section of the lake, or stopping the use of lead sinkers, little actions make a big difference in our progress.



2025 Long Pond banded female

As summer continues, I look forward to meeting more friendly faces and sharing my love for loons and nature with others. The encouragement from the Belgrade Lakes community has made coming to work each day easy, reinforcing the fact that people do care about the environment, and inspiring me to continue having a passion for protecting wildlife.

Alie Forker, Colby College Class of 2029





Stephen King, King, and more KING

by Martha F. Barkley

Yes, Stephen King loves his guitar and walking his dog, but book tour and watching tv series of his novels and movies at theaters of his works was overwhelming in 2025. Did you notice, dear reader of Stephen King horror novels?

This prolific Maine author loves reading, of course, and a passion for writing and watching movies and tv mini-series movies, too. Apparently, King stories were everywhere in 2025 and King was even happy about his works that were changed by movie productions on occasion through the years.

His first novel *Carrie* in 1975 has been made into four movies: the fourth will appear in 2026 after King was convinced of the updated version. Stephen King simply loved the popular success of his stories in spite of changes on occasion to some in movies.

Everywhere all year long in 2025 according to a USA Today news report in October, Stephen King’s best-seller books continued being sold, along with several movies and tv series glowed on the screen. Maybe you enjoyed some of these adventures from the library or bookstore or at the theater or on your cozy home television?

King, King, and some more of Maine’s popular author Stephen KING, not only the written word readers know well.

On book tour in 2025, he shared inside stories of Bangor settings and years ago creations that remain popular to this day. “For example, the first season [of *Derry*] discusses a club for Black soldiers that burned down in Derry, and it was inspired by an incident in Bangor.” A real literary achievement of 50 years: over 65 published works and more than that number made for the screen. Only about eight of King’s works are not made into movies, but even some of those stories are in the works. Hard to believe.

King does not quibble. If his stories are enjoyed, he grabs the flattery based on his original novel.

Check over a list of over 65 works. a real test of originality on the part of

King and/or the movie creators who were clever enough to recognize the screen value of King’s lines and appealing plots.

I bet you can recall at least one or two of the movies...1970s through 2025. His wife, Tabitha, too, writes, and so does their son Owen. *Sleeping Beauties* was a father/son collaboration. Wouldn’t you like to sit around with the King family for a writerly discussion? Owen’s brother also writes. I believe there is a YouTube occasion of all three together on line: several YouTube appearances to view.

Best of all, look for a King novel around your home somewhere and reread some pages. Ever the word-smith, our very own Maine King of horror, Stephen. Two of their three children following in their parents’ footsteps of the writing life. Quite unusual.

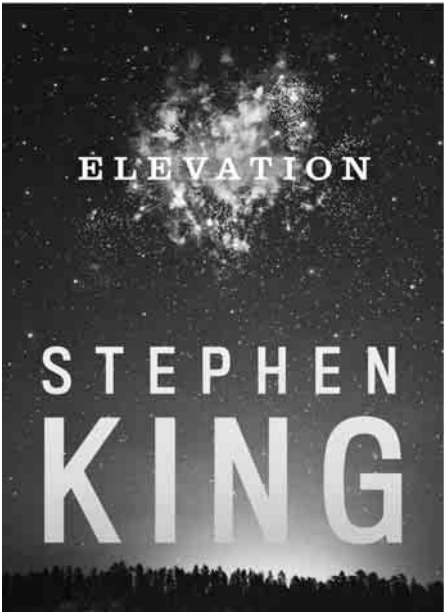
Readers of the King family, we have lots to look forward to and shelves of books spanning 50 years. All those movies to see.

Some movies surprised me as being based on King’s original novella or story: *Shawshank Redemption* being one. *The Long Walk* is the newest movie I want to see. Every time I watch *Shawshank* I love it, Morgan

Freeman and music aired in prison stirs my heart every viewing. Have you seen that great movie multiple times like me?

I may even try to see the upcoming *Carrie* in 2026. *The Life of Chuck* won the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival, so maybe I will eventually view that movie, too, when reading horror is a bit much for me.

So many movies and BOOKS from our Maine popular Stephen King. His book on writing still remains my favorite AND *Elevation* was a short, short novel and not too scary for me, reviewed in *Summertime* not too long ago.



