

Summertime in the Belgrades



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

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 6

Go Out Local and Love It!

by Esther J. Perne



Vienna Union Hall: plays, concerts, community gatherings

Get into the people-joining, foot-stomping, hot dog-munching mode. It's festival time, music time, the living-is-busy time and it's the height of summer's long days when weekly, monthly or once-a-season events overspill the calendar.

Scan through a calendar, any calendar (there's one on page 6), or check out a poster in a store window or on a bulletin board or a sign by the side of the road - and discover what folks are being invited to do, what the spectators are watching, where the participants gather. Don't forget word-of-mouth; it's huge in Maine. Storekeepers and shoppers from here are great guides to what's up. Visitors and vacationers love to share their outing experiences, too.

Celebrate big at a small town annual summer-fest. Almost every downtown has its day or weekend, its fun activities, often a parade, fireworks, speeches, maybe a dance and definitely competitions, good cooking and activities for children.

This weekend there are festivities in Hallowell and East Madison and the continuation of the International Film Festival in Waterville. Next weekend Oakland and Farmington will summer-fest celebrate, then Wilton and Winthrop in August, later Madison and probably a lot of small towns in between. Keep checking out those bulletin boards.

Celebrate small at a quiet, simple outdoor presentation. There are concerts every night of the week, usually in waterside parks, (many with nearby playgrounds perfect for bringing children

Continued on page 2

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Continued from page 1

along), outdoor theater productions in Hallowell and Skowhegan, college campus performances and crafts fairs - not to mention the agricultural fairs that will soon begin their schedule in surrounding central Maine locations.

Celebrating small includes those delicious suppers, breakfasts and other benefit meals. The most famous might be the beanhole bean supper sponsored by Belgrade Fire and Rescue. And, celebrating small includes unique experiences: a loon-calling contest, a library book sale, a garden tour, a conservation outing.

Conservation, nature, the outdoors open a whole new range of opportunities for going out local and loving it. A good place to start is one of the guided hikes or paddles with the 7 Lakes Alliance in Belgrade Lakes or with one of the other associations in the region.

There are indoor events, too - a great excuse to visit historic auditoriums and rustic settings, to experience the quaintness of being in the middle of nowhere, to enjoy the spirit of small-town community.

When it comes to local outings and affordability, there are expensive splurges to be sure, but many of the entertainment and enrichment activities in the area, especially the weekly ones, are free or by donation - making it possible for families to go to an event and have ice cream, too.

Finally, don't forget that going out local includes event-free outing, too. Take a drive to a neighboring town and discover that getting there

is a large part of the fun - a scenic road, a surprise encounter with wildlife, a stopover at a roadside stand or country store and safe sidewalks to stroll at the end of the drive. Go out local and love it!



MIFF: (top) Maine-made *A Game of Chance*; (bottom) Quebec-made *People Live Here*



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Table of Contents

Light Up The Summer With Fun Local Outings..... 1-2

Table of Contents: Things to Know; Places to Go..... 3

Fighting Food Insecurity: Belgrade Union Church..... 3

7 Lakes Alliance: Expansion of Mt. Phillip..... 4

Belgrade Historical Society: Belgrade Hotel Souvenir Bracelet..... 4

Take It Outside with Pete Kallin: Ancient Wisdom 5

Calendar of Events: It's On-The-Go Time..... 6

Film Festival's Finale Days..... 7

Map of the Belgrades: Loops Around the Lakes..... 8-9

More On MIFF Week Two..... 10

Notebook: Awesome Area Actions and Activities..... 11

Business Guide: Best Bets For Local Businesses 12-13

Call of the Loon: An Intern's Long Loon Day..... 13

Books with Martha Barkley: King and Strout in The Atlantic..... 14

Real Estate Update: Sales Have Jumped Up..... 15

The Dams Keeper Report: Larger Lakes in Great Shape..... 15

Best Kept Secret

by Shannon Sprague



Tucked quietly within the life of Union Church of Belgrade Lakes, United Methodist Church is one of its most meaningful and consistent ministries—a steady commitment led by the Missions and Outreach Committee to support neighbors facing food insecurity. This has most-

ly been a “behind the scenes passion” which has become one of the church’s most important expressions of living out its faith in practical, compassionate ways.

One way the church helps in this area is a shared effort and intention of purpose with the Rome-Belgrade Food Bank. The food bank exists to feed, with compassion and dignity, meeting the basic household needs of our neighbors in the Belgrade and Rome community. Operated entirely by volunteers (including folks from the church) with sustenance from local churches, businesses, and community collection sites, providing food assistance in a way that focuses on respect, accessibility, and care.

Recently, the Union Church of Belgrade Lakes joined in that mission by helping supply items for the food bank’s summer “Cook-out Bags.” These bags are designed to help families enjoy the weather while sharing an outdoor cook-out style meal together. As part of this effort, the church put together 50 bags that included brownie mix and party-size bags of chips as well as other items that help provide moments of joy during the summer months. Some other ways that the church supports the food bank are weekly donated items, filling holiday bags at Christmas that include fixin’s for a turkey dinner in which they partnered with the food bank’s board members. It truly demonstrates that “It takes a village” and Union Church leads the way helping the Food Bank!

Union Church of Belgrade Lakes Belgrade also participates monthly to prepare and deliver dinner for Maine Bread of Life. This organization works to address hunger by providing meals and hospitality to individuals and families in need, offering not only nourishment but also a place of welcome and dignity. Their mission encompasses a broad commitment casting the net wide for those neighbors who are experiencing hardship, not only helping to meet needs but doing so with also providing hope and a sense of stability.

This need and combined initiative reflects a deeper truth: food insecurity is everywhere including in our own neighborhoods, affecting families and individuals who are working hard to make ends meet. Ministries like these remind us that small, consistent acts of generosity can make a real difference in the lives of our fellow human beings.

If anyone would like to support or participate in these outreach efforts, please contact the Union Church of Belgrade Lakes at (207) 495-3599.

Sometimes the “best kept secret” is hidden in plain sight, showing up as a community steadily caring for its neighbors, one meal, one bag of groceries, and one act of love at a time.



Summertime in the Belgrades

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Mount Phillip Conservation Area Expanded

by Laurie Raleigh, 7 Lakes Alliance Advancement Director and Noah Pollock, 7 Lakes Alliance Land Conservation Director

With sweeping views of Great Pond and well-worn trails, Mount Phillip has long been a cherished landmark. Its protection is the result of extraordinary community commitment that began more than two decades ago and has now come full circle. In the early 2000s, as Mead Paper Company divested its holdings, the Belgrade Lakes community stepped forward. With leadership from the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (BRCA), predecessor to 7 Lakes Alliance, and in partnership with Pine Island Camp, nearly 200 acres on the front side of Mount Phillip were conserved. Today, that story continues, as once again, the community rallied to support its conservation.

7 Lakes Alliance recently acquired an adjacent 133-acre parcel on the mountain's north side. Leadership support came from a number of dedicated donors, including Jack and Diana Schultz, Pine Island Camp, and Bob Hogan, who made a final leadership gift toward the protection of Mount Phillip before his passing at age 99. 7 Lakes also received funding through the State of Maine's Land for Maine's Future Program to help complete the acquisition.

