

Lost and found: 'Christmas Miracle' answers Windham family's prayers

By Ed Pierce
 STAFF WRITER

Christmas presents come in all shapes and sizes, yet for one Windham family this year, the enormity of the gift they have been given simply cannot be measured.

Sarah Walker of Windham and her daughter, Eliza Symes, 8, adopted Noodle, an orange kitten, from the Animal Refuge League three years ago and he rapidly became a beloved member of their family. He grew into a mischievous and friendly indoor cat with a huge personality and a large appetite who likes to perch at the top of the stairs in their home and observe his surroundings or to encourage hugs and attention from Eliza.

But on Saturday, Aug. 31 all of that changed. Sarah and Eliza couldn't find Noodle anywhere in their home and believed he had somehow slipped out the door and become lost. They spent the remainder of Labor Day Weekend desperately searching for Noodle, walking up and down their street, searching under bushes and calling out his name. They posted on local community boards that he was lost and even notified the Maine Lost Cat Recovery Network praying and hoping someone would find Noodle and



Kristina Atkinson and her son Rylen, left, helped return Noodle to his owners Sarah Walker and her daughter, Eliza Symes. The cat had been missing from his Windham home for more than 3 months and his family had about given up hope that he would be found.
 PHOTO BY ED PIERCE

bring him home.

Days turned into weeks without knowing Noodle's whereabouts and as the weeks turned into more than a month of the cat being lost, Sarah and Eliza's optimism about finding him started to fade.

"I felt sad and didn't think he'd come back," Eliza said. "It was like

losing my friend forever and I cried a lot."

Sarah says she tried to remain hopeful for her daughter but that wasn't easy as the weather began to turn colder at night in September and the calendar changed to October, and then on to November and eventually to December.

"After the first couple of weeks, I didn't think he'd come home," she said.

The mother and her daughter focused on recalling the good times with Noodle, who is known in their household as sort of a troublemaker.

"He's very friendly but can get under your feet and trip you," Sarah said. "I also think it was him who turned on the faucet and flooded our kitchen one time."

Kristina Atkinson and her family live about a mile, or what amounts to a 10-minute walk, from Sarah Walker off Albion Road in Windham.

She said that on Nov. 8 she told her son, Rylen, 6, to use caution in letting their dog out in the backyard because she had briefly spotted what appeared to be an orange tail in her neighbor's yard and thought it might be a fox.

Later that same day, Kristina noticed that some leftover chicken sitting on their grill was gone. She saw the orange tail again and observed that it didn't belong to a fox, rather it was a large orange cat. She said she assumed the cat belonged to her neighbor.

A few days later her sister saw the male cat, sitting in the Atkinson's
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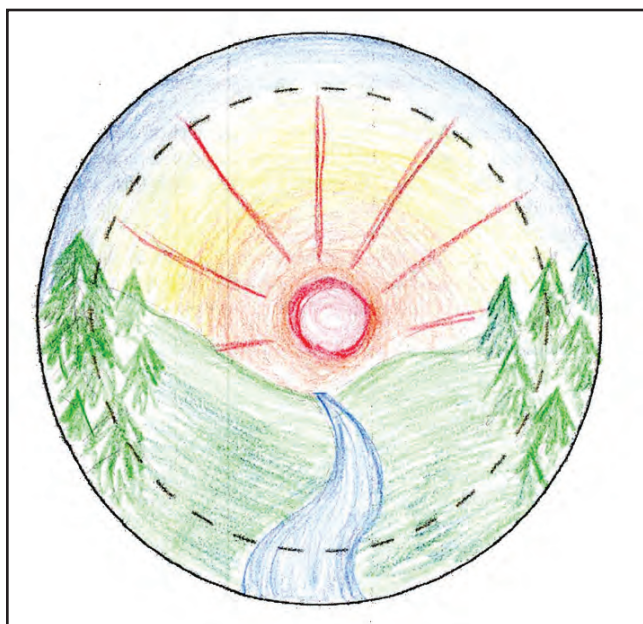
Student 'Clean Air Campaign' continues effort to reduce airborne pollutants in Lakes Region

By Ed Pierce
 STAFF WRITER

It's a proven fact that our lungs can heal themselves when they're no longer exposed to pollutants and are a key component to everyone's overall health and well-being. With that in mind, the "Clean Air Campaign" is part of a project launched to support the clean air policies within public buildings like schools, municipal offices, libraries and outdoor spaces like parks, conservation lands, and ordinances supporting a smoke-free environment.

This year-long initiative has been taken up by Windham and Raymond students in conjunction with the Be The Influence coalition with the intention to keep air indoors and outdoors clean throughout Lakes Region communities and improve everyone's health and the environment. Since its launch more than 10 months ago, the "Clean Air Campaign" is on the way to achieving its desired results.

To further raise awareness about the "Clean Air Campaign," an art design competition for students in the community using art and doodle designs that represents clean air spaces both indoor and outdoor for all was conducted and a winning window cling design was selected.



The winning design for the Clean Air Campaign's 2025 Window Cling competition was created by sophomore Margaret 'Maggie' Soule of Windham High School. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Patrice Leary-Forrey, Be The Influence Project Director for Windham/Raymond said that the winning design printed for a window cling was chosen by a jury of adults and students on Dec. 11 and will now be recreated into a window cling and distributed throughout the Windham and Raymond communities.

The first phase of the project was

to present to members of the Windham Town Council a sign change for public spaces indicating that vaping is not allowed. Participating students attended the Windham Town Council meetings in November to propose the sign ordinance change and the measure was discussed by councilors and passed unanimously during a council meeting on Nov. 12.

"Here in Windham, the Be The Influence Club of Windham High School worked together in November with the Windham Town Council to change the sign ordinance for outdoor spaces to include smoke free from tobacco, vaping and cannabis. The Windham Town Council unanimously passed the sign change for outdoor spaces," Leary-Forrey said. "With the use of vapes and the medical and recreational use of marijuana in Windham, stu-

dents wanted to make sign changes to open spaces in the community and keep current the no-smoking message and prevention education for the town."

To promote that message, the students wanted to extend the effort with an art contest for RSU 14 students to submit artwork for a "Clean Air Cling" allowing the community to take personal accountability in their cars, homes, boats, and small businesses stressing the importance of clean air for everyone.

The new clings will send a personal message that supports the health and wellness of friends, family and loved ones, said Leary-Forrey.

The winning art design for the new 2025 Clean Air Cling was created by Margaret "Maggie" Soule, a sophomore at Windham High School.

"As a community we can continue to ensure the health and wellness of all by supporting this community project," Leary-Forrey said. "The 2025 Clean Air Window Cling will be available mid-January at the Public
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INSIGHT

Blowing in the Woodwind

Following my mother's insistence that I learn how to play a musical instrument as a teenager, I reluctantly agreed to try the clarinet, and it turned out to be a disaster.

She grew up during the Great Depression and was a fan of bandleader Benny Goodman, who happened to be one of the best clarinet players in America at the time.

To get me started, my parents took me on a Saturday morning to a music store where I could pick out a clarinet. My mother said she dreamed of me playing in a band and becoming as well-known as Benny Goodman someday.

But from the start, there were issues with the clarinet. At the music store, my father was reluctant to spend several hundred dollars for a new clarinet and case, and instead turned his attention to the used instruments which were much less expensive. He selected one with a beat-up old black case that was only \$15. There was a reason why this clarinet was placed in the discount rack as apparently one of the keys would stick and the mouthpiece was scratched. My father said it was a perfect instrument to practice on before I could use some of my own money from my newspaper delivery route to buy a new one. The music store salesman also sold my father a small packet of reeds used with the clarinet. You would use your tongue to moisten the reed on the mouthpiece before blowing into the instrument. To me, it was like licking a small thin piece of wood and I detested it.

Responding to an advertisement in the Sunday newspaper, my par-ents arranged for me to attend lessons with a clarinet teacher for \$5 a week every Saturday morning. His house was old and smelled like mildew and I quickly came to realize that learning how to play the clarinet would be extremely difficult. There was more to do than just blowing onto the reed and placing my fingers on holes in the clarinet and tapping various keys.

To make music, clarinets use multiple octaves using different finger-ings and you are using every finger on both hands to play the instrument. The learning curve was formidable and at age 12, there were many other things I wanted to do with my time after school than sit-ting in my bedroom practicing scales on my clarinet until dinner.

When I reached junior high school that fall, my parents signed me up to be a member of the school's band. The music teacher, Mr. Taylor, led the band and would choose music we would be playing for our annual Christmas and Spring concerts. Every day during the period after lunch, we would gather in the music room with our instruments for band practice. Of everything I associate with playing the clarinet, that was the best for me because I got to sit between two attractive girls, Jackie Duane and Eleanor Gruver. One played clarinet like me and the other played saxophone. I couldn't de-cide which one I liked more, but I never told them such.

By ninth grade, I had come to loathe the clarinet. I never really ad-vanced beyond basic playing skills. My clarinet would constantly squeak when I tried to play the notes I wanted. Or several of the keys would stick when I played it, and I'd have to pound on them to make them unstick.

I would compare myself to others in the band and was amazed at how much better they were than I was on their own musical instruments. Each time I messed up during band practice, Mr. Taylor would stop the rehearsals and let me know about the mistakes I was making. It became intolerable and wasn't much fun for me.

When I mentioned to my parents over dinner that I wanted to quit playing the clarinet, my father said nothing, but my mother had a meltdown of epic proportions. She berated me for wanting to play a musical instrument and then not following through with it. She said no matter how much I wanted to quit that she wasn't going to let me do that. She said she wasn't going to throw away all the money she spent on my clarinet lessons for the past three years.


It was a dilemma that I somehow had to resolve. I was a terrible clar-inet player, and I didn't like having to use the reed for the clarinet. I was never going to become Benny Goodman. I felt trapped into doing something I didn't want to do in the first place.

One day after Christmas when I was in the ninth grade, I saw Mr. Taylor outside the band room, and he asked me how I was doing. I told him it was hard trying to live up to my mother's expectations and he said he understood. He told me that playing a musical instrument is not for everyone and he would call my father about it.

The next evening, my father told me that I no longer had to play the clarinet if I didn't want to. So ended my time as a musician and I seriously haven't looked back since. < ~ Ed Pierce

NOTE: The Windham Eagle will not publish on Dec. 27th to allow staff to enjoy the holiday with their families.

Today in HISTORY



DECEMBER 20

- 1790 – The first successful cotton mill in the U.S. begins operations at Pawtucket, RI.
- 1803 – The U.S. Senate ratifies a treaty that included the Louisiana Territories from France for \$15 million.
- 1879 – Thomas A. Edison privately demonstrates his incandescent light invention at Menlo Park, New Jersey.
- 1898 – Marie and Pierre Curie discover radium, a radioactive element that will be used to treat cancer.
- 1907 – An explosion at a Yolande, Alabama coal mine kills 91 miners.
- 1945 – The wartime rationing of automobile tires ends in the United States.
- 1957 – Singer Elvis Presley receives his draft notice by the U.S. Army for military service.
- 1971 – The first preview issue of Ms. Magazine is issued in the U.S. by Gloria Steinem.
- 1985 – Sportscaster Howard Cosell retires from television broadcasts after 20 years with ABC-TV.

ON THE SPOT

What is on your Christmas wish list this year?