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0 Crie Hill Road, Liberty MLS#1641654 \$499,900
Views upon views, upon views. This private 89 acre parcel sits atop Cox Hill Road with unbelievably expansive views to the west. On a clear day you can enjoy the views of the Western Mountains of Maine and the NH White Mountains. SO GORGEOUS AND QUIET. With a mixture of field and woodlands this would be an ideal spot for your future home. Can you imagine a house with lots of windows overlooking these views?! Both Lake St. George State Park and Sheepscot Lake are only minutes away. Liberty is located in the mid-coast region with the Atlantic Ocean or Augusta only 20 miles away in either direction. If you are a wildlife enthusiast this could be the property for you. Driveway, utility poles and electric lines are already in place. We encourage you to come take a look.



533 Rte 135, Lot 2, Monmouth MLS# 1657244 \$1.360M
In the quest for the perfect home, the ideal combination of luxury, comfort, and lifestyle often feels elusive. However, an extraordinary new construction within the designer-inspired Freshwater Woods community presents an opportunity that transcends traditional living. With 315 feet of shared waterfront, this development redefines living in harmony with nature while enjoying the finest modern design and craftsmanship. Envision a visually stunning home that not only meets but exceeds your expectations.



974 Sturtevant Hill Rd, Winthrop MLS# 1644187 \$475K
Imagine all the space you will have with this 10 room home. This home has been expanded over the years, providing many options. There is even an insulated unfinished basement just waiting for your creative ideas. You have a spacious eat-in kitchen, formal dining room, large living room and a den on the lower level. All bedrooms are on the main level. The primary bedroom with its own bathroom and laundry has a nice balcony-the perfect place to enjoy your morning coffee and after-work glass of wine. This home sits on almost an acre with lovely flower gardens, a fenced-in backyard, and a paved drive. Just a quick drive down the hill and you're on Main Street with all its shopping or at the town park on the shores of Maranacook Lake. You have to see this one to appreciate all it has to offer.



32 School Street, Belgrade MLS# 1667208 \$325K
A year-round retreat in a classic Maine village, with all the perks of lake life - minus the lakefront taxes. Nestled in the heart of the Belgrade Lakes Village, this inviting lake house sits perfectly between Long Pond & Great Pond, offering effortless access to both shores just steps from your door. A short stroll brings you to the village's boutique shops, local restaurants, farmers market, & weekly summer concerts on the green-everything that gives a Maine lake village its timeless New England charm. For golf lovers, the award-winning Belgrade Lakes Golf Club is only minutes away!



For more information call or visit
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info@lakehomegroup.com

75 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, ME 04918



— Real Estate Update —

How the Pandemic Permanently Redefined Belgrade Lakes Real Estate

For generations, buying a seasonal waterfront camp on Great Pond or Long Pond was an accessible dream, with values rising at a modest, healthy pace.

Then came 2020. What began as a global healthcare crisis quickly triggered an unprecedented migration that changed rural real estate. In the span of just a few years, a humble market of rustic seasonal escapes transformed into a highly competitive arena of million-dollar luxury assets.

Before the pandemic, the Belgrade Lakes housing market was both stable and accessible. In 2018, an un-winterized seasonal cottage with decent lake frontage routinely sold for between **\$250,000 and \$350,000**. Turn-key, year-round homes with modern amenities were considered premium assets, but they rarely exceeded the \$700,000 mark. Properties sat on the market for months and even for years, negotiations were standard, and the region was viewed as a secondary vacation market.

When the COVID-19 shutdown began, the widespread trend of remote work allowed remote offices. The combination of urban salaries and historically low mortgage rates, out-of-state buyers from Boston and New York headed to Maine.

The Belgrade Lakes, offered the beauty of Maine along with high-speed internet, therefore, became a primary target. Homes were frequently listed on Friday and under contract by Sunday night, many bought sight-unseen. To win brutal bidding wars, buyers routinely waived inspections and offering well over asking. Within a 24-month window, values effectively doubled.

By late 2023, mortgage interest rates spiked toward 8%. In a normal cycle, high borrowing costs cool prices down. Instead, Belgrade defied traditional trends due to a secondary pandemic side-effect: **lack of**

inventory.

Because so many pandemic-era buyers had locked in historically low mortgage rates, homeowners refused or were at a disadvantage to sell. Demand cooled, but the scarcity of available homes kept prices marching upward. Buyers looking for lakefront property were forced to compete over an incredibly small pool of listings.