The property contains 76 acres of deer wintering habitat and 3.4 acres of wetlands and was at risk of a commercial timber harvest that could have impacted the water quality of Great Pond. 7 Lakes intends to manage the land as a nature preserve, open for all to enjoy. With striking rock ledges and elevated viewpoints offering expansive vistas, the property will provide new recreational opportunities. Thoughtful stewardship will also expand trail



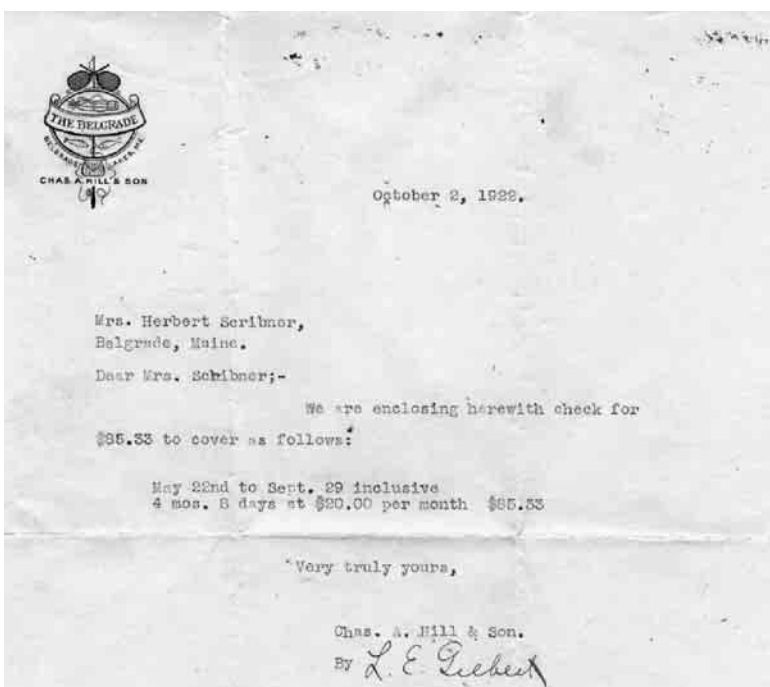
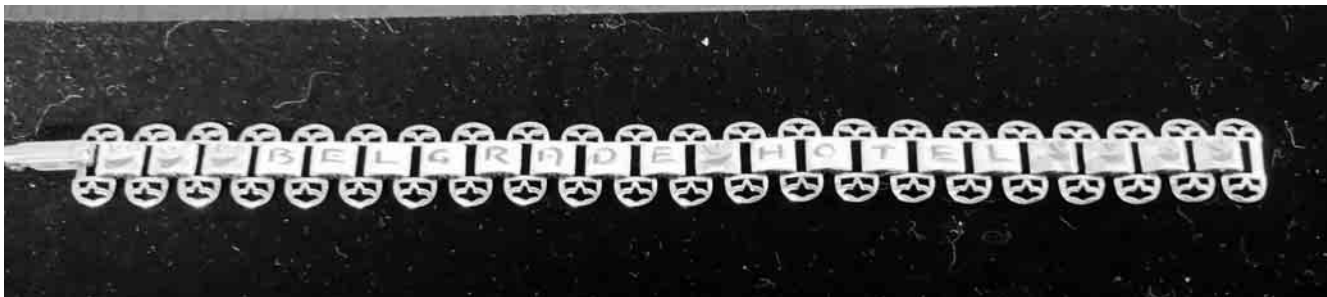
View of Mount Phillip from Great Pond

connections and deepen public access to and appreciation of this iconic landscape. At its heart, Mount Phillip's story is about neighbors stepping up when it matters most to protect the places they love. Conservation is rarely a single moment; it is a commitment sustained across decades and generations—a legacy carried forward by those who care deeply about the future. Thanks to the enduring vision and generosity of this community, Mount Phillip will remain a place of discovery, peace, and reflection for generations to come.



Belgrade History Beyond Belgrade

Submitted by BHS member Dianne Dowd



This lovely souvenir bracelet from the Belgrade Hotel has quite a story behind it. It was found in a wooden barrel of old letters in a farmhouse attic. My husband, Tom, had inherited the farmhouse in 1966 and it wasn't until 1976 that I found the

bracelet. Even then, I knew I should keep the bracelet and letters safe from harm. The bracelet is made of hand painted quarter inch metal blocks set on a metal filagree base. It is not made of precious metal, but it was made to last.

In 1920, Ellen (Nellie) Collins was living in Roxbury, Massachusetts. She

lived with her mother and worked in a paper box factory. She had worked in the same box factory for at least 20 years, but little did she know that her life was about to take a major turn. After her mother passed away, Nellie accepted a seasonal job as a housekeeper for the famous Belgrade Hotel of Belgrade, Maine. She traveled by train to Belgrade Depot where she

was met by a coach driven by one of the staff of the hotel. At the hotel, she was introduced to fellow staff including the head gardener, Herbert Scribner. Herbert had grown up in Belgrade and had been working at the hotel for several years. By 1920, he was the head gardener of the famous sunken garden of the hotel. Charles Hill, the owner of the hotel loved flowers and took a great interest in his gardens. During the summer of 1921, Herbert and Nellie got to know one another and before too long, they fell in love. At the end of the season, Herbert proposed marriage. Nellie returned to Massachusetts to sell her house and settle her affairs, and Herbert began work to renovate a farmhouse just two miles away from the hotel that he inherited as a home for his intended bride. All winter long Nellie and Herbert exchanged letters. One of the letters may have included this little bracelet. In the spring of 1922, Nellie returned to Belgrade and on April 22, 1922, she became Mrs. Herbert Scribner. She continued to work at the hotel that summer.

While it is unclear what the check covered, I do know it was for the full season. Herbert and Nellie lived on their farm on the Augusta Rd (Rt 27) for many years and were likely among the crowd that watched with heavy hearts as the Belgrade burned to the ground on October 3, 1956. Herbert passed away in 1957, and Nellie moved back to Massachusetts to live with her nephew where she passed away in 1963.





— Take It Outside —

I spent much of the past week out in the woods foraging mushrooms, raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries and attended way too many meetings. I also spent time collecting pre- and post- 4th of July water quality data and cooling off in the lake during some exceptionally hot days that are becoming more frequent as our climate changes. I caught quite a few fish as the fish are foraging on schools of baitfish.

Later, as I was putting my foraged bounty in the freezer, I thought that what I was doing was similar to what others have done around lakes for a long time. It reminded me of a column that I wrote over a decade ago when we were just opening the brand-new Maine Lakes Resource Center (AKA 7-Lakes Alliance Building) in Belgrade Lakes. For over a decade and a half, the nonprofit conservation organizations in the new center have been helping to develop new science and practices for better caring for our lakes. But like all scientists, we try to learn from the past and build on what others have learned. The rest of this column is from one of my favorite "Watershed Wisdom" columns from 2011 that I originally titled, "Ancient Wisdom." The final bit of wisdom from the Lorax is especially important.

Mother Nature's watershed design is based on maintaining upland forests and vegetated wetland buffers to protect water quality. We strive for responsible development to avoid excess stormwater runoff that can cause erosion and deplete groundwater supplies. These are not new ideas. Consider this observation from over 2000 years ago:

"There are mountains in Attica, which can now keep nothing but bees, but which were clothed, not so very long ago, with fine trees producing timber suitable for roofing the largest buildings....while the country produced boundless pasture for cattle. The annual supply of rainfall was not lost, as it is at present, through being allowed to flow over a denuded surface to the sea, but was received by the earth, in all its abundance, into her bosom where she stored it." Plato: *Dialogue of Critias* 360 B.C.E

Plato could just as easily be talking about modern day America. Cutting down forests in the uplands and clearing the native vegetation results in too much impervious surface, which in turn results in excess stormwater runoff. Instead of recharging the groundwater aquifers and filtering slowly into streams and lakes, this runoff flows quickly down the hills, resulting in flooding in the lowlands and excessive erosion and phosphorus-laden sediments flowing into our lakes.