- "To have my friends and family happy and healthy." – Caryn Bicknell
- "A new fly reel." – William D. Reiner
- "Have my mom and dog back. This year was awful." – Kat Doughty
- "For someone to gift me a pickup truck." – Tommy Matthews
- "Tolerance." – Rob Juergens
- "Peace." – Julie Mallett
- "Presence vs presents (being together with loved ones)." – Brenda Tubbs
- "Being back in the lives of those I miss so much!" – Renate Willingham Masse
- "Genuine wisdom from our elected leaders who look out for our best interests." – Jerry Greene
- "A great gift would be for my niece gets accepted to the college she wants to attend." – Isabella Mongon
- "Be 40 years younger." – Anne Glotchshuk
- "A trip to the Bahamas this winter." – Deirdre Schulte
- "Looking for a new laptop." – Mitchell B. Robinson
- "Lots of candy and treats in my stocking." – Rick Seacroft
- "Traveling on the Trans Canada Railway through the Rocky Mountains." – David W. Tettley
- "Meeting Tom Brady." – Dean A. Smalley
- "Having my book published and it make the New York Times Best Seller List." – Sarah Singer-Miller
- "A new bicycle." – Chris Macklin
- "Spending time with my grandchildren in Massachusetts and follow that up with a day trip with them to Fort Ticonderoga next summer." – Oscar F. Kellner
- "An all-expense paid shopping trip and vacation to Montreal." – Mariah C. Williston



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Raymond Comprehensive Plan meeting creates debate about potential sidewalk additions

By Kendra Raymond
STAFF WRITER

The Raymond Comprehensive Plan draft was recently published for review and a public town hearing was held on Dec. 4 at the regular Comprehensive Plan Committee's meeting. Committee members presented the current draft plan, shared updates, and heard feedback from residents.

The public commentary about the plan was open from Oct. 11 to Dec. 4, where suggestions and input could be recorded and shared with the committee. CPC co-chair Peter Leavitt says that there was a unanimous vote at the meeting to extend the public comment period on the draft plan to Dec. 31, 2024.

Raymond's new Comprehensive Plan's Priority Goals and Actions includes five sections: Build a resilient Raymond, protect Raymond's natural and water resources, invest in road and traffic improvements, prioritize walking and biking around Raymond, and strengthen Raymond's sense of community.

The fourth item, "Prioritize walking and biking around Raymond: Build a trail or sidewalk that spans the length of Raymond Cape Road," brought forth some lively discussion during the CPC committee's Dec. 4 meeting.

Leavitt explained that the priority and verbiage around pedestrian accessibility was changed following the meeting.

"Based on both online and in person public comments the CPC decid-

ed to change the priority status involving Raymond Cape Road for the construction of walking/bike paths to include the village areas," he said. "There was no public opposition to the draft plan's focus on promoting sidewalk and walking paths throughout Raymond in order to increase connectivity and/or improve roadway safety."

Kelly Rocheleau is a Cape resident and attended the meeting.

"I would like to hear what other people are feeling. We are concerned about safety on the road for drivers and pedestrians," she said. "I took away that the Cape improvements were low priority. It seemed like the sidewalks were being shot down."

A local social media page discussion initiated some debate as well. Raymond resident Laura Abbott posted, "It's insane. Is someone going to have to die for them to make it a priority? It's a safety issue - at minimum."

Kelly Rocheleau replied to the post, "The Comprehensive Plan is more about connectivity and bringing the town together. The paths make more sense to have them near the school, town office, Raymond village, and route 302. After hearing more, I understand that is the priority and that seems to benefit more of the town. To me, Cape Road is about safety. Something needs to be done before there is another fatal accident."

Rocheleau said that she recalls a devastating fatality on the Cape in 2018. "(Javier Araya Arriagada) was

my sister Karen's tenant," she said. The early morning collision occurred when Arriagada was driving north on the Cape. Her vehicle drifted off the pavement edge, and after over-correcting, Arriagada's vehicle collided with a Ford F-550 hauling a trailer driven by Franklin Everett. She died at the scene. Cape resident Melissa Savage came upon the accident as it occurred. She said that the victim was responsive, but all Savage was able to do was make her comfortable and offer soothing words."

The Comprehensive Plan draft section language under the heading Prioritize Safe Walking & Biking around Raymond says:


"Many Raymond residents are active people who love to spend time outdoors and would readily do less driving if it was safer and easier to walk or bike. Route 302 has a limited sidewalk network that lacks connectivity to other parts of town and nearby parks and public places. Routes 85 and 121 have a more rural setting and lack sidewalks or bike lanes. Raymond's local roads do not have ade-

quate road shoulders for pedestrians. Improving the ability to bike and walk around Raymond will be a big quality of life improvement for residents - and will help reduce traffic congestion.

Policy: Make it easier to walk and bike around Raymond.

- Build a trail or sidewalk that spans the length of Raymond Cape Road.
- Develop a capital plan to prioritize and fund sidewalk construction and connections along the busiest parts of Route 302 and Route 85 in Raymond, and to widen or pave road shoulders along other public roads.
- Amend ordinances to require sidewalks when new construction is built on Route 302, Route 85, and anywhere pedestrian activity is anticipated.
- Partner with Maine DOT to add bike infrastructure like bike lanes or shoulders to Route 302, Route 85, and Route 121.
- Create a plan to create pedestrian connections through sidewalks and trails in East Raymond Village.

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RSU 14 Backpack Program addresses food insecurity

By Ed Pierce

STAFF WRITER

Launched during the 2011-2012 school year to assist school children in RSU 14 to overcome food insecurity so they can grow up healthy, do their best work in school, and become successful adults, the Windham/Raymond Backpack Program has become a lifeline for students when school is not in session.

Despite the Maine Legislature approving “School Meals For All” legislation in 2021 where all students in Maine are given access to school meals, some families of RSU 14 students continue to be faced with issues of feeding children on weekends and over vacations when school is not open.

That’s where the Windham/Raymond Backpack Program comes in. It provides food to supplement children in need over weekends and school breaks during the school year. Each “Backpack” contains breakfast, lunch, and dinner options, as well as snacks and they are discreetly distributed to the students by teachers or staff at each RSU 14 school and are packed every Tuesday by a team of volunteers at Windham Middle School.

Backpack Program volunteer Marge Govoni of Windham said that ongoing research indicates that children who grow up in food insecure households sometimes trail their peers in terms of cognitive, emotional, and physical development and this RSU 14 program was created to help students overcome those challenges.



Shaw Dwight of Windham’s Paul’s Boutique was honored earlier this year for donating to the RSU 14 Backpack Program, which feeds students in need when school is not in session. From left are RSU 14 Backpack Program volunteer Marge Govoni, Shaw Dwight, and RSU 14 Kitchen Manager Ryan Roderick. SUBMITTED PHOTO

She said that when the RSU 14 Backpack Program started, it provided meals for about 50 students but has since increased to more than 120 students participating from both Windham and Raymond schools.

“The increase in participation paired with rising food cost has made it more important than ever that we keep this program open and available to as many children as we can,” Govoni said.

Data formulated by the National Health Interview Study shows a direct correlation between household food insecurity and significantly worsening general health in American children, including more acute and chronic health problems and increased emer-

gency room hospital visits.

The Windham/Raymond Backpack Program only accepts monetary donations to ensure the nutritional items and menu are similarly based and meet the needs of the child, Govoni said.

“In order to continue to serve up to 120 children each weekend during the school year, we need more members of the community to support our program,” she said. “We are reaching out to local businesses asking for additional sponsors to this program.”

For residents who are considering donating to the RSU 14 Backpack Program, Govoni said that donation benchmarks are one bag for one child at \$10, and one child for the school

year at about \$300.

“Of course, any amount is helpful, and 100 percent of the donations go toward buying food and supplies with no administrative cost or fees applied,” she said. “Using this program to give students food for the weekend ensures that come Monday morning when they return to school, they will not be hungry and ready to learn. I am passionate about this program and making sure that students have access to food over the weekend and it is run totally on donations and the work of some wonderful and caring volunteers.”

Ryan Roderick, RSU 14 Kitchen Manager, said that the Backpack Program is invaluable.

“It is not uncommon to think that because school meals are free that these kids should already have everything they need. The unfortunate truth is that even though breakfasts and lunches are available to all students, there are still hundreds of children who leave school on Friday afternoon and have no certainty that they will be fed a complete meal until Monday morning when they return to school,” Roderick said. “If that is the case, you can bet those students are going to be the ones struggling to stay focused, stay awake and to be the best version of themselves when they are in attendance. The backpack program helps those children sustain over the weekend, to feel a sense of comfort and normalcy and to be confident knowing they will not have to

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CLEAN AIR *Cont. from page 1*

Safety Buildings, Town Office, Public Libraries of Windham and Raymond. Small businesses in the community are encouraged to showcase the youth-driven project by showcasing the cling in the windows and company cars.”

Leary-Forrey said that the third phase of the “Clean Air Campaign” is prevention education of the health impact of Tobacco/Vape/Marijuana on an individual and for public and personal spaces and that’s the underlying purpose of the window cling.

“The window clings will be distributed by students in the spring and summer for individuals and families to put on their boats, cars, business, homes and they support clean air and community health and wellness,” she said. “The idea is to raise awareness of the science behind smoke of all types and the individual health impact it can have over time. Students will help distribute the window clings, prevention materials and provide the Quit

Link/QR codes to anyone who wants to improve their personal health and wellness.”

According to Leary-Forrey, BTI is supporting this youth-driven “Clean Air Campaign” project and is committed to supporting youth and keeping the community healthy and thriving.

“Keeping the community current with education and awareness so that everyone can have a positive healthy experience when visiting and accessing indoor and outdoor spaces in Windham and Raymond is the primary goal for this project,” she said.

If you or someone you know wants to quit tobacco, vape, or nicotine product, text the Quit Link for Maine: <https://mainequitlink.com/> or 1-800-quitnow or for additional support/referrals call 211 Maine Information Line.

For further details about the “Clean Air Campaign,” call BTI at 207-804-6742 or send an email to: btidirector@windhammaine.us

COMP *Cont. from page 3*

- Review and update standards for sidewalk construction in the Subdivision Ordinance to promote walkable new development.

Policy: Increase off-road trails for recreation and bicycle/pedestrian travel through town.

- Work with regional partners to connect to the Sebango to the Sea trail.

- Partner with local snowmobile and ATV groups to create pedestrian and bike access to existing trails.

- Build a trail connection between Sheri Gagnon Park, Raymond Village, and Route 302.

Increase trail, sidewalk, and bike lane connections to water access points and open spaces. Policy: Provide alternatives to driving.

- Work with RTP, town staff and boards, and Raymond residents to bring back the Lakes Region Bus.

- Explore partnering with regional towns for a vanpool service for seniors for daily needs and recreation.”

The CPC draft offered the following public comments: “Pretty much every road feels unsafe to walk or ride a bike on, except for the private, slow speed lakeside roads.”, “Cape Road needs a jogging/bike path! There are a lot of pedestrians and bicycles using that road safely. It is scenic with rolling hills and would be perfect for a path

that has benches and lighting, from the ferry up to Hawthorne.”, “I love the idea of creating more sidewalks.”

“We deserve a better road,” said Rocheleau.

So, what’s next and how can residents have their voices heard? Leavitt said that once the Comp Plan is voted in, the townspeople will decide whether to fund the improvements.

“Implementation of the recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Plan begins once the residents approve the plan (on the) June 2025 town warrant and the Select board appoints the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee. Ultimately the decision on funding any of the plan recommendations resides with the voters,” Leavitt said.

