

Summertime in the Belgrades



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

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 10

When Auctions Were A Way of Life

by Jodie Mosher



Col. Bill Mosher

April 29, 1973: The date of Col. Bill's very first auction in Smithfield, Maine. After attending auctioneering school in the midwest, the newly licensed Col. Bill got to show off his recently acquired skills as a licensed auctioneer. The old pole barn that stored hay bales back behind the family dairy barn was the site of the much anticipated first auction. Many bales were lifted by the baling twine and restacked away from the entrance to the barn to make room for the staging area and small makeshift livestock ring.

Merle, the owner of the auction and Bill's father, advertised in the local newspaper they

next several weeks.

In the mid 1940s Merle had a dream to own a dairy farm and raise his children there with Betty. Working hard to reach his goals made his dream come true. He went about things a bit differently than most local farmers and even held cattle auctions at his newly acquired farm. One of the slightly damaged black and white photos Betty saved in a photo album shows a few dozen men dressed in long wool coats, their derby hats on their heads, hands in pockets to keep warm as the cows were put on display by a handler. Betty's handwritten description reads, "Our Auction 1946, Merle Mosher's auction at the Dudley Farm (their farm),

were looking for consignments and livestock for the opening day event. Betty, Bill's mother, was in charge of concessions, baked sweets, made sandwiches and bought soda by the case set in coolers full of ice, to sell on the card tables set side by side outside in the sunshine on fresh mown grass along the dirt driveway. Potential buyers had to pass her by to get to the pole barn. The standing room only auction area at the old pole barn had reached its limits for the ever growing crowds that gathered over the



The first ad, 1973.

Sherm English, Auctioneer. It is almost guaranteed a young Bill was there watching outside alongside the men.

Merle and Bill's vision for an actual stand alone, much larger auction barn to host the auctions came to light. The Somerset Auction Barn was built in the pasture across from the farmhouse. A concession stand was also built so Betty could expand her concession menu with heartier fare. There was plenty of space for parking, wide elevated seating inside so buyers could place their items at their feet and everyone had a clear view of the auction ring, an "office" area for Bill's wife, Nancy, to hand out numbers, take payments,

Continued on page 2

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Continued from page 1



Bill's wife, Nancy, and a worker

make pay outs, and on the other side was the ramp for cattlemen and women to back up and unload their livestock, large holding pens and smaller ones for caged animals. At times animals needed to be poked and prodded to go in the direction of their holding pen. Col. Bill had wooden canes steam stamped with his name and town on them to give out to the cattle dealers to use as prods as a gift for their loyalty and of course, advertising!

The sign, proudly displayed for many years for the officially named Somerset Auction Barn was made from an old barn door, hinges still in place on the bottom. It was hand painted by amateur sign painter Bill, using white paint as the base and black lettering. It simply said:

AUCTION EVERY SUNDAY
CONSIGNMENTS WANTED
COL. BILL MOSHER

His name displayed at the bottom was his calling card. I guess if you asked around, someone would be able to tell you how to get in touch with him. No phone number was displayed.

Consignments, like box lots (which are a bunch of things and stuff that have nothing to do with anything else put into a box to be sold), tools, antiques, saddles, furniture, Avon bottles, etc. needed to be on display to pique the interest of would be bidders. After the consignments were sold, a brief stoppage occurred to prepare for the sale of the animals. People would stretch their legs, go to the concession stand for refreshments, some would pay, bring their items to their car or truck then come back to just watch the next half.

One by one, a complete description, if there was one, of the livestock brought into the ring was given by Col. Bill. It always looked like it was a smooth running operation but most likely there was a lot of commotion behind the scenes, especially getting unruly bulls, stallions and donkeys to cooperate going into the ring. Lots of laughter always ensued as Col. Bill would take a moment to crack a joke about his inept workers of the night, or tell them to get into the ring with the intimidating beasts so he could get the bidding started.

There was more to the auction business than simply waiting for people to bring things or livestock to the auction. Ads were written and placed in The Morning Sentinel early in the week as soon as enough consignments and livestock were secured. Merle and Bill, usually just Bill and a



The Auction Barn c. 1975.

hired hand, would hit the road a few times a week in the old cattle truck, with its cockeyed wooden ramp securely clipped to each side of the body. Prior to striking out, phone calls were made from landlines to many farmers, cattle dealers, horse-men and women to find livestock, a bigger money maker than the consignments, in need of new homes whether for pleasure or business. Hundreds of miles, many longer than necessary conversations and deals later, animals would be unloaded and herded into the pens at the auction barn, fed and watered until Sunday evening when they would be auctioned off to the highest bidder.

Col. Bill was the main event for most auction goers. He would welcome you by name as you walked in to find a seat, if he knew it, often times in the middle of selling a boat motor, box lot, or a deer head...you get the picture. He had a gift to make you feel welcome, make you laugh at yourself or himself, with his teasing and fun prodding and poking of the old timers and new visitors. His charm, wit and attention to detail was second to

...Continued on page 6

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Lights Up in the Skowhegan Opera House

by Gregor Smith



Skowhegan Town Hall

In February 1909, the burghers of Skowhegan inaugurated their new town hall, which included a 900-seat opera house. The structure replaced the previous town office, which had burned down five years earlier. Like its Waterville counterpart from 1902, Skowhegan’s new town hall typified a trend in the design of municipal halls in New England at the time, i.e. a majestic edifice with city or town offices on the main floor and a large, tastefully ornamented theater on the upper story.

Skowhegan’s Colonial Revival town hall was designed by John Calvin Stevens (1855-1940), a prolific Portland architect who designed more than 1,000 buildings in Maine. (Stevens was in the news in late May of this year when a historic house he designed in Augusta was moved across that city’s west side rotary to make way for the construction of a bank’s new headquarters.)

The Skowhegan Opera House opened to the public on February 13, 1909 with a staging of Eugene Walter’s drama *The Wolf*, followed three nights later by George Cohan’s musical *45 Minutes From Broadway*. Since then, the Opera House has hosted numerous town meetings, plays, dance recitals, movie screenings, concerts, commencements, and speeches by traveling orators, including Booker T. Washington, William Jennings Bryan, and William Howard Taft.

Currently, the Skowhegan Opera House is being managed by Lights Up Productions, a nonprofit incorporated in November 2023. The organization is run by a volunteer board of directors, headed by President Lyn Govoni, who aspires to expand the number and variety of events taking place in the Opera House each year. This past spring and summer, the Opera House hosted six performances of Arthur Miller’s classic play *The Crucible*, four dance recitals, three historical tours, four children’s theater workshops, a performance by Maine comedian Bob Marley, the PBS World Premiere of *Learning from Maine*, and keynote speakers for Build Maine and the Maine Grain Alliance Kneading Conference.

Lights Up is also a community theater company. Besides putting on *The Crucible* at the Opera House in late March and early April, it staged Shakespeare’s “Scottish play” in late July and early August outdoors in Skowhegan’s Coburn Park. Later this year, Lights Up will present *The Great Gatsby*, drawn from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s eponymous novel, in the Opera House in mid-October; “Ghost Tours” on Skowhegan’s Water Street at the end of that month; and *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, based on the beloved TV special, back in the theater in December.