The LakeSmart program emphasizes the importance of maintaining native vegetated buffers along the shorelines of our lakes, rivers, and streams. Over 500 years ago, Leonardo da Vinci gave the same advice:

"The roots of the willows do not suffer the banks of the canals to be destroyed; and the branches of the willows, nourished during their passage through the thickness of the bank and then cut low, thicken every year and make shoots continually, and so you have a bank that has life and is of one substance."-Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519)

A few hundred years later, Henry David Thoreau built his home next to Walden Pond and observed:

"My house was on the side of a hill, immediately on the edge of the larger wood, in the midst of a young forest of pitch pines and hickories, and half a dozen rods from the pond, to which a narrow footpath led down the hill. In my front yard grew the strawberry, blackberry, and life-everlasting, johnswort and goldenrod, shrub oaks and sand cherry, blueberry and groundnut."- Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

Thoreau clearly understood the importance of diverse vegetation and a healthy vegetated buffer. Interestingly, even before the advent of shoreland zoning rules, he built his house a half dozen rods back from the water, almost exactly the 100 ft setback requirement of Maine's current Shoreland Zoning law. With his narrow meandering footpath, I'm sure Thoreau would have qualified for a LakeSmart Award. He certainly understood the beauty of healthy lakes with forested shorefront areas:

"A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluviatile trees next the shore are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows."

We have discussed the importance of watersheds and managing our lakes on a watershed basis instead of arbitrary municipal boundaries.

Ancient Wisdom

By Peter Kallin

There are three places in Maine where this takes place- the Cobbossee Watershed District, the Saco River Corridor, and the Penobscot Nation in the Penobscot River Watershed. It is no coincidence that Cobbossee Lake is the only major lake that has been taken off of the official DEP list of impaired waterbodies and the Penobscot is Maine's only river with a relatively healthy run of Atlantic Salmon. Native Americans have long recognized the importance of taking care of our lakes and rivers. Chief Seattle (1786-1866) was not a Penobscot but I think they would agree with him:

"The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother."

More recently Luna Leopold (1915-2006), the son of the great 20th Century conservationist Aldo Leopold, who was the Chief Hydrologist of U.S. Geological Services (USGS) and a Professor at the University of California summed it all up when he said:

"Water is the most critical resource issue of our lifetime and our children's lifetimes. The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land."

The 7 Lakes Alliance continues to work to make conservation a tradition in our watershed. We try to implement some of the wisdom of past generations to preserve this special place for future generations. We need to take advantage of Mother Nature's built in systems and figure out ways to modify man-made systems to mimic natural systems. We have implemented many state-of-the-art best management practices into the design of our new center. Come visit and learn how to live lightly on the land for the sake of the lakes. We want our children and grandchildren to have memories like E.B. White:

Letters of E.B. White, Childhood memories, age 5:

"For me the golden time of year was summertime, when we all went for one month to a rented camp on the shore of Great Pond, one of the

Continued on page 14 ...

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— Calendar —

Through Sunday 7/19 - Maine International Film Festival, MIFF, films and schedules available at MIFF.org, Schupf Center and Waterville Opera House, Main Street, Waterville.

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

Friday 7/17 - Sunday 7/19 - Summer Book Sale, Bailey Library, Winthrop.

Friday 7/17 - Sunday 7/19 - East Madison Days, art show, yard sale, silent auction, food, fun, East Madison Road, East Madison.

Friday 7/17 - Sunday 7-19 - The Maine Event - Blue Ribbon BBQ, horse show, covered arena, free admission, Skowhegan Fairgrounds, Route 201, Skowhegan.

Friday 7/17 - Guided Paddle on Long Pond, 10 am-12 pm, RSVP 495-6039, meet at the Long Pond Boat Launch, Castle Island Road, west of Castle Island Camps, Belgrade.

Friday 7/17 - New England Music Camp, free concert, 3-5 pm, Bowl in the Pines, Sidney.

Friday 7/17 - Castle Bay, nautical and traditional songs, 2 pm and 7 pm, free, air-conditioned, 946-5311, Sawyer Memorial, 371 Sawyer Road, Greene.

Friday 7/17 - Boogie Mob, soul, funk, jazz, Johnson Hall Free Waterfront Concert, 6-7:30 pm, Waterfront Park on the Kennebec River, Gardiner.

Friday 7/17 - Student Concert, Maine Jazz Camp, 6:30 pm, Gordon Center, Colby College, Waterville.

Friday 7/17 - Sunday 7/19 - Quest, presented by Gaslight Theater, no reservations required, admission by donation, Friday and Saturday at 7 pm, Sunday 2 pm, Vaughan Homestead Pavilion, Hallowell.

Saturday 7/18 - Annual Loon Count, 7-7:30 am, on over 400 lakes, to volunteer check with a local lake association or contact conserve@maineaudubon.org, sponsored by Maine Audubon.

Saturday 7/18 - Old Hallowell Day, super celebration, day-long schedule, food, contests, fun, music, parade, book sale, bake sale, fireworks and much more, www.oldhallowellday.org, Water Street, downtown Hallowell.

Saturday 7/18 - Great Pond Flatwater Frenzy, 9 am-12 pm, register online at 7lakesalliance.org/event/great-pond-flatwater-frenzy/, launches from Belgrade Center for All Seasons, Route 27, Belgrade Lakes.

Saturday 7/18 - Neighbors Driving Neighbors Annual Community Breakfast, delicious buffet, catch up with neighbors, proceeds benefit volunteer transportation service, 9-11 am, 860-0677, Mount Vernon Community Center, downtown Mount Vernon.

Saturday 7/18 - Wilton Tour of Gardens, self-guided, 10 am-2 pm, rain date 7/19, 578-1208 or 418-0374, gardens and farms near Wilton.

Saturday 7/18 - 46th Maine Student Film & Video Festival, 12 noon, Maine Film Center cinema 1, Main Street, Waterville.

Saturday 7/18 - East Pond Association Annual Meeting, 10 am, www.eastpond.org, Brickett Point, East Pond Road, Oakland.

Saturday 7/18 - Student Concert, Maine Jazz Camp, 10 am, Gordon Center, Colby College, Waterville.

Saturday 7/18 - Darlin' Corey, Erica Brown, Kris Day and Matt Shipman, 7 pm, \$20, 293-4321, Vienna Union Hall, off Route 41, Vienna.

Sunday 7/19 - Belgrade Lakes Farmers' Market, stock up on summer favorites, 8 am-1 pm, 7 Lakes Alliance, Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Sunday 7/19 - Jim Sharkey - Irish music, Concerts at Norcross Point, 2-4 pm, free, downtown Winthrop.

Sunday 7/19 - Noisy Neighbors, Concerts in the Park, 5-6:15 pm, Coburn Park, Skowhegan.

Monday 7/20 - Walk with the Wildflowers, 10 am-12 pm, please RSVP 495-6039, meet at the Quill Hill Trailhead on Drury Lane, Rome.

Monday 7/20 - Western Maine Foothills Band Concert in the Park, big band, marches and other eras, 7-8:30 pm, Meetinghouse Park, downtown Farmington.

