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Maine BOOMERS Spring 2026

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Coming to Maine – One Boomer’s Brief Story

by Bill Van Tassel

My first visit to Maine was in the summer of 1971. I just graduated from Villanova University in Pennsylvania. I had been hired as a counselor and tennis instructor at Wild Goose Camp in the small, rural town of Harmony. Villanova was renowned for its Track & Field and Basketball teams, though not so much for Tennis. Athletic in nature, I started hitting the tennis ball for hours each day against the wall of the handball court near my dorm.

When I thought I was improving, I would hang out at the tennis courts and find partners to replace the concrete wall of the handball court. I fell in love with the sport with each improved month of practice. I studied the tennis styles of Arthur Ashe, Rod Laver, Bjorn Borg, John McEnroe, Chris Evert, all popular stars in the 70s and 80s, most of whom were Baby Boomers like me.

After three years of my new sport, I was able, by senior year, to squeak into the twelfth spot on the team by defeating the player who currently held that spot. I played, however, just one official match for the club. The player I had displaced went on to win back his twelfth spot,



Bill Van Tassel photos

continuing to defeat me from that point onward. Even so, with no hard feelings, I sponsored him to pledge my fraternity.

The experience enabled me to land a summer job at a boys’ camp on Great Moose Lake not far from the site of the town’s famous Harmony Free Fair. (A little less than forty years later I would photograph events at that same fair for a local publication.)

Upon camp’s closure I did some substitute teaching in my New Jersey hometown while thinking about enrolling in Art school. College had given me a growing interest in Art, History and World Culture, so I ventured out on a two-month,

back-packing trip around Europe. Completing that, I remained undecided about my future direction. With summer approaching and having enjoyed my experience working with the campers, I returned to camp as a head counselor of the youngest cabin and tennis instructor.

During that second summer, the director told me about a school teaching job that was open in Turner, Maine. The principal of this elementary school had been a counsellor at the same camp

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



George McGregor

In what felt like the longest winter ever, spring has finally arrived, and I don't know a Mainer who isn't happy about it. I think the cold spell we went through this winter was the nail in the coffin for everyone wanting winter to go away and never come back.

But now we are all pumped to be able to get outside and do our things. What do you like to do in/for spring? For me, I have been working in the yard and will be playing golf within the next week or so. I am getting ready to start fly fishing. Fly fishing always brings me that peace and quiet feeling. I have also started my Hot Green Pepper seeds that were planted inside. They are now germinated, sprouting and will be ready to plant in the ground soon. Last year I won a blue ribbon at the local Fair, so I am psyched to hit pay dirt again. I will plant the plants up at camp.

Spring also represents opening up camp and enjoying the camp life. With that said, I wish you all a great spring and will see you back here in summer with our next edition of the Boomers. Enjoy your spring and enjoy reading this Boomer edition!

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in its early years. My director encouraged me to apply for the position and drive down for an interview. He loaned me his car, and with some trepidation, I headed to Turner's farms and cows. Raised in a city on the Delaware River across from Philadelphia I knew that I "was not in Kansas anymore." Well, something "clicked" between the principal and me, so he took a chance and gave me the job with a provisional certification. I was twenty-two years old.