The recent CPC meeting was the last of its kind in the Comp Plan process. The CPC authorized the co-chairs Peter Leavitt and Kaela Gonzalez to make any additional edits to the plan that might be required by the Raymond Select Board or the state.

The Comprehensive Plan draft can be reviewed here: <https://compplan.raymondmaine.org/index.php/review-the-plan/>

Scroll to the bottom of the page to submit your feedback on the draft plan by the Dec. 31, 2024 deadline. <



Feedback about Raymond’s new Comprehensive Plan proposal has asked that more road safety and road improvement measures be included in the Raymond Cape area of the town. The Comprehensive Plan Committee has extended the deadline to submit public comments about the plan to Dec. 31 PHOTO BY KENDRA RAYMOND

Dolby, Blais & Segee Funeral Chapel
Barbara Caiazzo, 75



Barbara Caiazzo, 75, of Gorham, Maine passed away on December 8th, 2024. She was born Barbara M. Towle on December 26th, 1948 to George and Marilyn Towle of Standish, Maine.

She attended Standish schools and graduated from Bonny Eagle High School before earning a degree at the University of Maine at Portland, Gorham Campus, now the University of Southern Maine, where she met her future husband, William Caiazzo. According to legend, Barbara noticed Bill in the library their freshman year, and after informing her friends that he was the man she was going to marry, she walked up to Bill and introduced herself.

Barbara and Bill were married in June of 1971 and were inseparable during their 53 years of marriage. Barbara began her long teaching career the same year at the John Andrew school in Windham. She taught first and second grades in Windham for thirty-four years, where she made many of her lifelong friends before retiring in 2006. She joined the Alpha Delta Kappa International Honorary Organization for Women Educators in 1991 and was an active member for many years, holding various offices and organizing support for local scholarships and state programs.

The ultimate connector, Barbara lived life with an exuberant energy and loved her friends and family deeply and generously. She could be counted on to be the first person on the dance floor, or to call or visit when times were hard. She was known for making photo scrapbooks for each of her grandchildren and her two youngest nieces, which she presented to them annually on their birthdays, filled with handwritten captions and dozens of photos of their adventures together over the past year.

She loved cats, Cher, margaritas with her girlfriends, finding out who or what she had in common with anyone she met, traveling with her friends and family, and supporting Maine theater as a regular patron of the Ogunquit Playhouse and Maine State Music Theatre in Brunswick. She was deeply proud of both of her sons and all of her grandchildren. She was a consistent and enthusiastic spectator at road races and triathlons, band concerts, soccer games and theater productions.

Barbara is survived by her beloved husband, Bill Caiazzo, her mother Marilyn Towle, son Michael Caiazzo and wife Katie, son Greg Caiazzo and wife Kelly, grandchildren Jack Caiazzo, Hunter Caiazzo, Connor Caiazzo, Will Caiazzo and Andrew Caiazzo, siblings George Towle, Anita Bailey, Haydn Towle and wife Tamarra, and Cheryl Lewis and husband Ken, along with nieces Quinn Lewis, Bella Lewis, Jennifer Bailey Weiner, Amanda Bailey, Brianna Bailey, and Jessica Prevost, and nephew Matt Bailey.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Barbara’s memory to the Alpha Delta Kappa scholarship fund benefiting students going into the educational field.

Checks payable to: Maine Beta Chapter Alpha Delta Kappa, 3 Shady Run Ln, Gorham, ME 04038.

“If I could turn back time, I’d give it all to you.” - Cher

Dolby, Blais & Segee Funeral Chapel
Benjamin James Thompson, 82



Benjamin James Thompson, 82, of Windham, died on Monday, December 2, 2024, at Mercy Hospital in Portland as a result of complications from cancer treatment. He was born in Portland on July 18, 1942, the son of Stanley and Charlotte (Kerr) Thompson. Ben attended Windham High School, graduating with the class of 1960. He worked as a Hydro operator for Central Maine Power and Florida Power and Light and eventually retired from Central Maine Power. On September 7, 1962, he married Joan Hall and together they enjoyed 62 years of marriage.

Ben loved his family, his home and garden. He was the ultimate do-it-yourselfer and would tackle any project. He kept his old farm looking pristine and loved sharing the vegetables he grew. He and Joan introduced the family to camping when the kids were young and later enjoyed being snowbirds and traveling in their motorhome for the winter.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his sisters, Barbara Dyer and Eleanor Harmon, a brother, Stanley K Thompson. Surviving along with his wife, Joan Hall Thompson are his sons, Russell Thompson and his wife, Jocelyn Thompson; and Richard Thompson and wife Pamela Davis, all of Gray; daughter Tamara Butts and her husband, Reginald Butts of Raymond; granddaughter, Gabriela Hall, step grandson Russell Butts and his wife Heather Butts; and great grandson, Drew Butts. Ben is also survived by his sister, Lorraine Jones and her husband Edward Jones of Gray, many nieces and nephews.

The family expresses appreciation for the compassionate care provided by Dr. Emily Clemetson at Mercy Hospital.

At his request there will be no services.

To share online condolences and memories of Ben with his family please go to www.dolbyblaissegee.com. Arrangements are under the care of Dolby Blais & Segee, 434 River Road, Windham.



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WHS alumni preparing to travel to Tanzania

A 2023 graduate of Windham High School is about to embark on a journey which will take her to some of the world's most treasured national parks and game reserves in Tanzania on the African continent.



Sophie Koutalakis of Windham, a WHS graduate, will be one of 50 students participating in Shenandoah University's 2025 Global Citizenship Project and will travel to Tanzania in Africa in March as part of the program. COURTESY PHOTO

south of the equator in East Africa, Tanzania became a sovereign and independent nation in 1964 through the union of the separate countries of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. It also the site of the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain peak on the African continent.

Koutalakis is studying environmental science and sustainability at Shenandoah University, and she learned what destination that she will be traveling to in March during the

school's International Convocation event in November. To qualify for the program, Koutalakis submitted an application and also wrote an essay which was chosen by the school's selection committee based on her thoughts and passion expressed in the essay describing how she envisioned sharing her travel experiences upon her return from her trip overseas.

Shenandoah University's Glob-

al Citizenship Project is celebrating its 20th year in 2025 and since first launching the program two decades ago, the Global Citizenship Project has witnessed more than 1,400 Shenandoah University students, staff, faculty, and trustees travel to 69 different countries and to seven different U.S. states and U.S. territories in an effort for each participant to learn more about the world and about themselves.

Along with her coursework at Shenandoah University, Koutalakis is a part of the Shenandoah University chorus. At Windham High School, she appeared on stage as Ali in the school's production of "Mamma Mia" as Audrey in "Little Shop of Horrors," and as Anelle in "Steel Magnolias." She also was a standout performer with the Windham Chamber Singers.

Shenandoah University was established in 1875 in Winchester, Virginia. Through innovative partnerships and programs at both the local and global level, there are exceptional opportunities for students to learn in and out of the classroom such as with the Global Citizenship Project, and it strives to empower students to improve the human condition and to be principled professionals and leaders wherever they go in life. <

BRIEFS

Sign Language Class

Windham Public Library is offering an American Sign Language Class that will cover the basics of ASL communication with numbers and fingerspelling to start, then some common words and phrases in sign language, and participants will gradually move up to higher-level concepts at the pace of the group. The class will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 23. FMI, call Ray at 207-892-1908, Ext. 5 or email: rmarcotte@windhammaine.us.

Preschool Storytime

Preschool Storytime is held at 10:30 a.m. every Wednesday at Raymond Village Library, 3 Meadow Road. Join them for stories, songs, and crafts. This is best for children between the ages of 2 to 5. FMI, call 207-655-4283.

Loan Closet

The Windham Loan Closet provides area residents with wheelchairs and other equipment for medical and physical needs by loan at no charge. The Loan Closet is located on Windham Center Road next to the public library and is staffed by volunteers and open by appt. only. To schedule an appt with a volunteer call 207-894-5999 and leave a detailed message.



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Last-minute Christmas shopping is a chaotic tradition all its own. There's a strange mix of pressure and spontaneity in it. On one hand, you're trying to find something meaningful

for loved ones; on the other, you're frantically grabbing whatever catches your eye. But don't panic—there's still room to turn procrastination into success.

Start by making a quick list of people you need to buy for and brainstorm simple, versatile gifts. Think gift cards, books, candles, or gourmet treats. Local boutiques and small businesses often have unique, ready-to-go options, and you can skip the delivery wait. For a personal touch, pair a ge-

neric item with a handwritten note.

If you're shopping online, prioritize stores offering same-day pickup or e-gift cards. And remember, sometimes experiences like concert tickets or dinner reservations can be just as meaningful as a wrapped gift.

Even small gestures, like baking cookies or crafting something handmade, can carry big emotional weight. Above all, embrace the imperfection of last-minute shopping. It's not just about the gift but the thought behind it—and the joy of surprising those you love. <

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WAS EBENEZER SCROOGE A REAL PERSON?

Charles Dickens' Ebenezer Scrooge from A Christmas Carol was inspired by a mix of real-life influences rather than one specific person. Dickens likely drew from both his own experiences and observations of Victorian society when creating the character.

One notable influence was a real man named John Elwes, an 18th century British politician and miser

known for his extreme frugality. Elwes hoarded his wealth and lived in near squalor despite being incredibly rich, much like Scrooge. His reputation for penny-pinching and lack of generosity is believed to have been a partial model for Dickens' character.

Additionally, Dickens may have been influenced by his time working as a child in a blacking factory,

where he witnessed the harsh realities of poverty and greed. Scrooge's initial indifference to the struggles of the poor reflects the broader societal attitudes Dickens wanted to critique. Some scholars also suggest Scrooge's

transformation was inspired by Dickens' personal belief in redemption and social responsibility.

So, while not directly based on one person, Scrooge embodies traits and attitudes Dickens observed in society. <

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Nangle to chair Senate's Transportation Committee

State Senator Tim Nangle, D-Windham, has been appointed by Senate President Mattie Daughtry, D-Brunswick, to serve as the Maine Senate chair of the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Transportation for the 132nd Maine State Legislature.



STATE SENATOR TIM NANGLE

The Transportation Committee oversees a broad range of policy areas and agencies, including the Department of Transportation; Bureau of Motor Vehicles; Maine Turnpike Authority; and matters related to highway construction, safety and maintenance, traffic regulation, public transportation, aeronautics, waterways and railroads, the Highway Fund, driver education and licensing, and the Department of Public Safety (as it relates to motor vehicles and carriers).

"I'm honored to serve as Senate chair of the Transportation Committee. Reliable roads, bridges and public transit aren't just conveniences — they are the lifelines that connect Mainers to jobs, education, medical appointments and other vital services," said Senator Nangle. "Our work will focus on ensuring that our infrastructure is safe, resilient and equipped to meet the needs of our state today and into the future."

He will also serve on the Maine Senate's Health and Human Services Committee, which oversees the Maine Department of Health

and Human Services and addresses issues such as MaineCare, children's welfare and mental health services, public health initiatives, aging and disability issues, long-term care, health care facilities and workers, substance use disorder treatments, and other critical health and human services programs.

"I look forward to serving on the Health and Human Services Committee to help ensure that every Mainer — no matter where they live or what challenges they face — has access to quality, affordable health care and critical services," said Senator Nangle. "This includes strengthening our child protection system so that our most vulnerable children are kept safe and have the support they need to thrive. From supporting our oldest neighbors to caring for our youngest, these issues are too important to ignore."