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Summertime in the Belgrades

PO Box 290, Belgrade Lakes, ME 04918

Editor: Esther J. Perne, 207-495-3777 • sumbelnews@gmail.com

Layout Design: Michael Breault, 207-578-0226 • mo.breault@gmail.com

Webmaster : Gregor Smith • gregor@roadrunner.com

www.belgradelakesnews.com

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The Buzz about Bomazeen!

By 7 Lakes Alliance Board Chair, Jane Eberle
and Vice-Chair, Carol Sabia

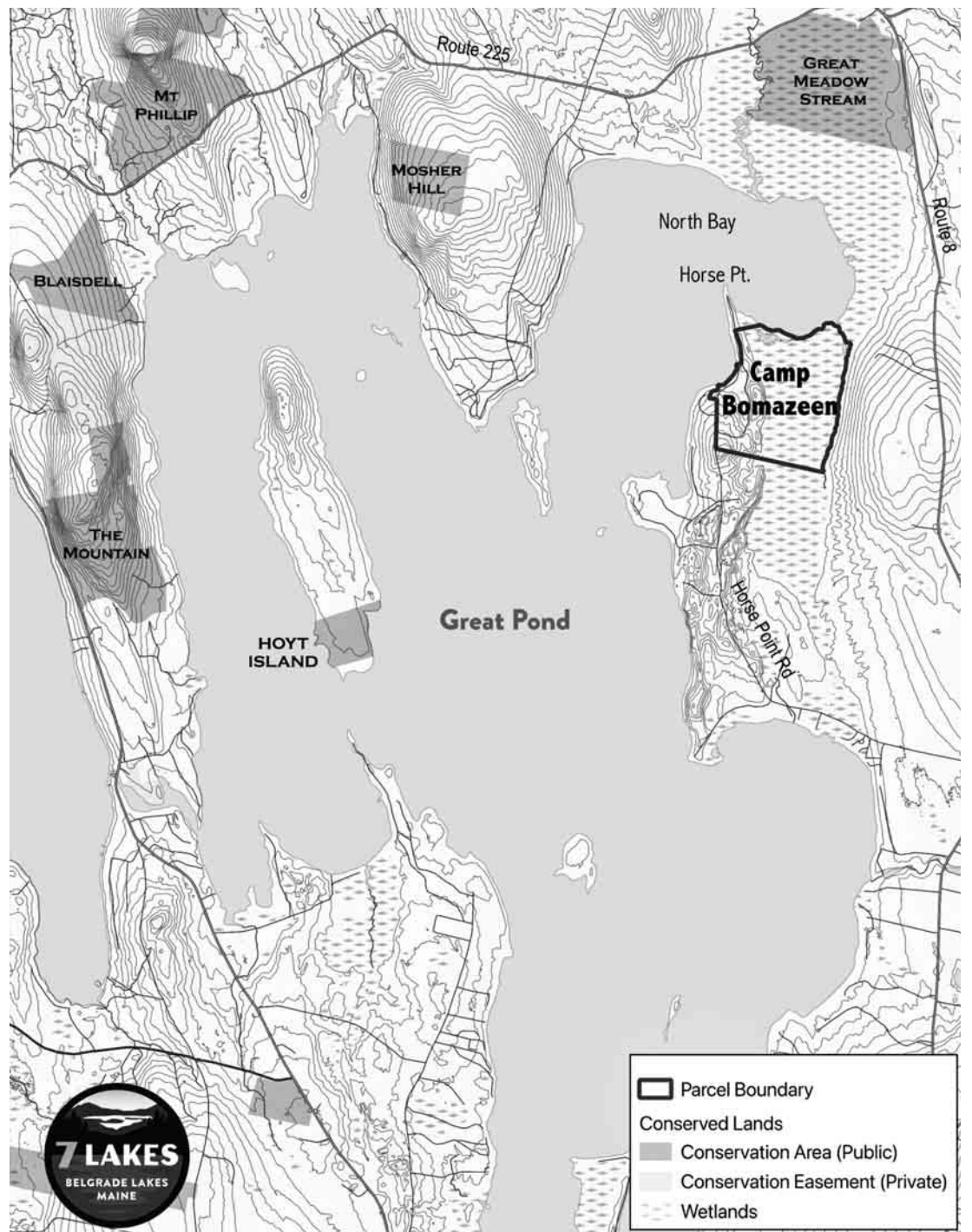
The word is all over town that 7 Lakes Alliance is planning to purchase Camp Bomazeen! But it is not just buzz. This is a real-time, real-life, real opportunity. We at 7 Lakes are incredibly excited to begin our campaign to purchase Camp Bomazeen, an opportunity that is truly a once-in-a-lifetime chance to protect a significant parcel of land on the north end of Great Pond. While the property includes 200 acres of wetland, 80 acres of upland, 900 feet of shoreline, and over 15,000 square feet of buildings, its true value is not about real estate.

Bomazeen matters because of what it protects: water quality in Great Pond, wildlife habitat and the natural character of a watershed that sustains everyone who lives on it, works on it, and returns to it every summer.

Although 7 Lakes Alliance and Pine Tree Council signed a Purchase & Sale Agreement, the deal depends on raising \$3 million from private donors by the end of August so the board can approve and close the property purchase by September. The work to raise \$3 million is underway now.

This funding will support not only property acquisition, but also due diligence that responsible conservation by a nationally accredited land trust requires: environmental assessments, a boundary survey, title review, legal costs, significant deferred facility maintenance, and establishing stewardship of the property.

Reaching the \$3 million required to conserve Bomazeen will take all of us who love this lake and this working together, for the sake of the land, the water, and the generations who will inherit it after us. To donate, visit 7lakesalliance.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/ and select Special Program: 7 Lakes/Bomazeen Conservation Fund. To make a pledge, contact Laurie Raleigh at laurie.raleigh@7lakesalliance.org or 207-931-8806.



Camp Bomazeen on Great Pond

Belgrade History Beyond Belgrade - A Busing Evolution in Belgrade Schools

Submitted by BHS member Rod Johnson



My, how things have changed in the Belgrade school system. Yes, it has been a long time since 1965 when my school days ended. Let's go back that far, some 61 years to be exact, and see what went on in those days. All the parts of going to school have evolved to such a degree that it is difficult to even compare. Let's look at busing as one.

There were 3 or 4 yellow school buses in 1965 and had been for some time. It made sense, one for each end of town and perhaps two for the rural Depot. Jamie Minot was the main Depot driver for all the years I can remember, and perhaps George Penny for the Penny and Knowles roads. John Damren drove the North Belgrade bus if memory serves, and Oral "Ding" Sawyer, alias Hooper, scooped up a few kids from the Lakes village,

route 27 and West Road. Jamie did the sports team runs at night, like a long ride to Phillips or Clinton. These were the days when the girls' and boys' teams traveled together and played basketball in back-to-back games. The buildings were non-gymnasiums. What does that mean? Our school was ranked class S (for small) and we played like kind. Most of the towns were very small and had no gym. To name a few: Albion, Winterport, New Sharon, Phillips and many more. The basketball games were played in grange halls, VFW's, Legion halls and often, with little or no heat. Showers after were not always available. On occasions, there were no subs if someone was sick or had gotten a poor report card and was off the team. Our baseball team had to coax a couple boys on occasion, just to get a full team to man the bases! Private cars were used to travel to games and riding in Barry Morrell's 58 Ford convertible all the way to Albion was a great treat. The coaches usually took their car as well just to get us all there.