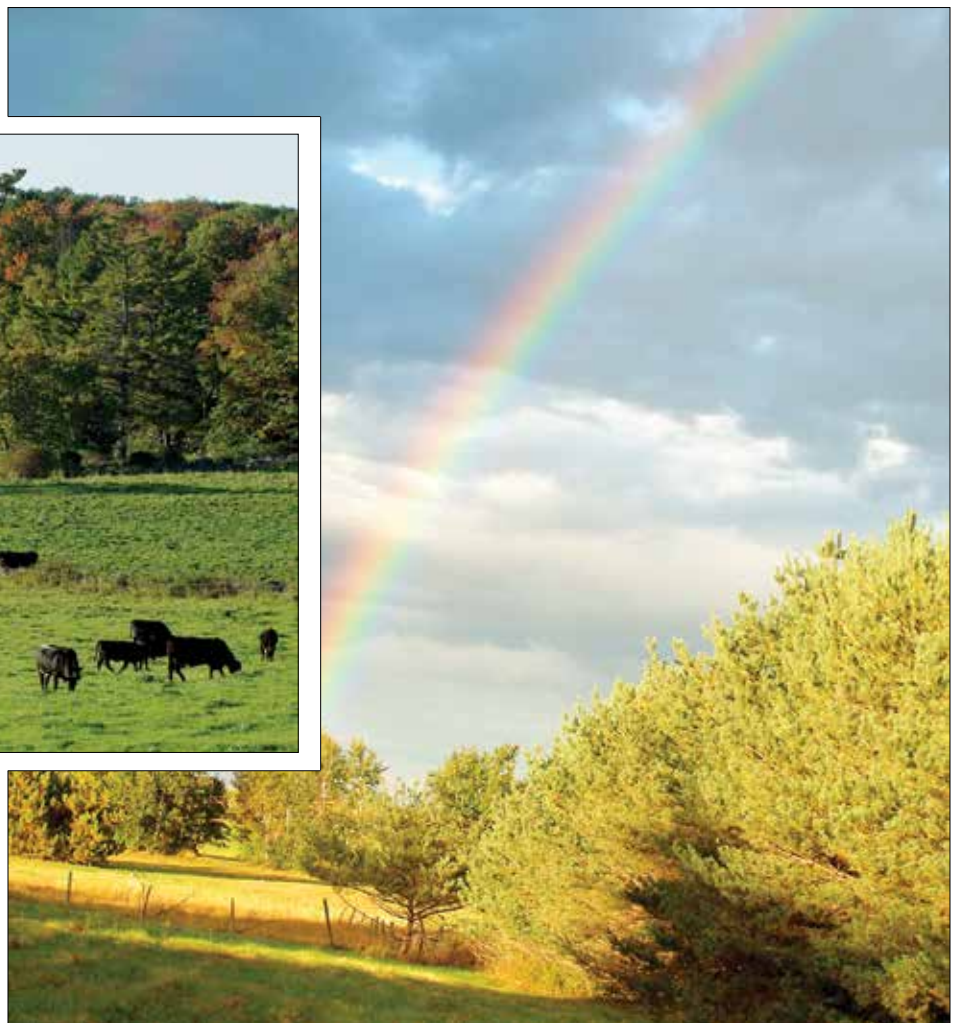
I believe I accepted the position for several reasons. I had found working with the kids enjoyable and I loved learning new things myself. Other than family, I had nothing calling me back to New Jersey. That first summer in Maine, ex-

cept for the Black Flies, was absolutely gorgeous; perfect weather; it seemed to only rain at night. Also, one of the counsellors who had snowshoed into the camp the previous Winter, gave a slide show highlighting the massive amounts of snow. My reaction at that time, again, age 22, was, "Hey, that looks pretty neat." I am now approaching seventy-six and no longer feel that initial enthusiasm. I have some other feelings, "no so neat" in my back, my hips and my shoulders.

I have never regretted moving to Maine. As I began my second year of teaching, I met the love of my life during auditions for a Lewiston/Auburn Little Theater musical. I am sadly a widower now, but I was blessed for sharing 32 years with one of the best decisions I ever

made. We have four great children and eleven grandchildren.

On occasion people ask me, "Would you ever move back to New Jersey?" I always respond, "Only if I had to take care of my mother." It turned out that a few years ago my sister and her husband fell on hard times financially and had to move in with Mom. It was perfect timing as age was beginning to present challenges for Mom. Her unexpected new residents have been able to wonderfully meet Mom's needs, and I have been able to stay in Vacationland to blissfully tolerate Maine's long winter and appreciate a less demanding pace of life.



Bill Van Tassel photos

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Paid Family and Medical Leave come to Maine

Beginning in May 2026, Maine workers will have access to a new Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program, a major step forward for working families across the state. The program provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of paid, job-protected time off so they can care for themselves or the people who matter most, without risking their income or employment.

This policy didn't happen by accident. AARP Maine strongly advocated for the PFML law, working alongside caregivers, older Mainers, and community partners to highlight the need for paid leave. With Maine's aging population and a workforce where many people balance jobs with caregiving responsibilities, PFML responds to a long-standing gap in economic and family security.

Under Maine's PFML program, workers can take paid leave for several important life needs. These include bonding with a new child by birth, adoption, or foster placement; caring for a family member with a serious health condition; addressing their own serious medical condition; supporting a loved one preparing for military service; or seeking safety from abuse, violence, or assault through what the program calls "safe leave."

The program is designed with flexibility and worker protection in mind. PFML provides partial wage replacement so workers can continue to receive income while on leave, and job protection for employees who have worked for their employer for at least 120 consecu-



tive days. Leaves can be taken all at once or in smaller increments, and importantly, the benefit is portable, meaning it stays with workers even if they change jobs.