Tuesday 7/21 - The Laura Hudson Project, Oosoola Park Music Series, free admission, food trucks, 5-7 pm, Ferry Road, Route 2, Norridgewock.

Tuesday 7/21 - Sump Pumps, Rock on the River 2026 series, free, 7-8:30 pm, Bandstand, Water Street, Hallowell.

Wednesday 7/22 - House and Garden Tour, 10 am, \$10, Vaughan Homestead, Hallowell.

Wednesday 7/22 - New England Music Camp, Student Honor Recital, free, 7:30 pm, Alumni Hall, Snow Pond Center for the Arts, Sidney.

Wednesday 7/22 through Saturday 7/25 - The Kneading Conference and Maine Artisan Bread Fair, www.kneadingconference.com, downtown and fairgrounds, Skowhegan.

Wednesday 7/22 - Invasive Aquatic Plant Identification Workshop, 1-2 pm, please RSVP 495-6039, 7 Lakes Alliance, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Wednesday 7/22 - Black Wolf Band, Summer Concert Waterfront Park, free, 6 pm, Water Street, Augusta.

Wednesday 7/22 - Cabaret Night, New England Music Camp music series, free and open to the public, 7 pm, 272-3418, Loudon Hill Center, 330 Water Street, Hallowell.

Thursday 7/23 through Sunday 7/26 - Maine Quilts 2026 exhibit, over 500 quilts on display, lectures, demonstrations, workshops, 9 am-5 pm, Civic Center, Route 27, Augusta.

Thursday 7/23 - Animal Adaptations Presentation with Chewonki, 3-4 pm, please RSVP 495-6039, 7 Lakes Alliance, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Thursday 7/23 - Open House, Old Town Meeting House Historical Museum, 1-4 pm, Belgrade Historical Society, Route 8, Belgrade.

Thursday 7/23 - Seed Mosaics, Art in the Park program, free, all ages, rain or shine, read-aloud book presentation, create artwork based on that book, 3-5 pm, Castonguay Square, Main Street, Waterville.

Thursday 7/23 - Cruise-In Night, DJ, concessions, 5-7 pm, Waterfront Park, Gardiner.

Thursday 7/23 - Joan Kennedy, WaterFront Music Series, 6-8 pm, WaterFront Park, Oakland.

Thursday 7/23 - Fully Funktional, Village Green Music Series, 6:30-8 pm, 495-3481, recreation@townofbelgrade.com

Thursday 7/23 through Saturday 7/25 - "A Miracle for Micky" and "Too Hot to Hustle," Vienna Historical Society Annual Summer Plays, 7 pm Thursday and Friday, 2 pm and 7 pm Saturday, \$12, food concession, Union Hall, Vienna.



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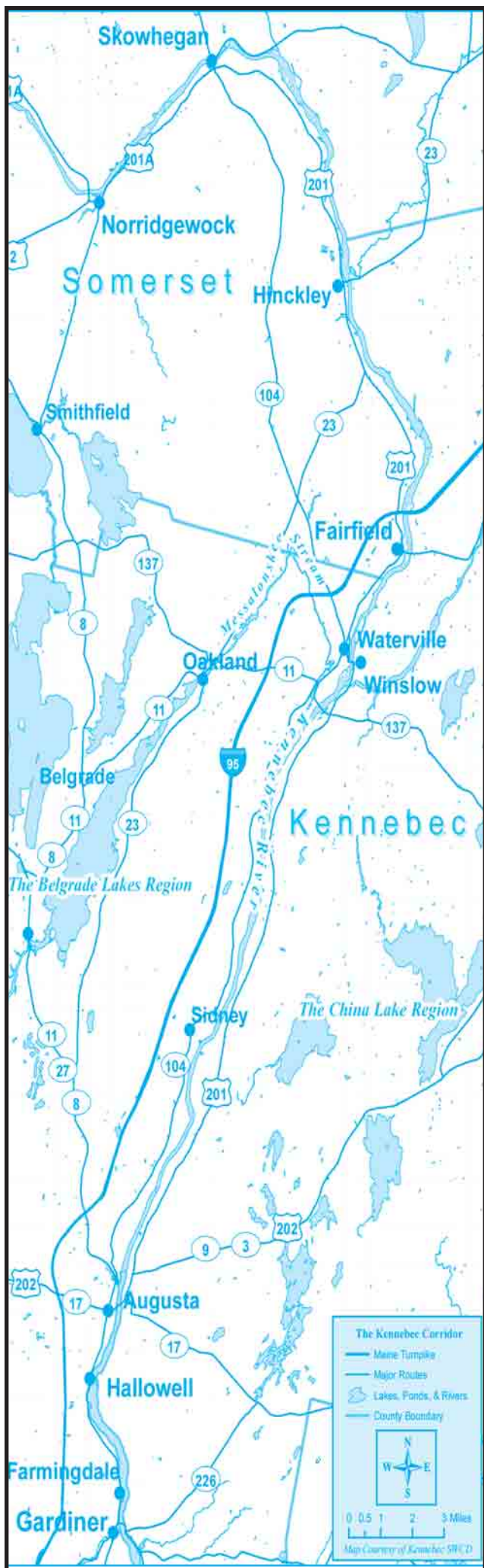
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Au Revoir to MIFF

by Gregor Smith

It's hard to believe that the 2026 Maine International Film Festival is almost over. It feels as if it has just begun. But fret not. There is still plenty to see in the festival's closing days, including the premières of three made-in-Maine feature films, two compilations of made-in-Maine shorts, a festival within the festival for Maine's youngest filmmakers, a salute to our neighbors to the north, and an energetic closing film with awards presentations.

All quotes are taken from the festival's website. Screening days and times are noted parenthetically; all screenings described below take place in either the Waterville Opera House (OH, 800 seats) or Cinema 1 (C1, 115 seats) on the second floor of the Schupf Center.

Maine Features and Shorts

The first of the three Maine features to screen is *In Transit* (Thurs., 1:00, OH & Sat., 3:00, C1), in which a young woman, seemingly content with her small-town life, agrees to model for an older woman, an angsty painter who takes up temporary residence. Their burgeoning friendship forces "both women must confront their preconceptions of what makes a good life."

In the second film, *Mallory's Ghost* (Fri., 1:00, OH & Sat., 6:00, C1), Mallory and Sam attend a retreat on the Maine coast, where Mallory, timid and insecure, believes she's being haunted by Sam's glamorous former girlfriend, Louise, who is very much alive. Nevertheless, becoming ever more envious and obsessed, she "is forced to confront the truth of Sam and Louise's bond, her own insecurities, and, ultimately, her sense of self."

The third new Maine feature is a documentary. *Downeast Hardcore: Stories from the Kave* (Sat., 9:00, C1 & Sun., 4:00, OH) profiles an unlikely punk rock club in a converted Bucksport barn, where for fifteen years in the early 2000s, alienated teens could find acceptance and belonging.