The small-town school situation became alleviated over time, as small towns joined with others nearby to create school districts. A large school was built that would accommodate three or four towns, and kids were bused much further. The original schools became lower grades for the most part. The system has its ups and downs, but one thing is for sure, the number of buses and their costs are a part of the now huge school budget.

While at a softball game that a friend's daughter was playing in recently, I was truly amazed at the sprawl of buildings and ball fields that now exists behind what was Williams High School in Oakland during the 1960s. This is part of the district now. Belgrade did build a gymnasium in 1961, which was a major step for sports and also served as a cafeteria and meeting place.





— Take It Outside —

Land and Stewardship

By Peter Kallin

Summer continues to fly by and every week seems busier than the last. I got out hiking last week and stopped at The Mountain to see if I could find kids hiking with their parents. As I began my hike up the hill, I met the Colancecco family from Wenham, MA finishing up their hike. They told me they have been coming to Great Pond annually for the past seven years, renting a different camp each year. This year, they were renting LL Bean's old camp at the end of Dry Point Rd. Dad is a physician at the Leahy Clinic in Beverly and their kids, 9, 7, and 6 have been hiking French Mountain every year. This year, they decided they were ready for The Mountain and hiked the Long Pond Loop followed by the Outer Loop and had a great time. Next year they will be back and looking forward to hiking Mt Phillip.



Colancecco Family with kids, 9, 7, and 6 after hiking The Mountain.

As a Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Certified Land Trust, Seven Lakes has two primary committees that work closely together to coordinate our land conservation activities: the Land Trust Committee, and the Stewardship Committee, which have several members in common to facilitate communication. The Lands team implements our Land



Dan, Sally, and Beth turning a steep hillside on the Lambert Trail into a trail.

Conservation Plan that was developed and has been regularly updated in accordance with Green Infrastructure principles for linking landscapes and communities (Ref.: Benedict and McMahon, 2006). The plan identifies a set of hubs (large, relatively undeveloped habitat blocks) and corridors (linkages between the hubs, including stream corridors, ridge lines, etc.). The Lands team evaluates individual properties for water quality impacts, scenic value, recreational opportunities, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, climate resilience, risk of development, proximity to other conserved lands, and whether a conservation easement or fee purchase (or donation) is appropriate, inter alia. The Land team coordi-

ates the legal aspects of the acquisition, such as Environmental Site Assessments (ESA), surveys, drafting conservation easements (CE), appropriate Board approvals, etc. This includes evaluating potential conservation partners (e.g., State or Municipal, other Land Trusts) and funding sources (e.g., Land for Maine Future (LMF), Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program (MNRCP).

During the acquisition phase, the Stewardship Team helps complete baseline documents for the CE or Fee property and begins to develop the Management Plan that summarizes how the property will be managed to protect essential conservation values of the property and how any public access issues (hunting, potential trails, education and outreach, etc.) will be managed. This includes identifying estimated costs for carrying out long-term stewardship and working with the Development Committee to raise stewardship endowment funds. Once the acquisition is complete, the Stewardship Team completes the Management Plan and identifies how the required annual monitoring visits and reporting will be accomplished. The Stewardship team includes a cadre of dedicated volunteers with diverse skills who take on drafting organizational policies and monitoring properties to meet IRS requirements. Each Fee property has a primary monitor that visits the property approximately weekly and identifies short-term maintenance issues (e.g., toppled trees after storms, erosion issues after storms, etc.) that needs attention. The team also has a cadre of volunteers who come out on volunteer workdays to move rocks, mark and maintain trails, control invasive species, etc.

The 7-Lakes Stewardship Committee puts in a lot of time keeping the local trails in safe, hiking condition and able to withstand wet weather without serious erosion. If you enjoy getting out on the trails, please consider signing up for one or more of our trail workdays. Contact Dan Woughter (495-6039) for the latest schedule, which is usually posted on the sign in front of the Resource Center

Take advantage of the rest of the summer and get out on the lakes or hike or bike in the hills. And take a kid along. Or a parent or grandparent. It's a special feeling pointing out sections of the trail you helped build, especially on a property you helped buy! You will be creating memories that will last and inspiring future stewards of this special place. 7-Lakes Alliance is currently trying to close on two major land deals in the near-term: Robbins Mill Stream and Camp Bomazeen, both of which have significant water quality benefits and one of which will help support Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in central Maine. We have pledges for almost \$2M for these projects but are still actively seeking matching donations to bring these projects to fruition and protected for future generations. Please contact Laurie Raleigh at <https://www.7lakesalliance.org/> (496-6039) and tell her you want to contribute to the Land Conservation Fund.



Tom Arminio, Cam Rogers, McKenna Thompson, Malcom Campbell and Scott Guay on a new bridge over an intermittent stream on the Blaisdell Trail.

CHINA LAKE



CHINA LAKE - Step back in time and enjoy the charm of this historic 1835 former parsonage, beautifully situated on the shores of China Lake with 115 feet of private water frontage. Surrounded by stunning perennial gardens, this special property blends timeless character with thoughtful updates and a picturesque lakeside setting. Recent improvements include updated vinyl windows, added insulation, and durable Hardie Plank siding, enhancing comfort and efficiency while preserving the home's historic appeal. The spacious renovated kitchen opens to a spectacular great room featuring cathedral ceilings accented by exposed beams reclaimed from the property's original attached shed. Filled with natural light, the great room overlooks the lake and includes a pellet stove and atrium doors leading to a large deck--perfect for entertaining, relaxing, or taking in the beautiful water views. Offering 3 bedrooms and inviting living spaces filled with period charm, the home showcases its rich history while providing comfortable year-round living. A cozy wood stove in the living room adds warmth and ambiance during cooler months. Relax on the lovely wide covered side porch, an ideal spot for morning coffee, evening gatherings, or simply enjoying the peaceful surroundings. Whether you're looking for a year-round residence, a seasonal retreat, or a piece of local history, this unique waterfront property offers historic charm, beautiful gardens, and exceptional frontage on one of Central Maine's most desirable lakes. **\$745,000**



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— Calendar —

Through Saturday 8/15 - The Friends of Lithgow Book Sale, 626-2415, Lithgow Public Library, 45 Winthrop Street, Augusta.

Through Saturday 8/22 - Skowhegan State Fair, food, fun, exhibits, livestock events, live bands, daily shows, harness racing, pulls, demolition derbies, parking \$5 per car per day, \$10 or \$15 gate admission, kids 10 and under free, \$25 ride bracelet, Skowhegan Fairgrounds, Route 201, Skowhegan.

Through Saturday 8/22 - "Our Town," Lakewood Theater, 474-7176, Route 201, Madison.

Friday 8/14 - Guided Paddle on Salmon Lake and McGrath Pond, 10 am-12 pm, RSVP 495-6039, meet at Pleasant Point Park, 59 McGrath Pond Road, Oakland.

Friday 8/14 - Studio Two: Beatles Tribute Band, the early years 1962-1966, featuring Berklee College of Music Alums, 2 and 7 pm, free admission, air-conditioned, 946-5311, 371 Sawyer Road, Greene.

Friday 8/14 - Artwalk Gardiner, visit the studios, meet the artists, displays in downtown businesses, 5-8:30 pm, Water Street, Gardiner.