Paid Family and Medical Leave matters because life doesn't pause when illness, family changes or caregiving arise. According to the 2026 AARP Valuing the Invaluable report, 310,000 Mainers are caregivers of adults, providing care for older parents, spouses, neigh-

bors, and other loved ones, contributing 220 million hours of care annually. Without paid leave, many workers—especially low-wage workers and caregivers—are forced to choose between a paycheck and their health or family. PFML helps ensure that no one has to make that choice.

Workers planning to take leave should notify their employer as soon as possible, typically 30 days in advance, when the need for leave is foreseeable.

To learn more or prepare to apply, visit maine.gov/paidleave, where workers can find up-to-date information, eligibility details, and application guidance. As AARP Maine continues its commitment to supporting caregivers and working families, PFML stands as a powerful example of policy that values both work—and life.

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Building community across Maine: The power of AARP local programs and events

Across Maine, AARP's community programs and events play an essential role in bringing people together, strengthening neighborhoods, and supporting residents as they age. From educational workshops and fraud prevention presentations to social gatherings, wellness activities, and local advocacy events, AARP Maine creates spaces where people can connect, learn, and make a difference—right where they live.

Community engagement is at the heart of this work. These programs are designed not just to inform, but to invite participation. When people gather around shared interests or common goals, stronger relationships form, civic pride grows, and communities become more resilient. For many participants, attending an AARP event is the first step toward discovering new opportunities to stay active, engaged, and connected.

A significant portion of AARP Maine's programs and events are volunteer run. Volunteers help plan, promote, and deliver programming across the state, often bringing their own professional skills, lived experience, and local knowledge to the table. Their involvement ensures that



offerings reflect the real needs and interests of Maine communities—from rural towns to larger cities. Without these dedicated volunteers, many

a renewed sense of purpose, and the satisfaction of making a meaningful impact. Whether someone has a few hours a month or wants to take on a leadership role, there's flexibility to match individual interests and schedules. For some, volunteering becomes a creative outlet; for others, it's a way to give back, stay socially connected, or rediscover passions after retirement.

Community involvement benefits everyone involved. Participants gain valuable information and social connection; volunteers develop skills and confidence, and communities grow stronger through collaboration and mutual support. In a state like Maine, where local ties matter deeply, these connections are especially powerful.

If you're interested in joining a community of engaged Mainers and making a difference, learning more is easy. To explore volunteer opportunities, simply *email me@aarp.org*. To find upcoming programs and

events near you, visit <https://www.aarp.org/states/maine/maine-events-hub/>. Together, we can continue building vibrant, connected communities across Maine.



programs simply wouldn't be possible.

Volunteering with AARP can be surprisingly fun—and even life-changing. Volunteers often say they gain more than they give: new friendships,



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Safe ways seniors can lose weight

Metro

The prevalence of obesity among adults 60 and older is significant. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 39 percent of adults 60 and over met the criteria for obesity over a two-year period between August 2021 and August 2023.

The National Council on Aging notes the importance of maintaining a healthy weight as you age. Seniors who qualify as obese, which occurs when a person's body accumulates and stores excessive amounts of body fat, carry a higher risk of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer. The NCOA also notes that excess body weight puts a strain on the joints, increasing the risk for osteoarthritis and making daily movements more difficult. People with obesity also are more likely to develop asthma and sleep apnea.

Seniors diagnosed with obesity are urged to seek safe and healthy ways to lose weight. Fad diets and other means to quick weight loss can be dangerous, but the NCOA notes simple lifestyle changes and healthy habits can help seniors safely lose weight.

- Consume nutrient-dense foods. Lean proteins, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables offer plenty of vitamins, minerals and fiber but tend to be low in calories. That makes them ideal options for people looking to lose weight, as they contribute to feelings of fullness without consuming a lot of calories.

- Incorporate physical activity into your daily routine. Exercise can pose problems for older adults who qualify as obese. The joint issues that can affect older adults with obesity can make traditional exercise regimens that incorporate strength training and moderate to vigorous aerobic activity very difficult, and maybe even dangerous. But the NCOA notes that exercise need not be intense to be effective. Walking is a great physical activity for older adults. Swimming also is excellent, as it provides a full-body workout that's easy on the joints. Seniors are urged to speak with their physicians about physical activities they can handle.