If you prefer shorter documentaries, check out the Maine Documentary Shorts (Sat., 4:00, OH & Sun., 1:00, OH). In this compilation of seven short films, six to 22 minutes each, you can meet a variety of Mainers. They include a female lobsterman from a seventh-generation lobstering family who becomes a scallop farmer, a man who live alone in a tent atop a remote frozen lake, an artist who has

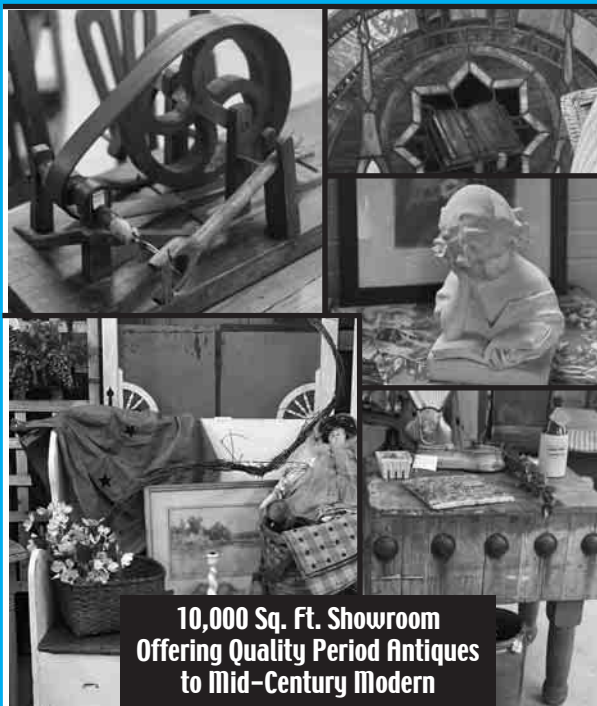
been creating a "magical property" on a coastal island for three decades, and teachers in Lewiston "working to rebuild a sense of safety and community in their classrooms while navigating their own trauma" after a mass shooting in 2023.

If you prefer fictional people (and creatures), try the Maine Narrative Shorts (Fri., 4:00, OH & Sat., 1:00, OH). In the seven shorts totaling 101 minutes, you can meet, among other characters, four young men returning to their boyhood summer camp in Maine to scatter the ashes of the recently deceased fifth member of their group, a different group of friends who have drifted apart but now seek to reconnect through exploring abandoned buildings together, a young woman running away from a tragedy who has magical powers she doesn't understand and can't control, and a lonely mouse who plays a game with the wind. This last, whimsical offering comes from animator Gordon LePage, a frequent past MIFF contributor.

On Saturday, you can watch shorts, both fiction and nonfiction, by Maine's up-and-coming cinéastes. The 46th Maine Student Film + Video Festival will be held at noon Saturday in Cinema 1.

Continued on page 10...

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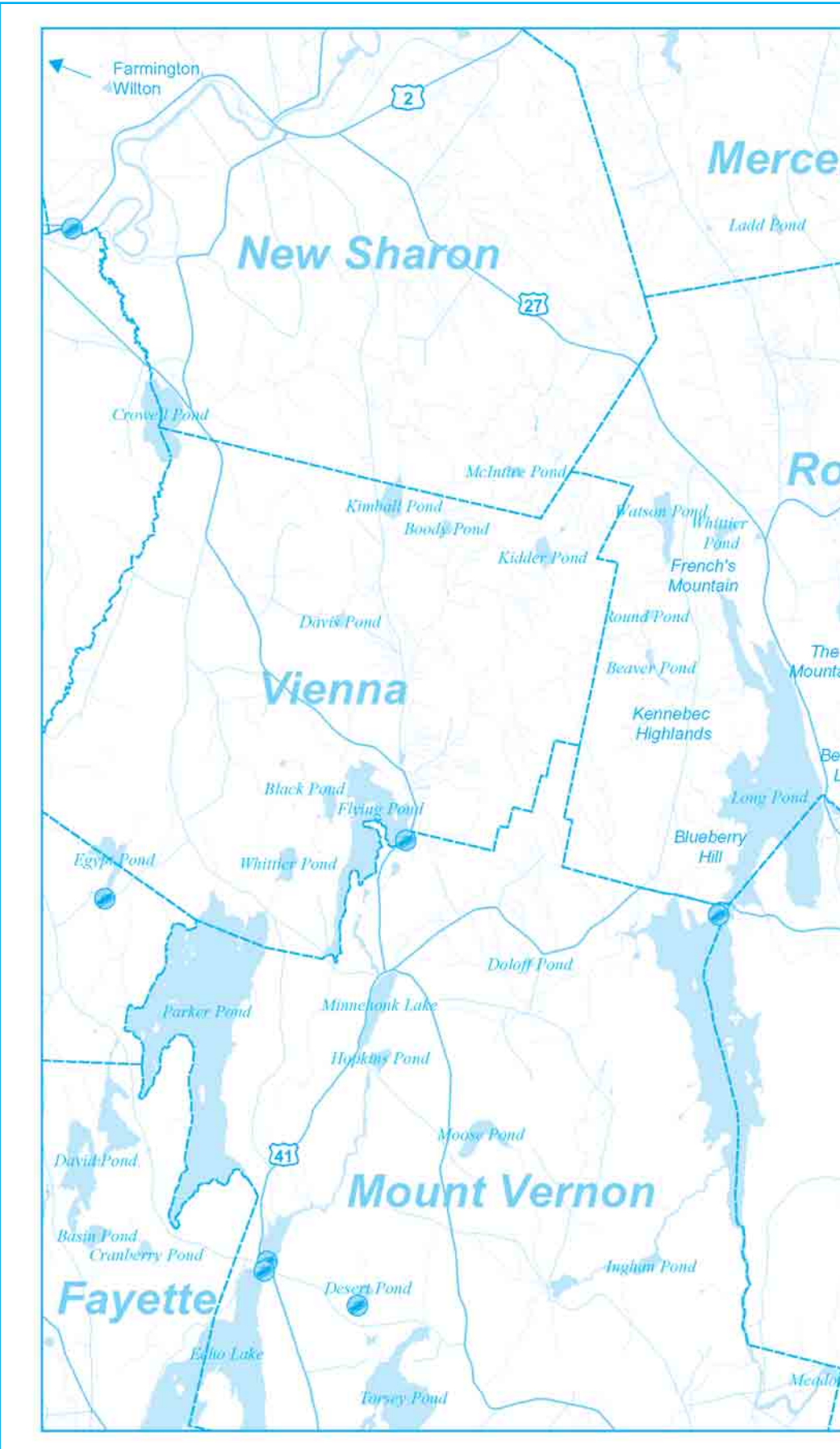
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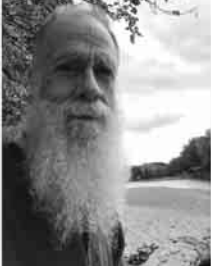