Friday 8/14 - Jenny Jumpstart and The Cap Guns, Johnson Hall Free Waterfront Concert, 6-7:30 pm, Waterfront Park on the Kennebec River, Gardiner.

Saturday 8/15 - Village Green Artisan Fair, 9 am-2 pm, free admission, arts, crafts, food truck, Route 27, downtown Belgrade Lakes.

Saturday 8/15 - Winthrop Sidewalk Art Festival, food, sales, artists, crafters, 9 am-3 pm, along Main Street, downtown Winthrop.

Saturday 8/15 - Central Maine ATV Glow Ride, 400 machines lighting up Waterville to Fairfield, meet at Walmart Parking lot, Waterville Commons, Waterville.

Sunday 8/16 - Belgrade Lakes Farmers' Market, 8 am-1 pm, parking lot 7 Lakes Alliance, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Sunday 8/16 - LQH, locally founded band brings the funk and jazzy jams, Concert at Norcross Point, free, 2-4 pm,

Winthrop.

Sunday 8/16 - Two Blue Cats, Concerts in the Park, 5-6:15 pm, Coburn Park, Skowhegan.

Monday 8/17 - Play for a Cause Golf Tournament, Kennebec Valley YMCA, support local programs, 9 am registration, 10 am shotgun start, Augusta Country Club, Route 202, Manchester.

Monday 8/17 - Summer Tree Hike, 1-3 pm, please RSVP 495-6039, meet at the 7 Lakes Homestead Nature Education Center on the south side of Watson Pond Road across from Wildflower Estates.

Monday 8/17 - Western Maine Foothills Band, Concert in the Park, 7-8:30 pm, Meetinghouse Park, downtown Farmington.

Tuesday 8/18 - The Fossils, Oosoola Park Music Series, 5-7 pm, Oosoola Park, Ferry Road, Norridgewock.

Tuesday 8/18 - Scolded Dogs, Rock on the River 2025, 7-8:30 pm, Water Street, Hallowell.

Wednesday 8/19 - Natural History and Conserved Land Education Boat Tour, 10 am-12 pm, please RSVP 495-6039, 7 Lakes Alliance, 137 Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.

Wednesday 8/20 - Invasive Aquatic Plant Identification Workshop, 1-2 pm, please RSVP 495-6039, 7 Lakes Alliance, 137 Main Street, Belgrades Lakes.

Wednesday 8/19 - House & Garden Tour, 10 am, \$10 per person, reservations recommended at vaughanhomestead.org, 622-9831, Vaughan Homestead, 2 Litchfield Road, Hallowell.

Wednesday 8/19 - Community Read Book Discussion, Heartwood by Amity Gaige, 6 pm, Belgrade Public Library, Depot Street, Belgrade.

Thursday 8/20 - Farmers' Market, 2-6 pm, Head of Falls, downtown Waterville.

Thursday 8/20 - Cruise-In, 5-7 pm, Waterfront Park, Kennebec River, Gardiner.

Thursday 8/20 - Darlin' Corey, Village Green Music Series, 6:30-8 pm, 495-3481, recreation@townofbelgrade.com, Main Street, Belgrade Lakes.



...Continued from page 2

none. It was obvious when you would hear the laughter and crowd heckling that many came just to listen to his auctioneering banter for entertainment.

Gripping the gavel end using the handle as a pointer, he would point to the numbered index cards held high, a hand gesture or even an eyebrow raise from bidders. Sometimes he would draw a bidder in by cajoling them with sarcasm about how badly they needed an item. Here is a short example to help you imagine -

"How much ya, gonna give? Let's start it out at \$5 dollars. I've got 5 and now 10. Ten, 10,10...I can tell you really want this, yes, you, the man in the hat looking at his wife that just hit him on the arm. Ten it is! Now can I get 15, who'll give 15 for this amazing specimen of a box lot? No one? Going once, going twice...SOLD! And with the slam of the gavel it was on to the next item.

Laughter was always a key component of the day. There were spotters paid or unpaid, in the ring that would help Col. Bill target bidders in the far reaching corners of the stands so that if he was navigating a bidding war, he would not miss anyone's bid. Once the item(s) were sold, a runner, the person responsible for delivering the winning bidder the goods purchased, would set the item near them or hand it to them then walk away to grab the next item sold and so on.

Someone, it could have been Diane, Martha or Bill's sister, Jean, would sit next to him with a yellow legal-sized pad of paper that was scored with 2 lines on one side to notate the item description, the winning bidders number and the price paid. Once a page was full, the runner or closest person to her was instructed to take it to Nancy. Each number corresponded to a name in the file Nancy kept and the information gathered was rewritten to clearly show what was purchased and for how much. Honesty of the bidders, who already had their goods in hand, was imperative and expected. They were to go to the office area to pay before they left the barn to head home.

Auctioning off the livestock was commonly the most exciting part of the day. Once all of the consignments were sold, paid for and taken out by the new owners, an entirely different feel

Continued on page 10...

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STATE LAW REQUIRES DEBIT CARDS ONLY FOR ONLINE PURCHASES

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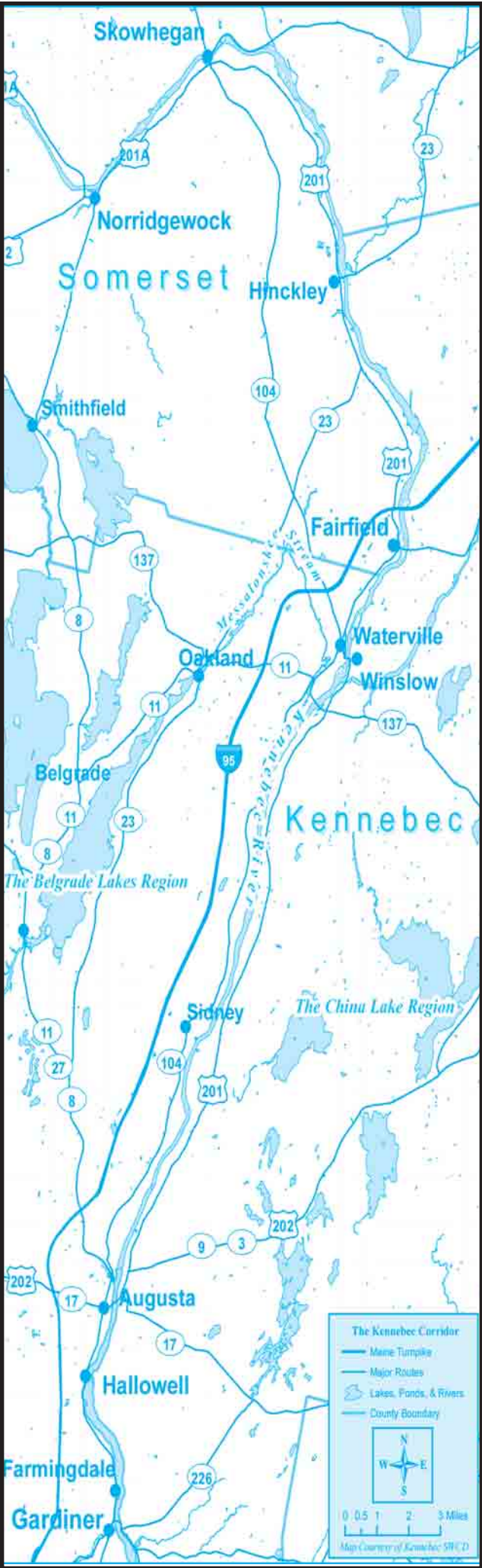
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—Along the Kennebec River Corridor—