Metro photo

- Don't skimp on sleep. Sleep can be an effective ally for seniors looking to lose weight. The NCOA notes that seven to nine hours of sleep per night helps support a healthy metabolism and regulate hunger. Seniors who have trouble falling asleep at night can try various strategies, from avoiding caffeine from the afternoon on to avoiding screens after dinner, to prepare their bodies to get better rest at night.

- Work to combat stress. The NCOA reports that stress is a contributor to weight gain. And stress and disorders linked to it are perhaps more common among adults 60 and over than people realize. In fact, according to the Anxiety and De-


pression Association of America, anxiety disorders, which are a notable source of ongoing stress, are the most widespread mental health condition among older adults. Sufficient sleep, meditation and deep breathing exercises can help seniors combat stress, and that in turn may help older adults avoid excess weight gain.

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Virginia Blais, “Gini” to those who know and love her

I’ve been trying to figure out how to write about Gini Blais without making her sound like a greeting card, because she would absolutely hate that. The truth is simpler and harder to say all at once; she is just one of those rare human beings who makes everyone around her feel like they matter. There are some people whose lives do not unfold in big sweeping gestures, but rather in quiet acts of care. Virginia Blais, “Gini” to those who know and love her, is one of those people. She has never chased the spotlight and has never wanted it. What she wanted was to be useful, to show up and to love people to the best of her ability. And she’s been doing exactly that her whole life with a kind of stubborn, quiet determination that most of us can only admire from a distance.

Gini grew up in the small town of Peru, Maine, attending local schools until eighth grade before moving on to Rumford High School, where she graduated in 1980. Like many of our generation, her early adulthood was a blend of practicality and determination. She married shortly after high school and went to work building a life for herself.

But Gini was never one to stand still for long. With a desire to learn, she returned to school and earned her associate degree in business. That achievement opened a new door for her as an account executive. Around that same time, she welcomed her first son into the world, the first of two, a moment that would quietly but profoundly alter the course of her life. She discovered something simple and powerful: she loved children.

That love led her to open her own daycare so that she could spend more time with her children. It was work that fed her heart, but as life often does, it shifted once again. When she eventually closed the daycare, Gini returned to the workforce, taking a position at Rumford Hospital behind the registration window.

It was there, in that front-row seat viewing urgency and crisis, that something tugged at her. As she watched ambulances pull in, and watched



Virginia Blais

Submitted photo

first responders working with real purpose, she felt an undeniable pull toward that world. It wasn’t enough to witness it; she wanted to be part of it. She went back to school once more, earning her EMT certification through long hours of classes and ride-alongs, learning not just the technical skills, but the emotional weight of the work. That decision became a calling.

For the past 30 years, Ginny has served as an Advanced EMT responding to emergencies that most of us can barely imagine. She has been there in moments of chaos and heartbreak offering not just medical care, but steadiness and compassion.

One moment stands apart. In 2019, Gini was among the first responders to the devastating Farmington propane explosion, a tragedy that claimed the life of the fire chief and severely injured several others. Her ambulance team was the second to arrive on the scene. She recalls the air thick with white dust, debris floating like ash, and the eerie glow of headlights cutting through the haze and the intense panic of not fully realizing the scope of the day. Out of that smoke came two firefighter figures moving through the devastation and in that moment, she realized this was much larger than anything she had experienced.

Even now, years later, memory carries immense weight. The explosion was so powerful it was heard in several surrounding towns. Gini and

her team felt it at their base even before they received the call from dispatch.

While working on the scene, Gini suffered a severe asthma attack brought on by air quality. In the midst of crisis, she became a patient herself. Though she continued to help where she could, aiding with loading patients and coordinating care, the experience left her with lingering health issues and a quiet burden of guilt for not being able to have a bigger impact.

“I wish I could have done more,” she says softly. And yet, her career is filled with many moments that define what it truly means to serve in this profession for 30 years. She speaks not only of emergencies, but of the quieter calls, transferring patients to nursing homes, accompanying individuals to hospice, bearing witness to life’s final chapters. One memory stays with her: transporting a seven-year-old cancer patient and her mother to Barbara Bush Hospital. In those final moments of that young life, Gini found that her perspective forever changed.

“It taught me that every moment matters,” she reflects. “Every single one.”