Lawmakers are assigned to committees by the presiding officers based on their interests, experience and professional background. Joint standing committees are composed of three senators and 10 representatives.

Senator Tim Nangle has dedicated his life to public service. Prior to his election to the Maine Senate in 2022, he served on the Windham Town Council and worked 27 years as a paramedic with the Portland Fire Department's MedCU (Medical Crisis Unit).

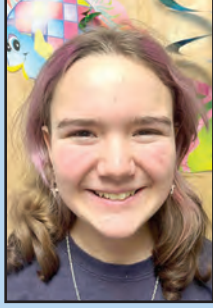
During his first term in office, Senator Nangle championed a new law that provides municipalities with additional tools to address shoreland zoning violations, preserving Maine's tradition of local control. Senator Nangle previously chaired the State and Local Government Committee

and served as a member of the Transportation Committee.

He's now serving in his second term representing Maine Senate District 26, which includes Casco, Frye Island, Raymond, part of Westbrook and Windham. The Maine Legislature is set to reconvene on Jan. 8, 2025. <




Elizabeth Hancock



Grade: Fifth Grade School: Manchester School
Teacher: Jennifer Breton and Megan King
Favorite subject(s) in school: Reading and Writing
Parents' names: Diane and Dan
Reason for selection: Elle was chosen for Student of the Week because of her character, enthusiasm for learning, kindness, and leadership abilities. Elle is often one of the first to help anyone in need and encourages her peers. She celebrates everyone's successes and lifts those when needed. She has a tremendous work ethic and comes to the classroom to spread joy to everyone. She loves to learn and share her discoveries. She often punctuates her sharing with musical references which we all appreciate and love. Her kind heart and wish to make everyone feel valued are just some of the reasons Elle is a deserving student for this recognition!

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WMS teacher dedicated to students and community

By Ed Pierce
STAFF WRITER

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

It's said that a great teacher is more than just someone who gives out answers to tests but is understanding of the needs and challenges of students and gives them the tools they need to succeed in life. Windham Middle School's Mandy Lavallee can certainly be called one of those dedicated educators.

Lavallee teaches English and Language Arts at WMS and she serves as the school's Student Council Advisor. She's part of the Leadership Team for WMS and a member of the school's Curriculum Committee for vocabulary work, the Community and Culture Committee and is the EF Tour Advisor.

"For eighth grade English and Language Arts, we are finishing up our World War II book studies unit," Lavallee said. "Not only are we reading and analyzing, but we are crafting and writing. Students will be expected to write a literary essay as their final assessment."

As WMS Student Council Advisor, Lavallee's helped connect students to their community.

"So far this year we have collected food for the Windham Food Pantry, adopted a few families for Christmas and are currently supporting administration during our Holiday Assembly," she said. "Within the next few

weeks, we will be working on screen printing our own Windham shirts. Student Council has partnered with STEM to help bring this amazing opportunity to our students and staff."

According to Lavallee, working on the WMS Leadership Team has been eye opening.

"It's important work and I'm proud to say, I've had the honor of working side by side with amazing staff from both middle schools," she said.

Now in her second year of teaching at Windham Middle School, she has spent the past 20 years in the field of education.

"In 2005 I started as an educational technician at Windham Middle School. I worked with students who were in the care of the Department of Human Services and then the Functional Life Skills Program," Lavallee said. "While I've worked in other districts teaching social studies and ELA, my favorite place to call home is WMS. While I do love curriculum work, making connections with my students and their families



Mandy Lavallee teaches English and Language Arts at Windham Middle School, and she also serves as the school's Student Council Advisor. She's part of the Leadership Team for WMS and has spent more than 20 years working in the field of education. SUBMITTED PHOTO

is what I enjoy the most. I truly enjoy my students and can't imagine doing anything different. Once my student, always my student."

Originally from the Greater Portland area, she attended the University of New England where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in history with a concentration in education. She later went back to UNE and obtained a teaching certificate and is certified to teach in both Kindergarten to Grade 8 and Grades 7 to 12. She did her student teaching at The REAL school on Mackworth Island. Lavallee has also worked as an educational technician, taught Social Studies for grades 9 to 12, been a Kindergarten to Grade 8 teacher and taught Language Arts for students in Grades 7 and 8.

"One of the most memorable moments I've had at WMS took place in October. We had just finished our memoirs and were celebrating our writing," Lavallee said. "I decorated the classroom to look like a cafe. We had hot chocolate, tea and popcorn. The students were enthusiastic and

engaged as we shared our pieces. I saw many smiles and heard several giggles. Their pieces were heartfelt and honored the people in their lives. It was a great day. When they asked if we could do it again, I knew our celebration of writing was a success."

She says the most challenging aspect of her work is dealing with all the policies and procedures regarding schools.

"These can sometimes hinder activities designed to enhance curriculum or not get the support my kids need in what I believe to be a quick enough time frame," she said. "Patience is something that I am working on."

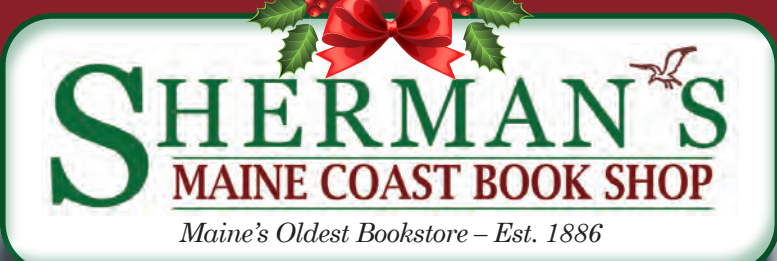
Last spring, Lavallee partnered with EF Tours in an effort to bring travel opportunities to RSU 14 middle schoolers.

"In April 2025 we will be traveling to Spain. This trip is designed specifically for middle school students," she said. "We will be visiting an olive oil farm, making tiles, learning Flamenco dancing and more. I am already working on our next adventure which will be Italy."

Her family is proud of her work and are her biggest cheerleaders.

"My own children love that I teach in their school district. It's a great thing when you can attend your own children's events and see your school kids succeed outside the classroom," she said. "The most important thing I have learned while working for WMS is that you can do anything with enough heart and determination." <


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Windham in the '60s: Winter comes to Field-Allen

► **By Max Millard**
SPECIAL TO THE WINDHAM EAGLE

From 1961 to 1963, when I attended Field-Allen Junior High in Windham Center, the winter always brought some mornings of drama. That was when we woke up in the midst of a snowstorm or just afterward. My sisters and brother and I gathered in the kitchen, all bundled up and ready for school, ears fine-tuned to the radio, eagerly awaiting the magic words.

“No school in Portland, no school in Westbrook, no school in Raymond, no school in Gorham, no school in ... Windham!”

Yay! We cheered and laughed as if we'd just won the lottery, then went back to bed for a few more hours. I didn't learn until years later that for every day missed in winter, we got an extra day of school in June.

We loved the snow, especially when it was as fresh and soft as cotton candy. We dug tunnels big enough to crawl in, just under the surface of the snow so that a faint blue light would seep through, and we could keep digging. When the snow was especially thick, we'd go up on the roof of the house and jump off. Sometimes we'd be buried up to our necks, but we never got hurt.

My best friend in the neighborhood was Lloyd Bennett, who lived just up the road. One of his tricks was to bury himself in the snow so that only his face was exposed. Then other boys copied him, so he brought a straw to school and had himself buried completely and breathed through the straw.

Just beyond Lloyd's house was a sharp cliff next to the road which we called the ledge. To get on top, you had to walk way around it, so it was the ideal spot for Lloyd and me to throw snowballs at cars. Even if the driver stopped and chased after us, we could escape in the woods.

Our favorite target was the Windham school bus. We had ridden it for years, so we knew the schedule. We'd stockpile a lot of snowballs in advance, and as soon as the bus approached, we'd pelt it with several direct hits.

The driver was an old man named Arthur Tyler, who was not known for his patience. After a heavy bombardment, he sometimes got so mad that he'd stop the bus and shake his fist at our hiding place. We never threw directly at him because he could have called the police. So, we let him stand there heroically to impress the kids, and he never reported us.

Windham then had fewer than 5000 people, and for most of the year, it had only two places of entertainment – a drive-in movie theater and a bowling alley. In the winter the drive-in was replaced by the high school and junior high basketball teams, which played other schools in the area.



The cover of the Field-Allen School's 1962 yearbook cover depicts the junior high in its heyday. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Basketball was by far the most popular sport in Windham. Boys practiced at every recess during the school year. The school furnished the balls, and sometimes a boy would throw one up on the roof, claiming it was an accident. No one was allowed on the roof. But Field-Allen was a squat one-story building, and by standing on another boy's shoulders and shimmying up a pole, a wiry boy could get up there at night and keep the ball.

Our basketball team was captained by my classmate Steve Turkington, the big man on campus. Everyone called him Turk. Once a week, he'd come to school wearing his Boy Scout uniform, which displayed so many merit badges that he resembled a Christmas tree.

The school raised the American flag every morning and pulled it down every afternoon. Turk often was chosen for flag duty because he knew exactly how to fold it. When a teacher showed a movie in class, Turk got to run the projector. He and his girlfriend, Cheryl Gagnon, served on the student council, and were the unquestioned king and queen of the class.

King Turk, as some kids called him, was the absolute master on the

basketball court. The school bleachers were always filled with cheering fans, and he was practically a god to them. Turk was so lithe and quick that he could cut through the defenders as if they were frozen in place. Then there was the jubilant and energetic cheer-leading squad featuring Cheryl. The girls were all pompoms and short skirts, dancing up a storm and chanting:

“Sitting in a grandstand, beating on a tin can.

Who can? We can, nobody else can. Fight! Fight! Fight team fight!”

Turk and I were never buddies. In our yearbook, he signed his photo: “To Mike, the big lip.” But like most of my classmates, I was a bit in awe of him for his popularity, his leadership and his self-confidence.

The last time I saw Turk was at the Windham High School's 10-year reunion in 1977. He was still looking trim and vigorous. I asked him, “How's your basketball?” He responded, “I still have the moves, but I don't have the speed.”

Turk died of a heart attack in 1995 at the age of 46. I was shocked by the news, because he always seemed to be indestructible.

Nowadays, living far from Windham, I sometimes pass by a pickup basketball game of adolescent boys, in which one player is clearly outshining the rest. And it takes me back to watching King Turk when he was on top of the world, putting on a show and bringing much-needed entertainment to those cold Maine winters so long ago. <

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➔ **FOUND** *Cont. from page 1*

driveway. And suddenly he was everywhere on their Ring cameras, showing up at 8 p.m., 11 p.m., 3 p.m. and at all hours of the day and night.

Despite her husband's apprehension, Kristina started leaving some soft cat food outside her door for what she surmised was a homeless and lost orange cat. The cat would eat the food and leave and wouldn't make eye contact with Kristina or Rylen.

But on Saturday evening, Dec. 7, Kristina opened the door when the cat was eating, and he appeared to be startled and walked about 20 feet away. But he suddenly turned and came back, sitting there still for about five minutes before approaching Kristina

and letting her pet him. When she returned inside, he sat outside the door and wanted to come inside.

Kristina and Rylen let the friendly cat in and found a warm space inside their garage for him and started to post on social media about finding him and looking for his owner. Her husband fell in love with the cat and thinks the cat may have found a warm spot in a nearby culvert to survive while lost.

"I had a woman from Raymond contact me and thought he was their lost cat," Kristina said. "They drove here and took the cat to their home and thought it was theirs."