“Loon Room” —a New Neighborhood Hangout Spot
Highlighting Live Music, Amateur Comedy & More—
Takes Flight Friday, August 14, in Waterville

Devoting itself to creating a warm, inviting “All Are Welcome Here” ambiance for the Waterville-area community, Loon Room—a live music, amateur comedy, and special events venue (with a future used-goods sister store coming soon)—is opening on Friday, August 14 at 1 p.m., at 252 Main Street, in the old A Coffeehouse building across from Cappza’s Pizza. That evening’s Special Event will be an Open Mic “Beatles Night at Loon Room,” from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The unique, community-nurturing “coffeehouse meets pub meets live-events space” will be open:

- Fridays from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., with Open Mic Live-Music Events from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., with Comedy & Storytelling the first three Saturdays of the month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; then private Fun Nights such as Trivia, Bingo, and Talent Shows each fourth Saturday of the month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., devoted to BYOT (Bring Your Own Topic) “Sunday Afternoon Discussions,” plus a Live Discussion Podcast from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Enhancing the vibe and ambiance of Loon Room will be a host of enjoyable drinks and “local munchies,” including organic, fair trade coffee drinks, teas, ciders, “mocktails,” good wines, seltzer water, THC drinks, and good beers.

For the convenience of all customers and specifically for those wishing to participate in the Open Mic and Fun Nights, Loon Room will provide extra guitars (with musicians encouraged to bring their own), a bass guitar, and an electric piano, plus free parking at the side of the building, on Main Street, and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

A future used-goods store upstairs at Loon Room, “Byde’s Badlands,” also owned by Jenny and Craig Allen—which will sell uncured, high-end-sourced used clothing in bins by the pound—is also planned for the coming weeks.

For more information about Loon Room, please email loonroom@novem.technology

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... continued from page 3

Before Lights Up Productions came along, a town employee, most recently Cara Mason, served as Opera House manager. There was also an Opera House Committee, which consisted of the Opera House manager, a town select person, and other interested citizens, including a representative of the Friends of Skowhegan. “The Friends’ responsibility was to raise funds to give to the Town of Skowhegan for their updates and renovation projects,” Govoni said.

In July 2024, Lights Up Productions began a three-year lease of the theater, for which it pays only \$1/year but must make \$100,000 worth of upgrades during the triennium. So far, Lights Up has bought a sound board, clip-on microphones for actors, and speakers. Govoni continues, “We have a new lighting board and have replaced the old stage lights with LED lights. We have added safe offstage flooring, extending from the wooden stage planks all the way to the outer walls. We have big dream projects we hope to complete by the end of June 2027, including lobby level bathrooms, a new main stage valance, lobby renovations, and balcony railings.”

Looking further ahead, Lights Up aspires to make more extensive enhancements to the theater to make it more friendly to actors and audience members alike. Govoni envisions an

Continued on page 15...