Today, the frantic price climb has finally subsided. The market has shifted toward a more strategic, balanced environment, but it has settled on an elevated plateau.

The overall median listing price in Belgrade sits at approximately **\$568,000** (a 9.3% increase year-over-year). However, because that includes off-water homes, true lakefront property commands a substantial premium:

- **Seasonal Waterfront:** Small camps now start at **\$450,000 to \$650,000**.
- **Year-Round Lakeside:** Modern homes on prime locations routinely command **\$800,000 to \$1.5 million**.
- **Luxury Estates:** High-end properties boasting substantial frontage are firmly in the **\$2 million plus** range.

Ultimately, the "COVID effect" did more than just inflated numbers; it altered the region's demographic by introducing a wealthier, national buyer pool. While today's slower pace gives buyers breathing room to conduct inspections and negotiate, the entry barrier has changed. If you purchased a slice of the Belgrade shoreline in 2018, your assets have likely doubled or tripled in value. For everyone else, the price of lakeside tranquility is at its peak.

Dan McCarron



The Dams Keeper Report

Well, the water temperature is finally warming up a bit more to my liking!! Upper Long Pond is a delightful 78.1°F today (on the surface!) and in my opinion, perfect! My toes will tell you that it is nowhere near 78°F down there but it's all still very refreshing! But remember, with these warm water temperatures and with 85°F air temperatures, we lose 3/4" of water per day just to evaporation, so fortunately this year we've got water to spare.

As I write this week's column, Mother Nature has been unusually kind to us here in the Belgrades! The weather for our July 3rd Fireworks couldn't have been better as well as the weather for the 4th Boat and Street Parades. Boy, did we luck out and we deserve it especially considering the rain that we've had to endure earlier in the season. We had 1.03" of precipitation for the past ten days and they are forecasting absolutely nothing for the next 10 days which is Chamber of Commerce weather and deserved by us all!

As you are aware as you drive around, all of our gates are still slightly open to bring the levels back down to 3" above full pond, particularly for Long Pond. The Village spillway dam is presently just 1.8" above full pond with gate 1 opened 2' for the next day or so. Long Pond is still dealing with some run off and is on its way back down to the 3" above full. Gate one is opened 2' with gate two completely shut down. Snow Pond is still holding at 2.64" below their spillway which is excellent and still leaves them some water to work with especially with the A/C demands with the sweltering heat. Salmon and McGrath are in perfect shape at 3" above full pond with the 1 cfs calibrated valve opened 15 turns – Thank you Cam & Co.!

If you have a particular questions regarding our Dams and/or water levels, please email your inquiry to: dickgreenan@outlook.com and we will try to answer your question either in this column or via email.

Enjoy the family, your vacation and this incredibly beautiful weather and please stay safe!

Dick Greenan

Belgrade Lakes Watershed Dams Committee



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Lake Associations of the Belgrades: 2026 Annual Meetings

- East Pond Association (EP) founded 1946; Annual Meeting Saturday, July 18, 10 am, Brickett Point, off East Pond Road, Oakland. Everyone welcome. Lakeside Towns: Smithfield/Oakland, www.eastpond.org.
- North Pond Association (NP) founded 1985; Annual Meeting, Saturday, July 25, 2-5 pm, Fairview Grange, Village Road, Smithfield. Lakeside Towns: Smithfield/Rome/Mercer, www.northpondmaine.org.
- McGrath Pond-Salmon Lake Association (MP-SL) founded 1989; Annual Meeting Thursday, July 9, 6-7:30 pm, North Belgrade Community Center, Route 8, Belgrade. Lakeside Towns: Belgrade/Oakland, Box 576, Belgrade, 04917, 465-3983, www.mcgrathpond-salmonlake.org.
- Belgrade Lakes Association (BLA) - Great Pond and Long Pond - founded 1908; Annual Meeting Sunday, August 2, 4-6 pm, Center for All Seasons, Route 27, Belgrade Lakes. Lakeside Towns: Belgrade/Rome/Mount Vernon, PO Box 551, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes, 04918, 512-5150, www.belgradelakesassociation.org.
- Friends of Messalonskee, (FOM) founded 1990; Annual Meeting Saturday, August 8, 3-6 pm, Sunrise Bagel, 50 Main Street, Oakland. Lakeside Towns: Oakland/Belgrade/Sidney, PO Box 532, Oakland, 04963, 618-8723, www.friendsofmessalonskee.com.