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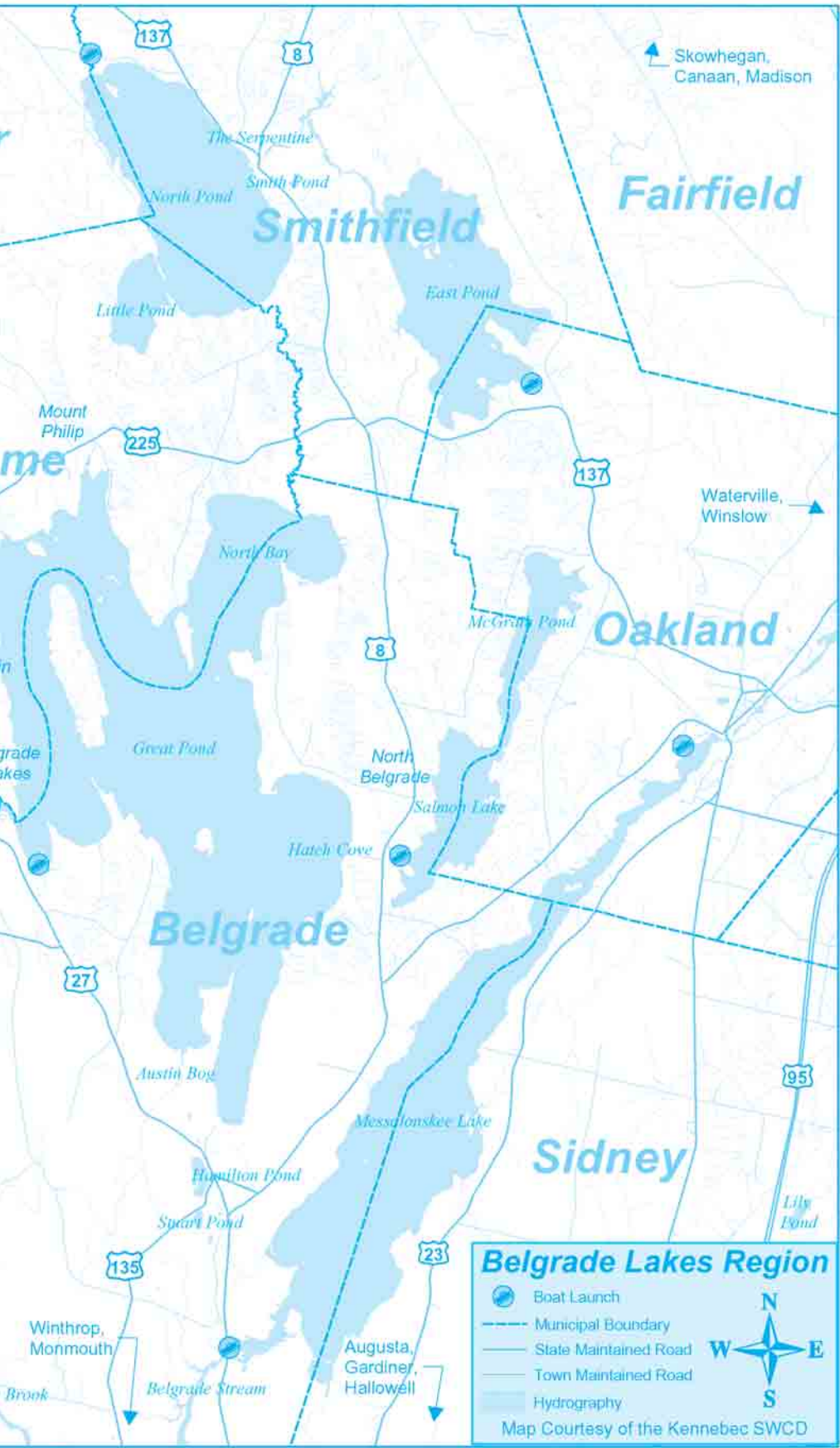
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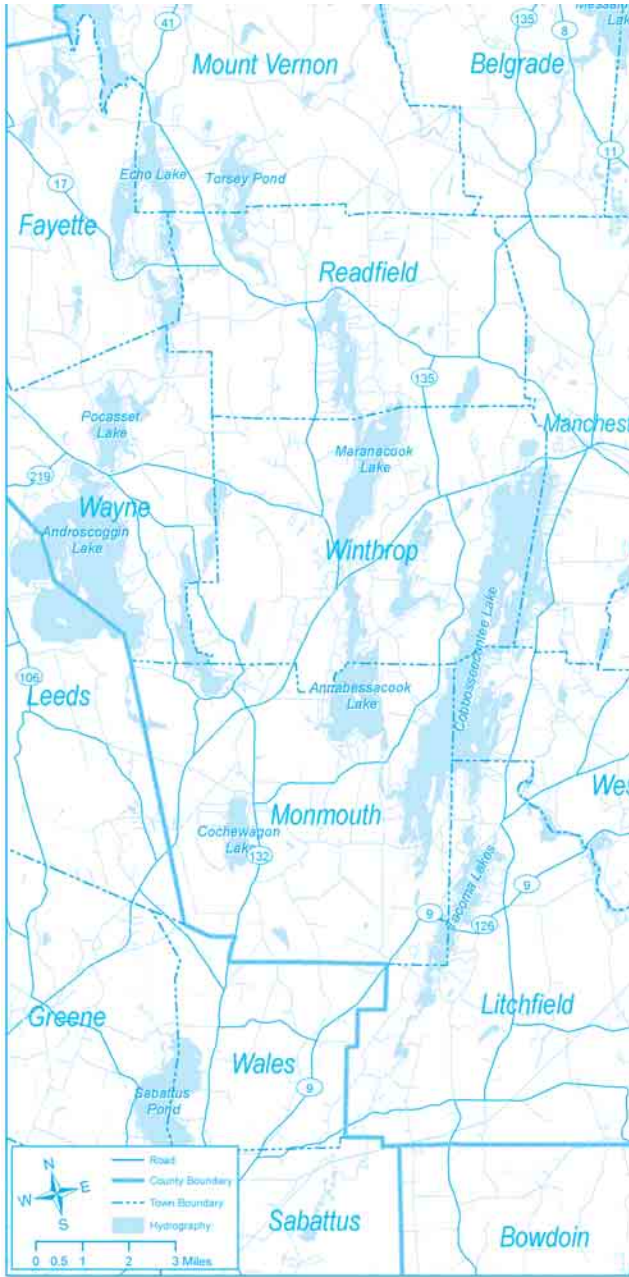
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Winthrop Area Watershed



...Continued from page 7



Mallory's Ghost
New Québécois Cinema

Maine students in grades K-12 were able to submit short films, up to 10 minutes long, in any of three categories (Narrative, Documentary, and Creative) to be judged by a panel of educators, media arts professionals, and past entrants. Winners get filmmaking equipment or a grand prize of \$500. Admission to the student festival is free.

As a special treat this year, MIFF will present two feature films and a program of seven shorts in collaboration with Québec's Festival du Film de Knowlton. (For those who aren't fluent in French, don't worry, the films will be subtitled in English.) In the first feature, *Kairos* (Fri., 6:00, C1), an actor, returning to his native Montreal after a long sojourn abroad, tries to relaunch his career but after several failed auditions instead gets a job as a nighttime radio call-in show host, becoming a philosopher and therapist to his lonely listeners.

The second is *I Lost Sight of the Landscape* (Sun., 3:00, C1), is very meta, a film about filmmaking. According to the festival's website, "Intrigued by a theatre artist's creative process, a filmmaker tries — over 16 attempts — to make the film she wants. As the years go by, unexpected turns of events blur the boundaries between art and life....*I Lost Sight of the Landscape* is an improbable comedy that reveals the uncontrollable nature of life, with honesty — and a good dose of humor."

The shorts (Fri., 3:00, C1) are a mixture of fiction and nonfiction. Four have no spoken words, giving them a meditative aspect. The shorts include "People Live Here," an experimental, animated documentary about the architecture of Montreal; "Between Thoughts," the tale of a seemingly ordinary evening that turns extraordinary when three friends join to celebrate one of their birthdays; and "The Magician," the story of a nightclub illusionist who possesses actual magical powers but is reluctant to use them due to the pain they cause.

Closing Night

The festival ends with the smash of a ball against a racket as MIFF with the East Coast premiere of *Give Me the Ball!*, documentary about tennis great and women's equality advocate Billie Jean King. A world-ranked, No. 1 player, the American athlete won 39 Grand Slam (Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, U.S. Open) titles from 1965 to 1980 and famously defeated Bobby Riggs in their "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match in 1973. In his program notes, senior festival programmer Ken Eisen writes, "There's an exclamation mark in this energizing and empowering movie's title because its subject...did everything she did on the tennis court as if her life — and those of other women! — depended on it....This is a film about a tennis player that's not as much about tennis as it is about changing the world."