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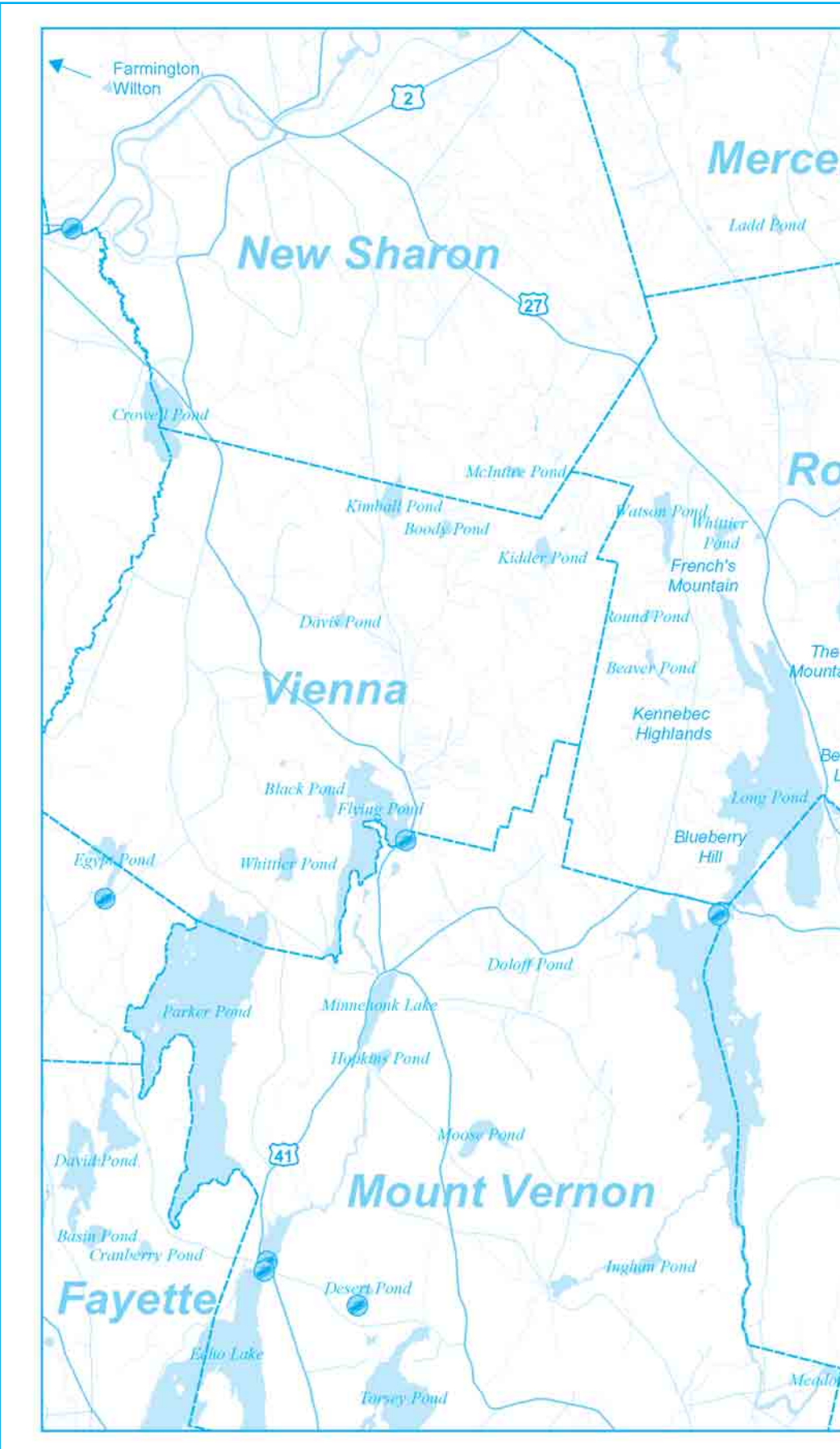
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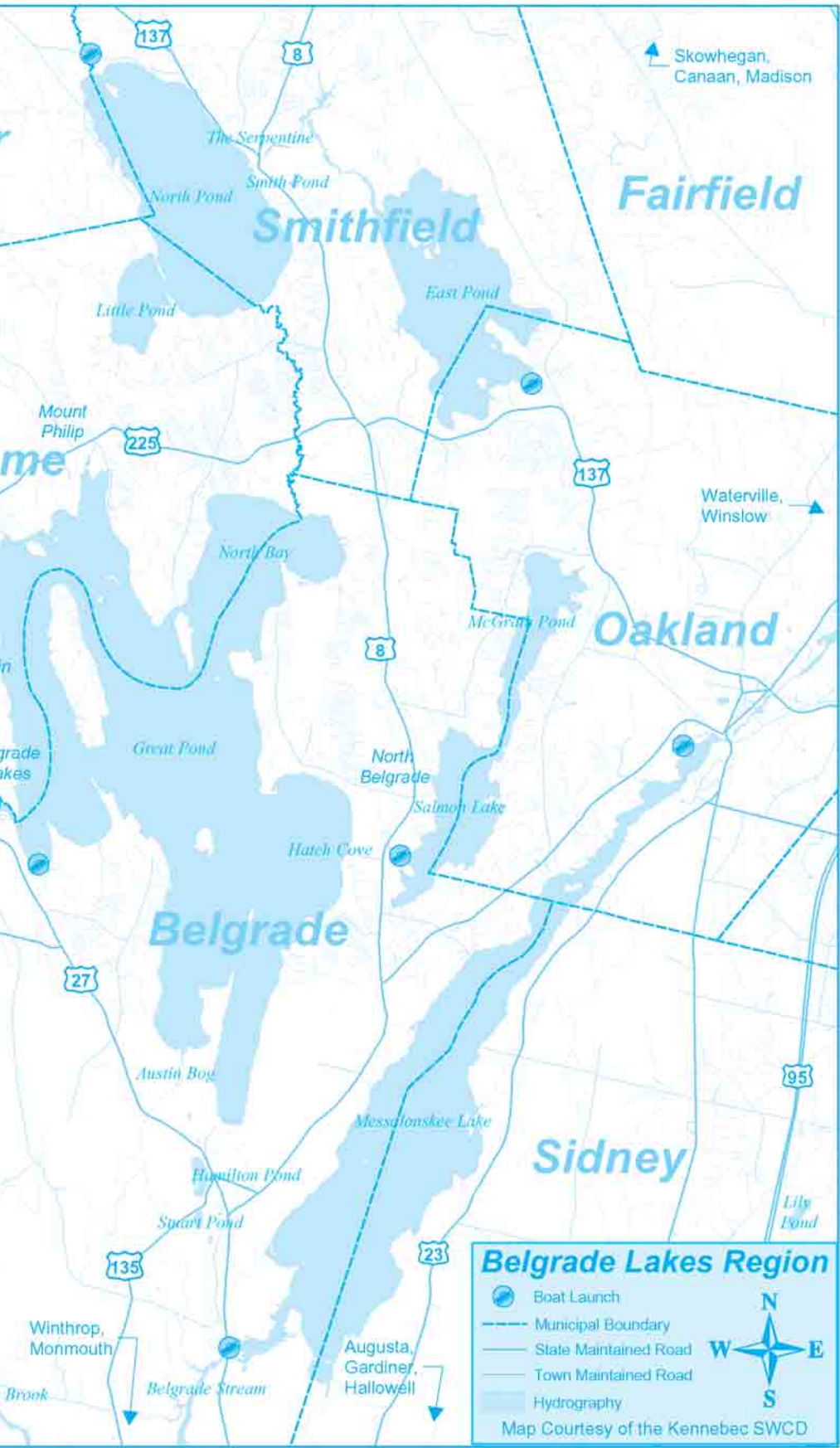
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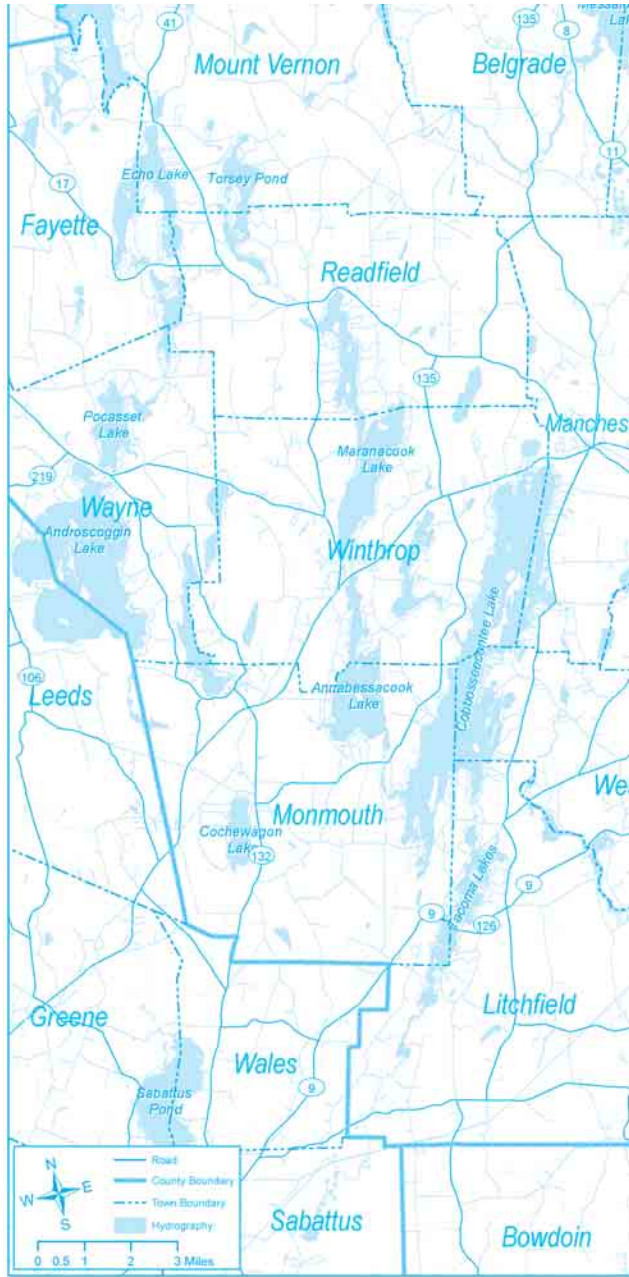
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Winthrop Area Watershed



Designing Women at Longfellow's Greenhouses in Manchester

Designing Women, a group of women artists and makers has been around since the 90s. Our mission is to showcase high quality arts and crafts by women artisans while inviting the public to support us along with the selected nonprofit. (Visit www.designingwomen.org) The market at Longfellow's Greenhouses is celebrating its 20th year. When the group approached the owners of Longfellow's there was 6 feet of snow on the ground and the concept of having an artisan's market out in the field was a new idea. Scott Longfellow suggested Sexual Assault Crisis and Support Center for the non-profit to partner with and the rest is history.

Designing Women is an incredible show filled with talented artisans, inspiring creativity, and something for everyone to enjoy. We have been truly honored to host this special event for the past 20 years. It has been a pleasure partnering with an organization that is so passionate about supporting local artists and bringing the community together. Our customers look forward to the show each year, and it has become a favorite tradition here at Longfellow's. Congratulations to Designing Women on this wonderful milestone, we look forward to many more years of working together!

This year will be the 20th year for the market and we will have a couple of food trucks, music and 20 or so women artisans and makers from pottery, clothing, photography and much more. Hope to see you at the market. Saturday August 29. 9:30-4pm.