But as it turned out, it wasn't their lost cat, who was much older and was polydactyl with multiple toes on its paws.

At 5 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 9, Kristina then read a Facebook post by Sarah looking for Noodle. She contacted Sarah and they agreed to meet later that day at the veterinarian's office to see if the cat was Sarah's. It seems Noodle had been microchipped when Sarah first got him, and the vet could determine if the cat found by Kristina was indeed the lost Noodle.

Kristina drove to Raymond and picked up the cat from the family who had originally thought it was theirs. She met Sarah at the veterinarian and within a few minutes, the microchip confirmed that the orange cat was the missing Noodle.

Before meeting Kristina at the vet though, Sarah had picked up Eliza from school.

"She did not know. I picked her up a little early and said I had a surprise, and that Noodle was in the car," Sarah said. "Then we took him to the vet. I didn't want to tell her we might have found him and then to have it not be him. She was happy and excited. I think she kind of didn't believe it was him for a moment."

Kristina and Rylen say they were

pleased to have played a part in re-returning Noodle to his home after being lost for more than 3 months.

"I keep telling people I lost my dad a year ago and he was a huge animal lover," Kristina said. "I think he led Noodle to our house. My hope is this will inspire others to do this too."

Noodle quickly adapted to being warm and back at his home.

"He had lost some weight but was a big cat to begin with," Sarah said. "He's been hungry ever since. I tell Eliza that Santa Paws helped him find Kristina and she knew how to get him back home."

Sarah said she cannot begin to express her gratitude to Kristina for her kindness.

"We are very grateful for her going out of her way for us," Sarah said. "It's nice to know the community will help you if you need it."

As for Eliza, she rarely takes her eyes off Noodle these days.

"He hasn't changed at all," she said. "He's my friend and if you ask me, it's truly a Christmas miracle that he's back home with people who love him." <

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Maine Bureau of Insurance urges consumers to be cautious in selecting health plans during ACA open enrollment

AUGUSTA – Maine Superintendent of Insurance Bob Carey encourages Maine consumers to be cautious when shopping for health plans during the annual Affordable Care Act (ACA) open enrollment period.

Open enrollment for plan year 2025 is open now. For coverage to begin on Jan. 1, 2025, Maine people must enroll by Dec. 15, 2024. The final deadline to enroll is Jan. 15, 2025 for coverage to begin on Feb. 1, 2025.

The Maine Bureau of Insurance wants consumers to be aware that many legitimate-looking health plans they may see when doing an internet search may not offer comprehensive coverage and may not be authorized to be sold in Maine.

Consumers are urged to shop for plans at CoverME.gov, Maine's health insurance marketplace, which offers health plans that have been reviewed and approved by the Bureau of Insurance and is the only place Maine residents can get financial savings to lower monthly premiums. Consumers can also call CoverME.gov at 1-866-636-0355; TTY: 711, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the Open Enrollment Period.

Consumers can also purchase plans from a licensed insurance broker or from the following health insurers: Anthem Blue Cross Blue

Shield Harvard Pilgrim Health Care/Point32Health UnitedHealthcare (this company does not offer coverage through CoverME.gov) Community Health Options Taro Health (available in Cumberland and York counties)

"Unfortunately, every year during open enrollment, some consumers are misled into purchasing what they think are ACA plans, which have comprehensive benefits and strong consumer protections. But they are actually purchasing plans with limited benefits or just plain scams," said Superintendent Carey. Also, only plans sold through CoverME.gov are eligible for premium tax credits, which can significantly reduce the cost of coverage.

Online searches for health insurance, even ones that use seemingly precise search terms such as Maine ACA plans or ACA plans, often return results for lead generating websites, not the official governmental website for such purposes. A lead generating website asks consumers for their contact information so a salesperson can contact them. The salespersons contacting the consumer are not always licensed to sell insurance.

If a consumer purchases a non-regulated plan, the Bureau of Insurance may not be able to help if the company does not pay claims as promised.

Some warning signs that a consumer is not dealing with a licensed insurance company or agent are: The person on the phone will not identify the name of the company. The agent will not provide their insurance producer license number. The consumer is not given an opportunity to review the plan details prior to purchase. The salesperson insists that the consumer make a purchase right away. The consumer is required to join an association or pay an application fee to purchase the plan.

Mainers who are concerned that they may be dealing with a questionable salesperson or company should contact the Bureau of Insurance at 207-624-8475; TTY: 711 or 800-300-5000 (toll free), Monday-Friday, 8

a.m. to 5 p.m., before providing any personal or credit card information. Bureau staff will be able to confirm whether a consumer is dealing with a licensed agent or insurance company. Consumers can also confirm whether a company or agent is licensed in Maine on the Bureau's website -- <https://www.maine.gov/pfr/insurance/licensee-search>. Or find a trained and certified local broker or Maine Enrollment Assister at no cost to them by searching on CoverME.gov. Consumers with questions about insurance matters can obtain information and assistance from the Maine Bureau of Insurance by visiting www.maine.gov/insurance, calling 800-300-5000 (TTY call Maine Relay 711), or e-mailing Insurance.PFR@maine.gov.

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NOTE: The Windham Eagle will not publish on Dec. 27th to allow staff to enjoy the holiday with their families.

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RAYMOND ROADRUNNER

TOWN OF RAYMOND - DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



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Wed & Thurs
9am-6pm;
Fri. & Sat.
9am-2pm

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Holiday Hours

Saturday, December 21st - closing at 1pm
Tuesday, December 24th - closing at Noon
Wednesday December 25th - CLOSED
Tuesday, December 31st - closing at Noon
Wednesday January 1st - CLOSED



Raymond Set to Begin Property Revaluation

KRT Appraisal has been contracted by the Town of Raymond to complete a full town-wide revaluation. This project is required to more fairly distribute Raymond’s property tax obligations and because the town’s current assessment methodology is 20 years old and falling out of compliance with state standards.

This project includes the inspection and market valuation of all property within the town as of April 1, 2026.

KRT has recently completed projects for several Maine cities and towns.

THE PROJECT WILL BE COMPLETED OVER FIVE (5) PHASES, WITH PHASE 1 (DATA COLLECTION), SET TO BEGIN THIS MONTH.

➡ **PHASE 1: DATA COLLECTION:** The first phase, Data Collection of all property, will begin in December 2024. During this phase “Data Collectors” go to each property in the town to measure the exterior of each building and attempt to inspect the interior if the owner is available at the time of the visit.

These Data Collectors note the buildings’ location, size, age, quality of construction, improvements, topography, utilities, and numerous other characteristics both inside and out. They may also ask the homeowner a few questions regarding the property.

To confirm that a home was inspected, the homeowner is asked to sign a data collection form. The data collected is subject to verification by the Town Assessor and a KRT Supervisor. KRT Field Representatives will carry Picture IDs, Municipal Letters of Introduction, and have their vehicles listed with both the Assessor’s Office and the Cumberland County Sheriff’s Department.

Prior to starting the data collection in your area, a postcard will be mailed to each property as notification that the property will be visited in the next few weeks. Data Collectors will arrive at your property unannounced shortly after the postcard is mailed and ring the bell and knock on the door. If someone is home, they will explain who they are, with their KRT badge visible, and ask for an interior and exterior inspection. Due to the large number of properties to be inspected, KRT is unable to conduct this portion of the project on a pre-scheduled appointment basis.

In the case of no one being at home when they arrive, Data Collectors will assume it is ok to measure the outside of the building and proceed to do so. A follow up letter will be mailed out towards the end of the project (early spring of 2026) asking for a phone call to schedule an appointment for an interior inspection. The visit from KRT shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes from start to finish.

Data Collectors will not visit a property posted “No Trespassing”. Posted properties will receive a letter asking for permission to visit the property at a scheduled time convenient for everyone.

For more information on the revaluation project or questions please contact the Town Assessor at (207) 655-4742 or visit:

KRT Appraisal - Superior Revaluation Services - CAMA Experts and www.raymondmaine.org/town-office/assessing



KRT Appraisal

Special Holiday Events

REGISTRATION REQUIRED. SIGN UP AT: raymond.recdesk.com/Community/Program

Kids Night Out in Whoville
Friday, December 20th, 5pm-8pm
\$25 Per Child
Grinch themed games, pizza dinner, Grinch (2023) Moving showing, & more!

Merry & Bright Family Night
Saturday, December 21st, 3:30-5:30pm
\$40 per family
Family gingerbread building competition, bingo, photo booth, hot chocolate, and prizes!

Elf Workshop
Monday, December 23rd, 10am-3pm
\$60 per child
Christmas themed crafts, cookie making, Christmas games, and more!

Noon Years Eve Celebration
Tuesday, December 31st, 11am-12:30pm
\$15 per person
Craft stations, group games, phot booth, snacks, balloon countdown, and more!

Sand & Salt Shed Open

Raymond residents are welcome to get small amounts of sand/salt for use on walkways and driveways.

Please respect the limit of two 5-gallons buckets at a time.

The Sand and Salt Shed is located on Plains Rd (FL 89) & the gates are open from 7am-3pm, Monday-Friday.

ALL OTHER AREAS & EQUIPMENT REMAIN OFF LIMITS TO THE PUBLIC.

NOTE: The shed is closed during snowstorms for safety & to allow the plow truck traffic to move freely.



PUBLIC WORKS NOTICE

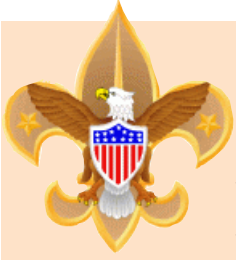
It’s that time of year where our Public Works crew is always on high alert for inclement weather! Please be patient with our road crew as they work hard to keep our roads cleared and safe for traveling. We understand that sometimes travel can’t be avoided during winter weather. For your safety and the safety of others, please stay home if your travel is not essential. Look over the “Winter Safety Driving Tips” provided by Maine DOT (www.maine.gov/mdot/winterdriving) for a refresher on driving in Maine Winter weather!

If you have concerns or want to report poor road conditions due to weather, please call 653-3641 and speak to someone. DO NOT EMAIL. It may be more than 48 hours before an email is seen, especially during inclement weather.



RAYMOND ROADRUNNER

TOWN OF RAYMOND - DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



Boys Scouts of America Troop 800 **BOTTLE DRIVE**


**Saturday, January 4th, 2025
from 10am-2pm**

at the Raymond Village Community Church,
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with a time and location and we will swing
by to pick them up!



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*Happy Holidays
from the Town Office*

WE WISH YOU ALL A WARM AND HAPPY
HOLIDAY SEASON AND A JOYOUS NEW YEAR!

TOWN OFFICE HOLIDAY HOURS
 Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th – Closing at 1pm
 Christmas Day, Dec. 25th - CLOSED
 New Year's Eve, Dec. 31st – Closing at 2pm
 New Year's Day, Jan 1st – CLOSED



**NO TRASH PICK UP on
CHRISTMAS DAY, DEC 25th**
 Residents on the Wednesday Trash
 route will need to hold their waste
 until the following week.

There will be pick up on New Year's Day Holiday



**RAYMOND 2024 CHRISTMAS
LIGHTS CONTEST WINNERS**



FIRST PLACE: 10 POND ROAD




SECOND PLACE: 6 SMALL ROAD



THIRD PLACE: 260 WEBBS MILLS ROAD

*A huge THANK YOU to Jackie Sawyer, local
Raymond resident and Real Estate Agent for
organizing and sponsoring this event.*

CONGRATS TO THE WINNERS!
**THANK YOU TO ALL THE CONTESTANTS FOR
ANOTHER YEAR OF SPECTACULAR DISPLAYS**



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2025 DOG LICENSES

2025 Dog Licenses are now available!
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www.raymondmaine.org. There is a link for
 Dog Licensing under Online Transactions>
 Animal Welfare on the right-hand column of the home page.