Give Me the Ball!

The screening, which will take place at 7:00 Sunday in the Opera House, will also include the presentation of MIFF's Tourmaline Awards. Each year since 2022, MIFF has honored one made-in-Maine short and one made-in-Maine feature at its closing ceremony. A three-member jury of film industry professionals will select the winners from the three Maine features described above (*Downeast Hardcore*, *In Transit*, and *Mallory's Ghost*) and sixteen shorts. The features winner will receive a \$5000 prize; the shorts winner will get \$2500.

At the same time, MIFF will also present its Audience Favorite Award. For this award, any new feature film shown at the festival — not just those made in Maine — is eligible. After watching the film, attendees may rate it, and the film with the highest average rating wins. The winning filmmaker receives neither a trophy nor cash, just bragging rights.

Except the student video festival, tickets to any festival screening cost \$15. Passholders may reserve a seat for any screening until three hours before it starts. You can reserve seats online at www.miff.org, over the phone at 873-7000, or in person at the box office. Even with a reservation, it's best to come at least 20 minutes early, lest your seat be released to another patron.

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Notebook

Mount Vernon: Neighbors Driving Neighbors: Annual Online Auction

• Neighbors Driving Neighbors is holding its annual online auction from noon on July 1st to noon on July 31st on Bidding Owl (<https://newbiddingowl.com/NeighborsDrivingNeighbors>). There are 237 items being auctioned, including experiences, gift cards, golf, art, food and beverage items. Proceeds are used to cover the operating costs of NDN's volunteer transportation service, including two part-time staff. Volunteer drivers help registered riders from Belgrade, Fayette, Manchester, Mount Vernon, Readfield, Rome and Vienna get where they need to go. Check out the auction and bid often!

Oakland: It's Time for Oakfest: YEEHAW!

• The theme is Wild, Wild West and there'll be plenty of action in Oakland on Friday, July 24 and Saturday, July 25 at the annual festival designed to connect people to local food, art, music and fun. Friday night features a block party on Main Street with a parade, a cornhole competition, a beer garden and music. On Saturday, a Kids Zone, live music a car show and an ATV Glow Ride will take place at Williams Elementary School. There will be food and other concessions all day. oaklandmaine.gov/oakfest

Friends of Messalonskee: Annual \$5,000 Raffle

• The Friends of Messalonskee lake association will hold its 2025 annual meeting on Saturday, August 8, 4-6 pm, at Sunrise Bagel in downtown

Oakland. To raise money for the organization, FOM is offering a Summer Giveaway Raffle for \$5,000. Ticket packages start at \$20 and are available all summer. Proceeds will be used to protect Messalonskee Lake and its watershed. www.friendsofmessalonskeecom.

Augusta: The Ironman 70.3 Is Coming

• Ironman 70.3 Augusta, billed as Escape To Maine, will take place July 24-26, where the Ironman Village will be set up near the YMCA. The course includes a 1.2 mile swim down the Kennebec River, a 56 mile bike ride and a 13.1 mile run. Ironfans are encouraged to be volunteers or spectators. ironman.com/races/im703/maine

Farmington: Literacy Volunteers Book Sharing

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Skowhegan: Shakespeare in the Park

• Lights Up Productions will present The Tragedy of Macbeth in Coburn Park on Water Street on Friday, July 30 - Sunday, August 2 and Friday, August 7 - Sunday 9. Friday and Saturday performances are at 6 pm; Sunday performances at 2 pm. Admission is free. For more information visit www.lightsupskowhegan.org

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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

Long Days With Loons



Four hundred miles from home in vacation land, my alarm goes off at 5:00 A.M., and I'm immediately jolted awake. I hop out of bed excitedly anticipating what another day on the Belgrade Lakes will bring. The morning is cool, as we drive out. With binoculars around our necks, we are covered in thick layers of sunscreen and bug spray. Alie (my fellow intern) and I carefully ease ourselves into our survey vessel, a 15' aluminum outboard boat, and shove off from the dock. All is quiet so early in the morning. No traffic noise, no boat noise, even the water is quiet. I am reminded that this is "the way life should be" in the great state of Maine. Suddenly the seemingly somber and mournful wail of the Common Loon cuts through the silence, reverberating hauntingly around us from a great distance. I close my eyes and listen in awe. It doesn't take us long before we have our first sighting.



2026 Colby Loon Intern Katie Lutz at the helm of the Loon Project boat.

Just ten feet from our craft, a diving bird pops up out of the water and bobs around curiously. We can both tell from the obvious field marks—checkered black and white back, jet black head, striped zebra-like collar, and bright cherry red eyes—that it's a breeding adult loon. In fact, they are an incredibly difficult species to misidentify.

Loons are what some biologists may call an indicator species. This means that their presence on a lake indicates relative ecosystem health. There are truly no other creatures like them. Loons are especially known for their charismatic behaviors and looks, but with our mission as interns, our eyes are trained on just the tail end of the bird. Binoculars glued to our faces, we look at each bird's legs for the presence of bands that help us identify which individual we are seeing. A red striped band over green on the left leg and orange dot band over silver on the right tell us that we are in the presence of the Blueberry Island 2023 female.



She is typically hard to identify as she makes a habit out of avoiding us, diving under the water as soon as we approach. Her mate however (an unbanded male), spends lots of time preening and showing off his shiny unbanded legs every time we get close. He puts on quite a display, rolling around, dramatically splashing and extending his wings. It's almost like he's intentionally setting up a distraction so his mate can make a subtle getaway. Every day spent with the loons is another day we get to know them. Each bird is unique and has its own curious behaviors.

I have spent my whole life as a "bird nerd." A couple of years ago I collected and inventoried all the bird books, encyclopedias, field guides, and even novels with birds pictured on their covers in my house: 137. I learned birds from the best birder I know: my father. He learned from his grandfather. As I aspire to work with birds after college, I really could not think of a better way to spend my summer than to be in the company of loons on the beautiful Belgrade Lakes.



A 2026 Raft of seven adult loons in upper Long Pond.





King and Strout

by Martha F. Barkley

How gratifying to find both Maine authors featured in The Atlantic magazine June 2026 at the library. I left the library right away to walk a couple blocks to Kepler's Bookstore, hoping they still had a copy to buy. Of course, another article on how to win on Jeopardy also interested me.

What else did I find within the pages of this magazine? More written from the archives about Stephen King. He was published in May 2011, another fiction story, of course, "Herman Wouk is Still Alive". The Deputy Managing Editor goes on to share interviews with King about the crazy story and then an interview with the very much alive Herman Wouk in 2012...fascinating page 13 of the magazine. By the way, Wouk lived until 2019 to the almost age of 104! Can you believe history like that?

"Dinah's Hat" by Stephen King is the short story printed with a full page, eye catching huge illustration.

The informative article about Elizabeth Strout has a lovely photo of her sitting on boulders by the sea, eye glasses in hand on her lap. The photo lures the reader into a kind of summary of her latest novel, which I may or may not read. What I found interesting was *The Burgess Boys* and *Olive Kitteridge* were both dealt paragraphs by writer Adam Begley. Even though he did not mention the two-part television portrayal

of Olive, which I found too harsh, Begley points out features from both novels the reader just can not forget.