For more information call Mary K at 207 713-4248 or Longfellow's Greenhouses 207 622-5965.



....Continued from page 6



took over. Cattle dealers in their common green khaki pants with matching shirts, eating dynamites or American chop suey from the concession stand, would chat around the ring or seated in the stand after doing a walk through to check out the animals in the pens earlier. Guinea pigs, rabbits, geese, ducks, pheasants, chickens, goats, sheep, ponies, horses, calves, cows, bulls, pigs, piglets, you name it, Col. Bill has sold it. The squeal of a child that wore down a mother or a father for a pet to take home was music to Bill's ears and would suggest another one so that one would not be lonely.

The lively communication between Bill and his "fans" is truly what made

the auction one of the most memorable events in Smithfield's history. People would drive from all over the state to attend. Cars, pickup trucks, cattle trucks and motorcycles would be parked on the side of the road on Rte 8 once the lot was filled and even along Pine Tree Camp Road. Neighbors would call the police once in a while to complain about cars parked too close to their yards. No Parking signs could be found along Route 8 right up until the most recent complete overhaul of the roads a few years ago. Summer people still share favorite memories of their time at the auction and how much fun it was to be so close to farm animals, the boards on the pens were plenty wide enough to reach in and touch, being able to run around and make friends with other children while parents did their own thing.

Bill thrived as an auctioneer and was sought to auctioneer at fairs, toy auctions at Christmas, car auctions, and any auctions that didn't coincide with his on Sunday. As the runner for many Sunday auctions through the years of my youth, I was always so proud to say, "Yeah, that's my dad."



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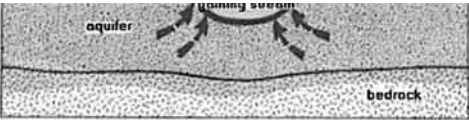
The Dams Keeper Report

Your twelve Town Delegates on the Interlakes Dams Committee wish that we could magically add some water to our ponds but such lofty goals are still beyond even our reach! Our ponds and gardens are all in desperate need of rain. Since Memorial Day, we’ve been forecasting the possibility of 26% less precipitation this summer, but it has now hit home! Even for the skeptics!

Great Pond is now just 1.56” below full pond at the dam but we’ve got reports of 6-8” below up in North Bay. Long Pond, at the Wings Mill dam, is currently 6.48” below full. At Tracy Cove, 9 miles north on upper Long Pond, we are at a full 8” below full. UGH!!! Salmon is also feeling the effects of the drought at 3.6” below full. Our friends on Messalonskee, like the rest of us, are trying to ‘adjust’ with their levels down to 6.24” and of course, they are at the absolute end of the seven lakes chain so you can see that no one has been immune from THE DROUGHT!

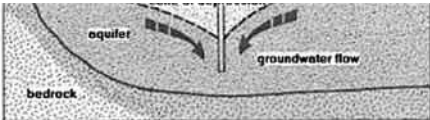
Intellectually, we know that we are losing 3/10” to 6/10” per day at this rate in evaporation with an ambient outside temperature of 85F to 90F per day. Add that to the fact that 75% of our camps still using lake water in addition to the normal seepage from our dams and you can see why there are rocks now that we haven’t seen since last fall’s drawdown! But, that still doesn’t account for all of the decrease in water levels!

There is also an additional phenomenon which I have talked about in years past called, “induced recharge”! Basically, when you’re swimming without a care in the world and you ‘run’ into a cold spot, you are in an aquifer where water is coming into the lake from the bedrock and water table. (We’re not talking about the warm spots here!)



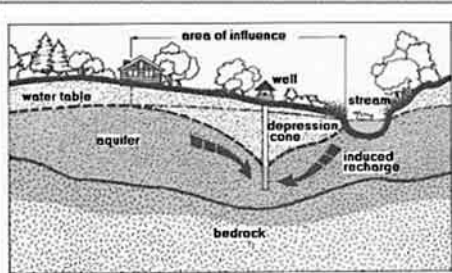
Gaining Streams

Streams that receive groundwater discharges are gaining streams. The level of water in the stream is the water table level for the adjacent aquifer. This is also true for lakes and wetlands that receive groundwater discharges. More than half of the total flow of some streams during dry periods may be from groundwater discharge.

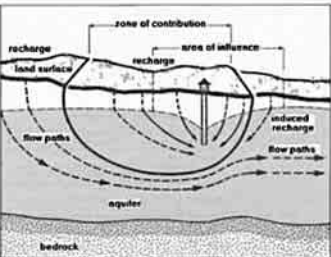


Wells: Cone of Depression

Pumping from wells lowers the water table near a well. This known as the cone of depression. The land surface overlying the cone of depression is also referred to as the area of influence. Groundwater flow is diverted towards the well as it flows into the depression cone.



Wells: Induced Recharge



Well Contribution Zone

But, in a DROUGHT, when the water table is down, the water pressure is reversed, and our precious water goes slowly back into the water table. Long Pond, in particular, due to its bedrock, is blessed with an inordinate number of aquifers and a greater potential for “induced recharge”! Hence, Long Pond’s even lower water levels.

As of this writing we have only received .94” of precipitation in the past 10 days, mostly due to the .76” from last night’s storm. There is only 0.55” of precipitation forecasted for the next 10 day which is nothing! The showers are spread over 5 days but still only amounts to 0.55”, if we in fact get it! We’re losing that EACH DAY due to evaporation! So, for those of you or your neighbors with boatlifts, as I’ve stated numerous times, you’ll want to make sure that you can still get your boat off. We wish we could just open up the magic faucet, but we still can’t find it!! Please share this updated information with your neighbors.

Enjoy the family, your Vacation and this beautiful weather!

Dick Greenan

Belgrade Lakes Watershed Dams Committee



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Waterville Creates, 10 Water Street, Suite 106, Waterville, 616-0292, www.watervillecreates.org

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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

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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



Please Fish Lead-Free to Protect Maine's Loons and Other Wildlife

According to our Maine Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (IF&W), ingested lead fishing tackle is the third leading cause of death for adult loons of which there are over 4,000 adult loons across the state, the largest population in the Northeast. Keeping lead sinkers and jigs out of Maine waters will help us all increase the survival of these birds and will allow for continued population growth of this species across the Northeast.

I typically collect two to three adult loons testing positive for lead poisoning every summer and just this past week, one from Lower Long Pond.



A "beached" loon is almost always a victim of lead poisoning or acute trauma.

gear. It's also the law but more than that, it is our moral responsibility.

In Maine, it is illegal to use, sell, or offer for sale lead sinkers and unpainted lead jigs measuring 2.5 inches or less in length or weighing one ounce or less. Effective this coming September 1, 2026, the use of all painted lead jigs measuring 2.5 inches or less in length or weighing 1 ounce or less will be prohibited and it is about time.



Left: This illegal lead jig and tangled fishing line was fortunately removed in July by a Beaver Cove resident.