DEADLINE FOR IS RENEWAL JANUARY 31, 2025
Renewals after this date will incur a \$25 late fee



Moose Landing Marina chosen as 'Small Marina of the Year'

Moose Landing Marina, a Marina Holdings company, has been named Best Small Marina by *Marina Dock Age Magazine*.

Each year, *Marina Dock Age Magazine* recognizes outstanding marinas in the United States by selecting one "small" marina (under 250 slips) and one "large" marina (over 250 slips) based on their overall business practices, customer service, environmental responsibility, and contributions to the marina industry.

The award is presented during the annual Docks Expo, held in Nashville, Tennessee, where industry leaders from around the coun-

try gather to celebrate the best in marina design, operations, and customer service.

The selection for this award highlights Moose Landing's leadership in creating a top-tier boating experience



Moose Landing Marina in Naples, a Marina Holdings company, has been named as the 'Best Small Marina' in America by *Marina Dock Age Magazine*. SUBMITTED PHOTO

while also prioritizing environmental stewardship and community engagement. Moose Landing's innovative facilities, and commitment to exceptional service have made it a standout among marinas nationwide.

"We are incredibly honored to receive this prestigious recognition from *Marina Dock Age Magazine*," noted Steve Arnold, Owner of Marina Holdings LLC. "This award is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion of our team, as well as the

loyalty and support of our customers. We're committed to providing an exceptional experience for boaters, and this award motivates us to continue enhancing our services and facilities for years to come."

As a Marina Holdings company, Moose Landing Marina on Brandy Pond in Naples is Five Star Certified and a Top 100 Dealer. It is a 15-acre property with more than 1,000 feet of water frontage and offers easy access to both Long Lake and Sebago Lake. <

LETTER to the editor

Editor,

In Maine, approximately 135,000 people age 50 and older live alone and are at higher risk of social isolation and loneliness. If there is one thing the pandemic made clear, it is that personal connections are vital to our mental and physical well-being.

With the holidays upon us, feelings of loneliness and isolation can be heightened, particularly if we have lost a loved one in the past year. A survey conducted by AARP found that three-in-10 respondents (31 percent) say they have felt lonely during past holiday seasons. In addition, four-in-10 (41 percent) respondents say they have worried about a friend or family member feeling lonely during the holidays. Fortunately, the

holidays give us a reason to connect. AARP Maine has posted a guide with resources for Mainers who may be experiencing loneliness. Some of the resources include a tool to measure your risk for isolation, an invitation to receive a friendly phone call from an AARP volunteer, opportunities to volunteer, and information on local services. The guide includes additional support for family caregivers. You can find the guide here: <https://states.aarp.org/maine/isolation>.

We often experience more kindness from strangers during the holidays. Perhaps if each one of us can commit to being that "kind stranger" we can all have a meaningful impact in another person's life. A simple act of kindness – a friendly call, an offer to help with shopping, sharing a laugh over a cup of tea – can make all the difference to someone who is lonely.

~ André Chassé,
AARP Maine Volunteer State President

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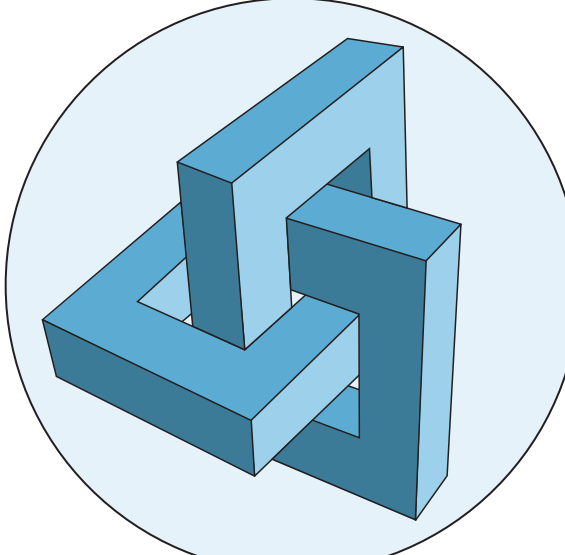

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EMERGENCY COVERAGE AT WARREN AVENUE LOCATION

→ BACKPACK *Cont. from page 4*

feel hungry, tired, or irritable by the time they get back to school. Every child deserves to feel happy and energized and to be given the best possible chance to succeed and the Backpack Program is our way to ensure that chance is given.”

Govoni said making a donation to the program can help transform the lives of the RSU 14 students whose lives can be made a little easier with a nutritional meal that is not always available to them.

“We cannot make this program work without the help of our very generous businesses, organizations

and residents of Windham and Raymond,” she said. “We are very grateful and cannot thank those who have contributed monetary donations or volunteer their time to help make this program successful.”

In this week’s edition of *The Windham Eagle*, local businesses participated in an advertising holiday greet-

ing fundraiser with a portion of the proceeds benefit the RSU 14 Backpack Program. Thanks to the ninety-five participants we were able to raise over \$1,100 to the cause. These can be viewed on pages 26-35.

To make a donation helping ensure that the food insecure children of the Windham and Raymond commu-

nities are nourished and well fed, mail a check or money order to: School Nutrition Program, Attn: Ryan Roderrick, 228 Windham Center Road Windham, ME 04062 Note: Backpack Program.

Online donations can also be made at <https://rsu14.androgov.com/> - Select “all other student activities,” fill in your information, for a specific school, select “School Nutrition.” For *Payment Description* write “Backpack Program.”

For more details about the Windham/Raymond Backpack Program, call 207-892-1800, Ext. 2012 or send an email to rroderick@rsu14.org or mgovoni@rsu14.org <

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Thank you local businesses!

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The Christmas Spirit Shines Bright in Our Community!

As the year draws to a close, we are once again reminded of the magic of Christmas – a season that lights up our homes, warms our hearts, and inspires us to give.

It's a time when the simplest of gestures can bring immense joy, whether it's the glow of holiday lights on a neighbor's porch, the laughter of children building snowmen, or the kindness of strangers sharing smiles in passing.

But beyond the twinkling lights and festive melodies lies the true essence of Christmas: the spirit of giving. This season, our community has shown what it means to come together. From food drives to toy collections or volunteers who quietly lend a hand to someone in need – every act of generosity reminds us of the power we hold to brighten someone else's world.



*From all of us at The Windham Eagle, we wish you a
Christmas filled with love, joy, and simple magic.*

WE APPRECIATE YOU ALLOWING US INTO YOUR HOMES EACH WEEK AND LOOK FORWARD TO DELIVERING FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. THANK YOU!

With federal overtime rules blocked, Maine's Minimum Salary Threshold set for 2025

This fall, the Maine Department of Labor shared the news that under a new U.S. Department of Labor rule, the minimum salary threshold for exempting a worker from overtime pay would be \$58,656 in 2025.

The Maine minimum salary threshold for exempting a worker from overtime pay must exceed 3,000 times the state's minimum wage or the annualized rate established by the US Department of Labor, whichever is higher. The new federal rule that would have increased the salary threshold was recently blocked by court action. Therefore, starting Jan. 1, 2025, the new minimum salary threshold in Maine will be \$845.21 per week, or \$43,951 per year.

This is only one of the factors used in determining whether a worker is exempt from overtime pay under federal or state law. An individual can earn more than the minimum salary threshold and still be eligible for overtime. The duties of each worker must be considered as part of this analysis.

The minimum wage and overtime law can be found here: <http://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/26/title26sec664.html>. The Maine Labor Department also has more information available on its website at https://www.maine.gov/labor/labor_laws/wagehour.shtml.

In other labor law reminders:

Paid Family and Medical Leave Registration & Contributions

Beginning Jan. 1, 2025, employers with employees in Maine will be required to register on the new Paid Family and Medical Leave Portal and begin payroll contributions.

The Maine Department of Labor is inviting employers and third-par-

ty administrators to webinars that will focus on what they need to know about the new Paid Family and Medical Leave online contributions portal before they need to register in January.

Benefits are scheduled to begin May 1, 2026.

To keep up to date on Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave, register for webinars, and more info, visit www.maine.gov/paidleave

Minimum Wage to Increase

Pursuant to Maine law (Maine statute Title 26, chapter 7, section 664), effective Jan. 1, 2025, the state minimum wage will increase from \$14.15 to \$14.65 per hour, based on data by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Maine law, amended by citizens referendum in 2016, requires annual adjustments to the minimum wage based on the cost-of-living index (CPI-W) for the Northeast Region. Between August 2023 and August 2024, there was a 3.6 percent increase in the CPI-W.

In addition to the minimum wage, the new "tip wage," or service employee minimum wage, in 2025 will be \$7.33 per hour. This means that service employees must receive at least a direct cash wage of \$7.33 per hour from the employer. The employer must be able to show that the employee receives at least the minimum wage of \$14.65 per hour when the direct wage and tips are combined at the end of the week. The amount of tips needed to qualify as a service employee will increase from \$179 per month to \$185 per month.

Employers can download the required minimum wage poster at no cost on the Department's website: www.maine.gov/labor/posters/index.shtml <

The history behind the annual tradition of reading 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'

"Twas the Night Before Christmas," originally titled "A Visit from St. Nicholas," is a beloved holiday classic that has enchanted readers for generations. Published anonymously in the Troy Sentinel on December 23, 1823, the poem's authorship was later attributed to Clement Clarke Moore, a professor of literature and theology. Moore reportedly wrote the poem in 1822 as a Christmas gift for his children, inspired by a snowy sleigh ride near his New York estate. However, some argue that Henry Livingston Jr., a poet and Revolutionary War veteran, was the true author, though Moore's claim remains widely accepted.

The poem played a key role in shaping the modern image of Santa Claus. Before its publication, St. Nicholas was depicted as a solemn, robed figure. Moore's portrayal of a "jolly old elf" with a "round belly that shook like a bowl full of jelly" created the cheerful, magical Santa we know today. The poem also introduced the idea of Santa's sleigh being pulled by eight reindeer, each named in its famous verses.

"Twas the Night Before Christmas" influenced many holiday traditions. The image of Santa descending through the chimney and filling

stockings with gifts became iconic. Its vivid descriptions of Christmas Eve magic contributed to the holiday's evolution into a family-centered, joyful celebration. In 19th-century America, Christmas was understated and often religious, but the poem helped popularize its more secular, festive aspects.

Reading the poem aloud has become a cherished tradition for families and communities. Its rhythmic lines and vivid imagery make it perfect for storytelling, especially on Christmas Eve. Public readings in schools, libraries, and community events evoke nostalgia and bring people together, bridging generations through shared joy.

Over the years, the poem has inspired numerous adaptations, including illustrated books, films, and stage productions. Its influence on Christmas extends to songs, decorations, and holiday marketing, cementing its place as a cornerstone of holiday culture.