The summary article, "The Secret of Elizabeth Strout's Appeal" also ends with a brief mention of Lucy Barton. All was satisfying to me as a reader who appreciates Elizabeth Strout's take on the Somalis in Maine years ago and Olive on the coast, an observer of daily life in small seaside villages.

Apparently Trump is never named, but implied, in her newest novel about a lonely history teacher, so that may grab some readers. I have read so many novels by Strout, and this wonderful review of her works makes me want to read some that are in between my favorites. *Olive Kitteridge* I mailed to a loved one and *The Burgess Boys* memories (2013) has been relevant to our current events of immigrants in 2025-2026.

Just find a King or Strout book at the library, many titles to choose from. Maybe reread a Stephen King novel or find an Elizabeth Strout not yet read. Maine novels by these two prolific authors, Pulitzer for Strout and National Medal of Honors 2013 for King, just mentioning two awards among many prizes for both writers.

Something in the Maine fresh air and sparkling waters helps creative writing by author after author after author. Sit by the lake and create your own story this summer. Beautiful Belgrade Lakes will nurture your talents.

...Continued from page 5

Belgrade Lakes in Maine. This Belgrade era began, I think, in 1904, when I was five years old. It was sheer enchantment. We Whites were city people—everything about Belgrade was a new experience: the big freshwater lake, the pines and spruces and birches, the pasture with its sweetfern and juniper, the farmhouse where we took our meals, the rough camp with its sparsely furnished bedrooms... the boating, the swimming, and the company of other campers along the shore. The month of August was four solid weeks of heaven....

The delicious smells and sounds of Belgrade are still with me after these many years of separation. I spent much of my time in a canoe,

exploring bogs and streams, netting turtles.... At Bean's store [in the Village] Father would treat us to a round of Moxie or birch beer, and we could feed the big bass that hung around the wharf and then head back [in the launch] across the lake... (There was a new drink out called Coca-Cola, but Father assured us it was a cheap imitation of Moxie and without virtue.)"

The camp that the White's stayed at was Bear Springs Camp, where a



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MLS# 1611844 M25/L56C, Red Oaks Lodge Rd, Belgrade \$125K

A beautiful 2.7 acre spot for your new home, close enough to Great Pond to hear the loons and close enough to Belgrade Lakes to take a stroll into the village and enjoy the shops, restaurants, and listen to the weekly music events at the Village Green. Two marinas are nearby where you can rent a boat slip for Great Pond access. Public swimming areas for Long Pond and Great Pond are also nearby. Part of the property allows for seasonal glimpses of Great Pond..



MLS# 1668643 1142 West Road, Belgrade \$299K

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MLS# 1669161 192 Dutch Gap Road, Chesterville \$275K

Welcome to this custom built property in a private area in Chesterville. This gem is ready for your finishing touches and is priced to sell! With great value, this home offers three bedrooms and 1 full bath, plus an unfinished basement with many possibilities. A large barn with a wood stove, complete with a separate established driveway - with an office on the opposite side - would be perfect for your hobby farm or other endless options.



MLS# 1669110 89 Western Avenue, Augusta \$325K

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— Real Estate Update —

The Fourth of July has come and gone, and we are seeing the normal summer energy in the Lakes Region. It appears to be a classic Maine summer, another telling sign is the real estate market.

If you glance at the year-to-date numbers in the Belgrade Lakes, the year began very quiet. So far, 140 homes have changed hands across the region, an 8% dip compared to the pace of 2025. Dive into the lakefront market, and it's a similar story on paper, with just 30 sales marking a 9% drop from last year. For the beginning months of 2026, the primary culprit has been a stubborn lack of inventory, leaving eager buyers with few options.

But June has changed the narrative.

As summer officially arrived, the market experienced a positive jump. June alone saw 42 residential homes sold, a 26% jump from last year. The waterfront market saw an even more dramatic shift: lakefront sales exactly doubled, surging from 7 sales last June to 14 this year. Many buyers who had been waiting in the wings rushed to grab their slice of lake life.

This competition, paired with a limited overall supply, has driven prices to historic heights. The median price for a home in the Belgrade

A Classic Maine Summer
A Positive Market!

Lakes region has climbed 20% to \$330,000. Meanwhile, the premium for true waterfront living has skyrocketed. The median price for a lakefront home saw a 67% leap, landing at \$591,000. Because prices have climbed so sharply, the financial footprint of the market is large, the overall residential market value is up 13%, and the lakefront market volume has surged by 22%.

Yet, the most significant plot twist of the summer might be in the listing.

While inventory has been a persistent headache for buyers, June brought a welcome relief valve: a 75% spike in new listings. This sudden influx of properties has finally pushed the region's supply over the 6-month threshold. In the real estate world, a six-month supply is a magic number, it signals a shift toward a balanced market, offering buyers some long-awaited breathing room and negotiating power.

As the summer rolls on, the Belgrade Lakes market remains as dynamic as ever. Prices are soaring, but for the first time in a long time, buyers finally have options to explore.

Dan McCarron



...Continued from page 14

young Jodie Mosher cleaned the cabins and struck up a life-long friendship with E.B. White. Bean's Store belonged to L.L. Beans's brother and is where the first Bean Boots were sold with their lifetime guarantee. We need to learn from the past and try not to make the same mistakes. The Lorax was right when he gave this advice:

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.



Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



The Dams
Keeper
Report

As I write this column (7/8/26), our lakes are still in great shape. But, unfortunately for our farmers, gardeners and those smaller lakes without dams, we're back in a drought. They are now forecasting a negligible 0.11" of precipitation for the next 10 days. For the record, we were bone dry for the past 10 days as well. We'll still be able to open things up to freshen Mill Stream coming into the Village from Great Pond but only for a very short time. This will help our residents on the Stream who rely on this water. Your Dams Committee is back in the save every drop of water mode!

The Village spillway dam is presently at 1.32" above full pond with both gates still closed. Long Pond, at the Wings Mill Dam, is 1.92" also above full pond with both gates still closed. Snow Pond is down to 6.96" below their spillway due to their electricity generation needs during this hot spell. Salmon and McGrath are in the same shape and at 1.08" above full with the 1 cfs. calibrated valve opened its 15 turns.

We received this question a few times every year: "What would happen if the dams were removed." Well, in 1975, Central Maine Power (CMP) stated the following during a public meeting:

"QUESTION: What would happen to the lakes if the dam gates were permanently removed and the water allowed to drop to original lake levels?

ANSWER:

Salmon Lake-McGrath Pond would drop about six feet. Great Pond roughly seven feet and Long Pond about three, subject to levels of the stream bottoms immediately ahead of these dams. The impact on individual lake and stream front properties would vary according to the character of the shoreline. Docks, water intakes, swimming and boating conditions would be affected and some property lines may be altered. Without the dams the remaining lakes would be subject to wide variations in levels which would be uncontrollable." Knowing what we know now, the impact on water quality due to further erosion and run off would also be catastrophic.

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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deserves a strong tomorrow.
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Forbes

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Your Hammond sales representative will walk you through ShoreMaster's many options and accessories and match you with the right equipment for your waterfront. ShoreMaster aluminum dock systems are lightweight, durable, and easy to install yourself. But if you prefer, Hammond Lumber Company will set you up with an experienced local installer and deliver your new ShoreMaster dock system statewide.

Enjoy life on the water to the fullest, with a ShoreMaster dock system from Hammond Lumber Company.





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MOOSEHEAD LAKE | BEAVER COVE
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