Common Loons and Lead Fishing Tackle Ingestion

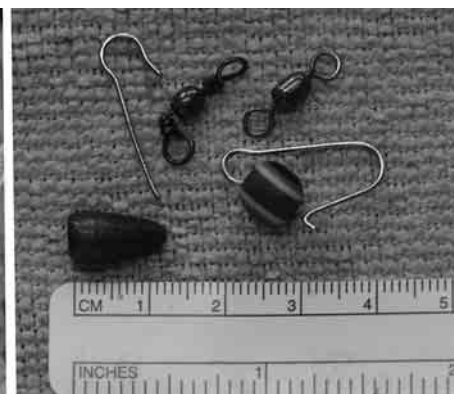
Exposure 1: Sinkers and Jigs Mistaken for Gizzard Stones



Exposure 2: Consumption of Fish with Attached Fishing Gear

Source: Maine IF&W

It is also highly recommended to NOT dispose of your broken off fishing line over the side as it is more likely to get tangled up on a loon's feet or bill. We all want to retrieve our favorite and expensive lures, but we all know that many times it is just not possible. The extra effort to retrieve your lure will keep it out of reach of our loons. All too often, when the fish breaks off the line, the fish is now compromised and becomes an easy meal for a passing loon whereby the hook invariably gets caught in their throat or gizzard and will ultimately result in their painful demise.



A 2022 Great Pond euthanized adult due to lead fishing tackle digestion.

While we're at it, remember that Maine has a 200' no-wake zone on all fresh-water bodies as well as our coastline and if you are taking part in any wakesurfing activity, please remember that you must be in at least 15 feet of water and must be more than 300 feet off the shoreline. I am encouraged by seeing more and more wakeboats at least riding out in the middle of the lake as opposed to a cove. Thank you!

If you have particular questions regarding our Belgrade loon population, please email your inquiry to: info@blamaine.org and we will try to answer your question either in this column or via email. We still have a lot of Summer left, so we hope you'll continue enjoying the "Call of the Loon"! We are so fortunate to summer here in the Belgrades!

Dick Greenan, Chairman, BLA Loon Preservation Project





Bomazeen Conservation Project
We can't do it alone. We need you.

Our community has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to conserve this 280-acre property before it is lost forever.

~~\$3 million~~ **\$1.25 million**
to raise by August 31, 2026.

Bomazeen matters because of what it protects: water quality in Great Pond, wildlife habitat and a beloved watershed where we live, work, and play.



Support the Bomazeen Conservation Project:
7lakesalliance.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/

Under the Donor Information section, select the "7 Lakes / Bomazeen Conservation Fund" in the Special Programs dropdown.

Questions? Contact Laurie Raleigh, Advancement Director at 207-931-8806 or laurie.raleigh@7lakesalliance.org.



— Real Estate Update —

For decades, Maine’s Belgrade Lakes Region was the quintessential quiet escape. Inspired by Ernest Thompson’s *On Golden Pond*, the Belgrade Lakes chain offered clean waters, and generational camps. While coastal towns like Kennebunkport, Camden and Mount Desert Island regularly saw seven-figure real estate sales, million-dollar transactions in Central Maine were rare anomalies.

Then came 2020.

In the five years leading up to the pandemic, the Belgrade Lakes market recorded just eight sales above the one million dollar mark. Since then, that number has surged to seventy-three, a nearly nine-hundred percent increase that signals a permanent market transformation.

Prior to 2020, luxury buyers in Maine focused almost exclusively on the coast. The pandemic reshaped those priorities. Fueled by remote work, high-earning professionals realized year-round lakefront living was entirely feasible. Buyers increasingly favored freshwater lakes over oceanfront living. Positioned within thirty minutes of Augusta and Waterville, the Belgrades provided the perfect mix of privacy and convenience.

At the center of this are Great Pond and Long Pond, where larger water bodies, easy access and amenities generate high valuations. Add

Luxury Lakefront

in the nationally acclaimed Belgrade Lakes Golf Club, an unpretentious village, and the region became an ideal alternative to crowded coastal towns.

This surge isn't just a product of inflation; it reflects a shift in land value.

In many transactions, a million-dollar price tag water frontage. Buyers are purchasing modest camps, tearing them down, and building year-round compounds. What used to be simple seasonal camps are now being transformed into luxury, four-season escapes.

For sellers, one million dollars is no longer a soft ceiling; it is the entry-level baseline for prime shoreline on lakes like Great, Long, and Messalonskee. For buyers, securing inventory requires quick action and substantial funds.

The jump from eight to seventy-three million-dollar sales confirms that the Belgrade Lakes Region has transitioned from a quiet regional market into a more widely recognized luxury market. For property owners on these shores, the Belgrades represent some of the most sought-after real estate in northern New England.

Dan McCarron

...Continued from page 7

“extended lobby area, overlooking the Kennebec River, backstage dressing room areas, new patron and stage scenery/equipment elevators, and an enclosed riverside stairway that will replace the current outside decaying fire escape. The estimated cost for all of these renovation dreams would be in the 10 million dollar range.”

To aid with those endeavors, Lights Up will hold a Gatsby Soirée Fundraiser in the Great Hall at The Skowhegan, the former mill building on Island Avenue, on Saturday, October 17. According to Govoni, “The soiree will have a 1920s theme, best costume contest, raffles, and a photo opportunity for attendees in

front of a classic car!” Unrelated, Lights Up is also scheduling free theater workshops for children and adults this fall. Topics include stage combat, auditioning for a musical, makeup, and improvisational acting. More information about both the soiree and the workshops will be available soon on Lights Up’s Facebook and Instagram pages and on its website, www.lightsupskowhegan.org.

Lights Up welcomes donations toward its Opera House renovations. To donate, click the “Donate Today!” button on its website or mail a check to Lights Up Productions, P.O. Box 724, Skowhegan, ME 04976. Regardless of how you donate, please include a note that that your contribution is for “Capital Improvements.”

MLS# 1674059 M5 L15A, Tibbetts Rd., Mercer \$39K
This secluded building lot in Mercer offers an ideal retreat for those seeking tranquility amidst nature. Previously home to an off-grid residence, shows remnants of an overgrown but visible driveway. Clearing has begun in another area of the property. A utility pole across the street provides easy access to bring power to the lot.

MLS# 1674611 18 Rowe Lane, Oakland \$465K
Welcome home to this meticulously maintained, 3-bedroom, 3-bathroom contemporary ranch. Tucked away on a quiet dead-end street in a peaceful country setting, this property offers a private retreat just minutes from shopping, schools, and I-95. Offering modern comfort, quality craftsmanship, and a tranquil setting without sacrificing convenience, this beautiful property is an absolute must-see!

MLS# 1673527 14 Sahagian Road, Belgrade \$499K
Nestled on the tranquil shores of Great Pond with its own 1.75 acres, this newly renovated 2,256-square-foot home offers an idyllic retreat that seamlessly blends modern living with the serenity of nature. The area offers rich opportunities for year-round outdoor activities, including hiking in the nearby Kennebec Highlands, biking, boating, ice fishing, skating, snowmobiling, ensuring you can stay active and engaged.

MLS# 1674700 116 Willey Point Road, Oakland \$1.250M
Nestled on the serene shores of Messalonskee Lake, this beautifully maintained and furnished year-round home offers a perfect blend of tranquil lakeside living and convenient access to urban amenities. Kayaking, boating, and sailing are just steps away, allowing you to fully enjoy the beauty of Messalonskee Lake throughout the warmer months. It's the perfect place to call home.

LAKEHOME GROUP REAL ESTATE
207-495-2500

For more information call or visit
Lakehomegroup.com
info@lakehomegroup.com

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