The enduring charm of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" lies in its ability to capture the wonder of the holiday season. Whether read by a crackling fire or at a festive gathering, it continues to bring the magic of Christmas to life for readers young and old. <



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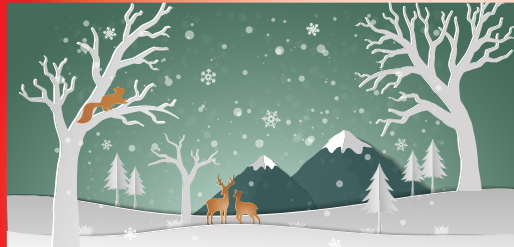
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SPORTS

Windham High swim team sets a high bar for season

By Matt Pascarella
STAFF WRITER

Windham's swim team came out incredibly strong in their first meet of the season at the Portland YMCA on Friday, Dec. 13 against Cheverus. Windham had a first-place finisher in almost every event with Windham's boys finishing first with a score of 86-64 and Windham's girls tied with Cheverus with a score of 65.

"I was really proud of the team and I'm looking forward to the season," said Windham sophomore Sullivan Scharf. "Today was ... get out there and have a first meet. We were just looking to get in the pool and get some times up there. The cheering was really good, everyone was supporting each other, everybody was really working together. I like our relay teams a lot ... I like how Coach Small puts them every week so they're a little bit different, so we get to work with different people each time. In practice I think we need to put in a little bit more work."

Scharf finished first in the 200-yard Individual Medley with a 2:07.72-minute time. He also finished first in the 500-freestyle with a time of 5:04.99.

Windham freshman Rocco DiDonato finished first in the 200-freestyle with a 2:21.16 time. DiDonato finished second in the 100-freestyle with a time of 1:03.65.

In the 100-backstroke, Windham freshman Nick Chasse finished first with a 53.16 second time.

Windham junior Pascal Hentsch finished first with a 1:26.03 time in the 100-breaststroke.

In the 100-butterfly, Windham freshman Peter Funk finished first with a 59.95 time. He finished second



(L to R) Windham sophomore Sullivan Scharf moves with agility during a prep swim meet against Cheverus at the Portland YMCA on Friday, Dec. 13. Senior Sarah Inman does the butterfly stroke. PHOTOS BY MATT PASCARELLA

in the 100-backstroke at 1:02.55.

"Coming to today, I was excited to know that we were going to have a lot of good teamwork, and we were going to cheer each other on," said Windham senior Martina Jefferson. "We have a lot of new swimmers, so I expected there would be some nervousness ... but honestly, we barely had that. We had a lot of encouragement from everyone else and I think it went great. I think a lot of us have been great at keeping that stroke long and on the backstroke, we've been getting that pop kind of. I think also streamlines have been great. Our starts need a little more work ... because we want to aim to go out farther because that will decrease our time, but otherwise there's not really a lot we have to change."

Jefferson finished second in the 100-backstroke with a time of 1:19.32. She finished third in the 100-freestyle with a 1:10.46 time.

In the 200-freestyle, Windham senior Morgan Farley finished first with a 2:28.13 time. She was also first in the 500-freestyle with a 6:34.04 time.

Windham senior Sarah Inman finished first in the 200-individual medley at 2:34.06 and first in the 100-butterfly at 1:14.45.

Windham freshman Stephanie Roghelia finished first with a time of 27.30 in the 50-freestyle. In the 100-breaststroke she finished first with a 1:17.79 time.

"Immediately I think we exceeded the expectations we had for the first meet of the year," said Windham swim team coach Peter Small. "Six of the 24 kids (on the team) have swum

high school before; across the board kids with experience, kids without experience did things today that we were really hoping to see. First meet of the year, we always say this is your benchmark, pace it the way we've talked about ... try to get the technique at the greatest level we've worked on, but this is your benchmark. It's from here that we measure improvement over time; times were faster, the technique was better, our turns, while we still need work was definitely better than I was expecting." <



(Top to bottom) Junior Pascal Hentsch competes in the breaststroke race. Senior Martina Jefferson does the backstroke.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



Stephani Roghelia

Age: 14 Team: WHS Swimming Team

Coach: Peter Small

Parents' names: Cecil and Michael Roghelia

Reason for selection: Stephanie takes her teammates to a whole other level; she works as hard as anybody else, she attacks things, she uses instruction from her coaches, she takes advice from her teammates and turns around and can apply it in the pool. Stephanie will take on a challenge and there's a moment where you can see that self doubt wants to creep in but she goes out and has had success every single set that she's gone after. She's developed this partnership and leadership of really taking this team forward.

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WHS indoor track and field team prepare to start season

By Matt Pascarella

STAFF WRITER

Since mid- to late-November both the Windham High School boys' and girls' indoor track and field teams have been practicing and working on their skill sets and technique as the start of their regular season nears.

Teams have been practicing indoors, in gyms, working out in the weightroom and outside to make sure they start the season strong. Both newcomers and veteran athletes have set goals for themselves and are nervously ready for the season to start.

"With track it's all about self-improvement," said Windham senior Carter Engelman. "I love to (achieve personal bests) in my events, that's my goal. I'm hoping for 14-6 feet in the pole vault; looking to break the school record in the 55-hurdles too. I'd love to see everybody improve, we've got a lot of great new freshman, and a lot of great returning runners and jumpers and they're putting in the work and it's going to be great to see them improve. There's always a level of nervousness. I'm able to decrease the pressure myself by making it about improving and not comparisons, but there's always a little bit of stress."

To help prepare, Engelman and



Windham senior Carter Engelman practices hurdles in the halls of Windham High School on Thursday, Dec. 12 as the WHS indoor track and field team gets ready for the start of the season which kicks off on Dec. 21 at USM in Gorham. PHOTOS BY MATT PASCARELLA

the boys' team have been doing a lot of running and have been focusing a lot on strength in the weight room. They are also focusing on the technical aspect and dialing it in before the season, making their forms better and working hard to make improvements. "We have a lot of good leaders and

a lot of kids that are really stepping up helping with practices and helping the younger athletes," said Windham boys' indoor track and field coach Paula Pock. "They are getting anxious to compete. We're really focusing on our strength and (being) mentally strong to help us get through some of those events and just not overthink it. We know we've put in the hard work and now we have to put it together in the meet. Our goal is to see a lot of kids qualify for the Southwestern and state meets. We have some kids that are setting some high goals to perform well at those meets."

The girls' team has new members who are excited to be part of the team

and are ready to compete.

"I love to work out and running is always fun and to be part of a team (is why I joined indoor track)," said Windham freshman Taylor Hall. "I heard great things about the coaches, so I wanted to see what that was like. I would love to do really well in the 50-yard dash as well as the long jump; hopefully come close to the school record, maybe even break it. Definitely (get a personal best) in everything and to become a nicer, more talkative person to my peers, being part of a team helps with that. I love the feeling of the nerves though; it helps you get going."

According to the girls' indoor track and field coach Jeff Riddle, each day is an investment in how the team will train to implement into the next day. The first two and a half weeks, they were just investing for the next day and the day after that. The team has responded extremely well to all of it and Riddle helped to ease any nerves by telling the team that the first two meets are like a practice with your uniform on. "Setting the sequence and flow of each day that's how you build to capacity," said Riddle. "I would like to see the team unified and have a blast doing this, to showcase and perform everything that they're learning into their events and do it for and with each other. I think they're going to have significant success."

Windham's indoor track and field team kicks off the season at 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 21 at the University of Maine in Gorham against Bonny Eagle, Deering and Falmouth High Schools. <



Junior Mason Arbour works out at WHS with Windham freshman Renner Gerrity.



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Wednesday, January 8 • 7:00 PM

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- Docks
- Solar
- Lot Sizes

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

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The Extinction Bowl

► **By Andy Young**
SPECIAL TO THE WINDHAM EAGLE



Andy Young, Columnist

The College Football Playoff (CFP), a 12-team tournament that will ultimately determine this season's national collegiate championship, begins this weekend with four games. The winners will move on to play higher-seeded teams, with the 11-game single-elimination tournament concluding with the Jan. 20 national championship game.

Truthfully though, it doesn't matter which group of youthful mercenaries

ultimately triumph. Each represents a multi-million-dollar corporation that, for the sake of convenience, has nominally attached itself to an institution of higher learning. This year's field includes Texas, Georgia, Notre Dame, Ohio State, and eight similar athletic factories.

Regardless of which squad wins, every team involved in this year's CFP will be back in the hunt in 2025 with revamped squads, augmented with the largest and quickest gladiators-for-hire money and similar inducements can buy. And while the contributions of influential alums will help pay for renting next season's athletic soldiers

of fortune, the bulk of the costs will be borne, largely through the courtesy of compliant lawmakers, by ordinary citizens who pay taxes and/or tuition.

I believe something of tangible value ought to be at stake in any meaningful post-season football playoff. That's why America (and specifically ESPN's programming department) needs the Football Elimination Tournament (FET), featuring the nation's 12 least-successful Division I programs. This year's lineup of gridiron sad sacks is clear-cut, since exactly 12 major college teams won fewer than two of the dozen games on their schedule. In the FET, the four worst squads would get byes through the opening round, just as the nominal top four get free passes through the initial round of the CFP.

The FET's first quartet of games would feature eight one-win, eleven-loss teams. This year's opening round would pit Dixie State (which, inexplicably, is located in Utah) against Delaware State, with Charleston Southern opposing Purdue, North Carolina A&T taking on Southern Mississippi, and Virginia Military Institute squaring off against Mississippi Valley State. However, unlike the overhyped, over-subsidized CFP, a win in an FET playoff game would entitle the victors to conclude their dreadful season, while the teams they beat would be forced to play on.

In the second round, the four Round One "losers" would play, in order, Kent State, Northwestern State (which, improbably, lies in the

not-so-northwestern state of Louisiana), Northern Colorado, and Murray State. Kent State and Northwestern State would merit their pass through the first round by having lost all 12 of their games in 2024. The other two would get first-round byes thanks to having, among the ten teams that finished 1-11, the two worst point differentials. Northern Colorado scored 317 fewer points than their opponents, while Murray State registered an even more abysmal minus 341.

Assuming the higher remaining seeds play their way out of the FET by winning their second-round games, and that Murray State and Northern Colorado subsequently (and mercifully) end their horrible seasons by winning in the semi-finals, it would set up a loser-take-all showdown between the tournament's last two remaining teams. But why would anyone care about the outcome of a game between two winless squads? Because of the stakes: the loser of the Extinction Bowl, Kent State or Northwestern State, would be required to drop their football program for at least five years!

Many of America's major-college football programs (which most likely includes every team in the mythical FET) that aren't affiliated with a major conference annually operate in the red, costing their schools obscene amounts of money. That established, the chance to rid one's university, at least temporarily, of the fiscal sinkhole intercollegiate football has become would be a prize well worth competing for. <

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Winter home maintenance tips

► **By Jonathan Priest**
SPECIAL TO THE WINDHAM EAGLE



— Jonathan Priest

Shorter days and cooler weather make it tempting to curl up under a blanket and hibernate until spring. It's a good plan, but before the snow flies, cross these six home improvement projects off your list.

1. Clean the gutters

The first snowfall of the season is not the time to learn your gutters are filled with debris or too loose to handle the weight of the snow.

Falling leaves can create a buildup, and when it rains or eventually snows and the snow melts, the water will need a clear path to run. Making sure you have clear downspouts has the same reasoning, so that debris does not build up.

Clean your gutters, or better yet hire a pro to tackle the job. While you're at it, look for areas where gutters are loose and may have torn away from the house. Reattach them using

gutter spikes, brackets or hangers. Clean, well-secured gutters are essential to protect the foundation of your home and reduce the risk of basement flooding.

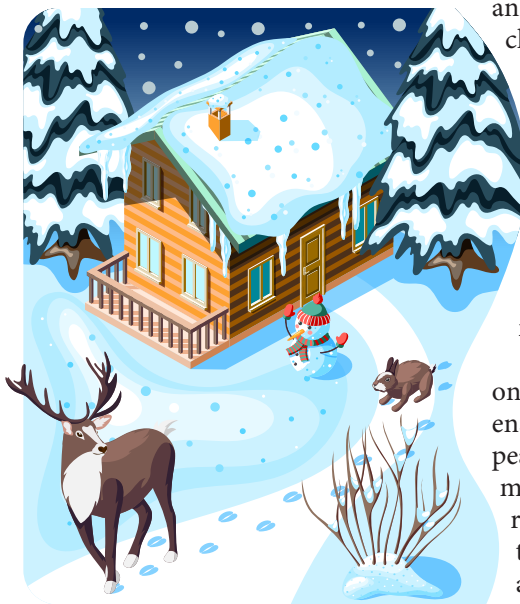
2. Check smoke detectors

Change the batteries in your smoke detector. As you are preparing your home for cooler months, Remember, if your alarm chirps—a sign the battery is low—replace it, no matter the time of year. Once you've replaced the batteries, test the smoke detector: It's as simple as pushing the button to make sure the alarm goes off.

Don't ignore hardwired smoke detectors; many have battery backups and those batteries need to be replaced, too. You should also replace any smoke detectors that are over 10 years old. Alarms are constantly checking the air for smoke, and after 10 years, the effectiveness of the alarm may decrease.

3. Hire a chimney sweep

A chimney sweep isn't just a character from Mary Poppins. These fireplace pros remove soot and creosote that build up in the chimney and pose a fire risk. A professional chimney



sweep, certified through the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA), will clean the chimney and inspect the entire fuel venting system for warped metal on the damper, cracked or collapsed flue tiles, cracks in the exterior masonry and other signs of fire damage. The National Fire Protection Association recommends an

annual chimney inspection. A clean chimney makes it safer to build a cozy fire in the winter; a chimney that has been swept not only helps prevent chimney fires but will also aid your fireplace to operate more efficiently as the smoke and other flue gases can exit the chimney more quickly.

4. Perform furnace maintenance

Call in the pros before turning on the heat. Regular maintenance ensures that your furnace runs at peak efficiency. Without semiannual maintenance (in the spring before running the air conditioner and in the fall before turning on the heat), airborne allergens may get trapped in the filters, resulting in poor indoor air quality.

5. Winterize water pipes

Data from the Insurance Information Institute shows that almost 30 percent of homeowners insurance claims were related to water damage and freezing. Make sure to drain outdoor water spigots and winterize wa-

→ see REAL ESTATE Page 44

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FOOD AND GAMES

THE WINDHAM EAGLE'S

Cooking Corner

By Angela Paris

SPECIAL TO THE WINDHAM EAGLE • JUGGLINGACTMAMA.COM

Creamy Chicken Broccoli Pasta Bake

Our cheesy chicken and broccoli pasta casserole is loaded with broccoli and shredded chicken in a mouthwatering creamy sauce. You can whip up this meal with just a few simple steps. Serves six, total prep time is 10 minutes. The total cooking time is 40 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 8 ounces of spaghetti | 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour |
| 10.8-ounce bag of broccoli florets such as BirdsEye Steamfresh | ½ teaspoon garlic powder |
| 2 cups of shredded chicken | ½ teaspoon onion powder |
| 1 tablespoon of butter | 1 teaspoon dried basil or dried thyme |
| 3 large garlic cloves minced | Kosher salt and fresh black pepper |
| ½ cup yellow onion diced fine | 4 ounces cream cheese cut into cubes |
| 10.5-ounce can of cream soup | 1 ½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese divided |
| 1 ½ cups of milk | |

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 350-degrees F. Lightly grease a 9 x 13 baking dish.
- Cook pasta according to the instructions on package, drain and set aside.
- Steam broccoli according to the instructions, drain any excess water.
- Add broccoli and the shredded chicken to the pasta; set aside.
- In a large skillet, melt the butter. Add onions and cook for about 4 minutes on low until translucent. Add minced garlic and cook for 1 more minute.
- Whisk in cream of chicken soup, flour, and milk. Sprinkle in garlic powder, onion powder, and dried basil. Season with salt and pepper.
- Mix in the cream cheese until it is melted into the sauce. Sprinkle in 1 cup of cheese and stir until combined. When cheese is melted, pour it over cooked spaghetti, shredded chicken, and steamed broccoli. Transfer pasta mixture to a prepared baking dish. Top with remaining ½ cup of shredded cheese.
- Bake for 10-15 minutes until cheese on top is melted.

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H	A	M	S	S	H	O	E	S	M	A	U	L
A	G	I	O	H	A	K	U	S	A	G	R	A
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P	A	L	E	A	C	A	T	S	A	B	E	R
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53								54				55	56	
57											58			
59						60					61			

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

- "The Las Vegas of the East"
- Cook
- Manning and Wallach are two
- Chameleon
- A way to fill up
- What MLBers hope to play in
- Unhappy
- Indefinite period of time
- Excites
- Males
- Mongol leader Genghis
- Turfs
- Soda comes in them
- Not nice
- Professional organization
- Part of a play
- Sea eagle
- Emily Blunt's character in "Sicario"
- Beige
- Mental sharpness
- Valley
- Alcyone's husband
- A place to gamble
- Flightless Australian birds
- Call out somebody's name over a P.A. system
- US spy group
- Pancakes from buckwheat flour
- Swiss river
- Disfigure
- Have surgery
- Formal withdrawal
- Early English council
- Square measures
- 2,000 lbs.
- Siskel and __, critics

CLUES DOWN

- Mouths
- Buffalo
- You plug it in
- Each
- Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
- King of Thebes
- English name meaning "mythical hunter"
- Indicates near
- More herbaceous
- Gas-powered cars need one
- Dishonest individual
- Systems, doctrines, theories
- The woman
- The whole of one's holdings
- Witnesses
- Doctor
- Paul __, Swiss painter
- Kids look for him on December 24
- Single
- Competitions
- Predict the future
- Cage for trained hawks
- Musician Clapton
- Frozen water
- Semiformal men's evening attire
- Most worn
- Common soap ingredient
- Former EU monetary unit
- Provisions
- Book parts
- Republic of Ireland
- Partner to "Pa"
- Sammy __, songwriter
- Dutch colonist
- Clare Booth __, American writer
- Solar disk in Egyptian mythology
- Minute arachnid
- From a distance
- Monthly apartment cost
- Young women's association
- Tourist destination
- "Woman" in Ojibwe language
- Pointed end of a pen

SUDOKU

5				6		2		
	6					7	9	
2			8			1		6
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HOW TO SOLVE:
Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

2	7	5	4	9	3	1	8	6
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3	9	1	6	7	5	4	2	8



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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Relying on hard work, high-quality service, a safe and clean energy product, and supporting the communities it serves, Waltz & Sons is the standard by which other propane companies in Maine are measured.

Located at 29 Park Place in Buxton, Waltz & Sons is a full-service propane company which focuses on residential propane and offers free site surveys, installation, service, remote tank monitoring, prompt deliveries, and Pre-Buy and Budget plans. Its service area spans a 50-mile radius surrounding Buxton and including the Lakes Region of Maine.

Waltz & Sons specializes in the Hearth Products and services all brands. They are a distributor of the Regency Brand and a Rinnai ACE Dealer which is the highest service level Rinnai recognizes in their partners.

“We started the company from our home in 1996. We built and moved to our current location in December of 2018,” said Sue Waltz. “We currently have 16 full-time and one part-time employee. We are proud to have 11 of those employees who are 35 years old and younger and two of which hold management positions.”

Her husband, Skip launched the business after doing subcontracting work for propane companies in the Portland Area.

“That grew into us buying tanks and having another company de-



liver the propane to our tanks. That grew into us buying our first delivery truck,” Waltz said. “It was about the time our son Mike joined us after serving in the U.S. Air Force. From there, we have consistently grown to who we are today. Of course, there were many bumps in the road as with any business, but we are proud to be the company we are today.”

The most significant aspect of Waltz & Sons is that the business only serves residential customers.

“We do have a few Mum and Pop shops like the Buxton Mini mart or home based businesses but no larger commercial,” Waltz said. “By doing this and focusing on the home products we stand out in our field as we are training specially on the hearth and home products. We do not work on furnaces or boilers though, as we work with plumbers to whom we refer that business. Therefore, we’re not competing against them but rather are working with them to offer homeowners the best possible service for their products.”

The company differs from its com-

petitors through its fully staffed service department with all employees fully licensed for inside and outside service and maintenance. During the winter months many companies do not set up propane tanks or service equipment as their service staff are busy with deliveries, but Waltz & Sons takes the time to do so.

“The main goal of our company is single call resolution and there is always a family member available to take a call,” Waltz said. “We also staff our 24/7 on call service with our management so that again, all calls are a single resolution whenever possible.”

She said the key elements leading to the success of Waltz & Sons are investing in their employees, investing in equipment, and investing in the communities it serves.

“We’re a small family-owned business that puts trust in our employees and we’re proud of our employee training program,” Waltz said. “We sponsor many activities within our service area and support local services as well. We feel we are very competitive for our services and are generally

under the state average for our propane pricing.”

Educating homeowners about the propane business also is an essential task for Waltz & Sons.

“Planning ahead is helpful as you can’t get a tank tomorrow and you can’t put propane in someone’s else’s tank as it’s against the law to deliver to someone else’s tanks,” Waltz said. “New regulations about fossil fuels make it necessary to educate residents about the benefits of propane.”

Their focus on exceptional customer service has paid off. It received the Institute for Family-Owned Business Chalmers Customer Service Award in October and took “Gold” in the Portland Media Groups “Best of 207” in 2023. The company was third in the Small Business Category of the Best Places to Work in Maine Awards this year, the first time it was part of that competition and Waltz & Sons is on the National Top Retailers list as published by LP Gas Magazine in the category of Single State Retailers. In 2024, Waltz & Sons received a load of Renewable Propane and were the second in the state to receive such a load, and the first in Maine to receive a load used in the residential market.

For further info about Waltz & Sons or to learn how they can serve you, call 207-929-8898 or visit www.waltzandsons.com. You can also find them on Facebook and Instagram. <

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Our Recent Awards



→ REAL ESTATE *Cont. from page 41*

ter pipes to reduce the risk. You can winterize water pipes by locating your hose bib shut-off valve, which may be in a basement or crawl space, and turning it off at the source. For extra protection, purchase a Styrofoam cover that attaches over the outdoor spigots to keep them from freezing. These quick fixes can provide protection against the elements as tem-

peratures drop. You may also want to shut off water to exterior faucets and drain sprinkler systems for extra protection against freezing pipes and water lines. **6. Assess windows and doors** Heat lost through windows and doors can account for up to 30 percent of home energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. To keep heat in the house, look for cracks or gaps in the exterior caulking, check seals around exterior door

and add caulking or weather stripping as needed. While these DIY fixes can reduce heat loss, a professional energy assessment can provide additional insights into areas where you may be losing heat and recommend fixes. Call your utility company to ask about their services or get a recommendation for a pro. Spending a few extra hours tackling these home improvement projects this fall will keep you warm and safe all winter long.

This article was brought to you courtesy of Farmers Insurance agent, Jonathan Priest, with an office at 57 Tandberg Trail, Suite 7, Windham and StaySafe.org. Call him at 207-893-8184 or send him an email at jpriest1@farmersagent.com <

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