That understanding has shaped how she meets the world, with much deeper empathy, for offering real presence, and on a rare occasion, laughter and understanding. All of it with a fierce

Virginia
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Movie Review

Marty Supreme



Dr. Peggy Cyr.

I was drawn to this movie because I grew up on ping pong and I knew this movie had a ping pong theme. My parents bought a ping pong table for our family of five children that was put in our unfinished basement and on cold winter nights and hot summer days we would go downstairs and play. I especially liked it be-

cause my mother would play against her kids. We got our competitive edge from her.

The movie is based loosely on a real-life Marty Reisman (played by Timothee Chalamet), a 1950's ping pong champion who starts out working at his uncle's shoe store in New York City. Marty lives with his mother, has no money, but wants to play competitive ping pong. He makes it to the British Open where he defeats the world champion in the semi-finals and then loses in the finals to Japanese player Koto Endo. Marty believes in himself when no one else does.

He is quite a charmer and has at least two

lovers, his neighbor and long-term friend Rachel, (Odessa A'Zion), who he gets pregnant and former box office queen and now has been Kay Stone (Gwyneth Paltrow) who he meets in a hotel lobby. Kay's husband, Milton Rockwell, (played by Kevin O'Leary from Shark Tank) is a very successful businessman who sells pens. Marty spends a good part of the movie trying to get money from Milton and others and at times resorts to stealing and a whole host of shenanigans.

After spending some time on tour with the Harlem Globetrotters he begs Milton to take him to Tokyo to have a rematch with Endo. He gets his trip to Tokyo and rematch, but as a publicity stunt for Milton's company where he must lose the game. That ends up being a tough pill for Marty to swallow.

The story is long and convoluted and with a running time of 2 hours and 29 minutes I found it too long. Suffice it to say I believe the word Supreme refers to Marty's con artist talents. He could talk his way out of almost any

jam. It has been touted as a sports drama, with an effort to elevate the sport of Table Tennis. It may have fallen short though. The movie was nominated for 9 academy awards but won none.

Most impressive to me is that Timothee played the ping pong games in the movie himself except for a few trick shots that were fixed in post-production. His table tennis instructor was Swiss Diego Schaff and his wife Wei Wang a US Olympian in Table tennis. He apparently trained extensively for years before the shooting of the film including learning the period specific strokes from the 1950s.

And my parents' Ping Pong Table? It made its way down to Auburn, Maine in a UHAUL truck and got set up in the basement of a condo my mother lived in. When she died,

we gave the Table to a family with two boys. I'm not sure it made it to its next location in one piece, but the memories of that ping pong table have lasted a lifetime.



Virginia

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commitment to kindness and often recognizing the importance of sitting simply while holding a hand.

Today, Gini is a proud single parent of two grown sons and a devoted grandmother, "Grammie" to her beloved grandchildren who she spends a majority of her free time with. She lives in East Dixfield, tending to her home and the property. She finds time to grow and can her own food and handles life's demands with the same self-reliance that has always defined her. When asked what keeps her going back each day to such a demanding profession, her answer is simple: "the people. It's the human connection and it's something I am called to do." Add to it all the deep and unwavering bond with her fellow responders. They share a

quiet knowledge that, in someone's worst moment, they are there.

When asked what she wants others to know about her, Gini doesn't reach for accolades or recognition. "I don't think I'm special," she says. "But I am honest, and I am caring, and somewhere on my journey I found my true calling. I'm an immensely proud mom and Grammie, a great sister, and a loyal friend ... and I wouldn't have it any other way."

Thirty years of running toward the worst moments of people's lives, and that's what she wants you to know. Not the difficult calls or the many years of service. Just that she's honest, and caring, and that she has found her place in this world.

And perhaps that humility is exactly what makes her extraordinary.

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What to look for in a second act

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A fiftieth birthday is often viewed as a milestone moment in an individual's personal and professional life. Upon turning 50, some adults might have felt as though they could see the light at the end of their professional tunnel, but that that's not necessarily so in the modern era.

According to the Pew Research Center, the number of adults 65 and older who are still working has nearly doubled since the late 1980s. The researchers at Pew also note the rate of workers 75 and older who are still working has quadrupled since 1964. So while 50 might once have been viewed as an age when it's time to start thinking about a professional exit strategy, modern adults 50 and over may now be looking for a second act so they can keep working for decades to come.

No two professionals are the same, so what makes for an ideal second act for some might not do the same for others. Everyone must identify their own professional priorities, but the following are a handful of qualities to look for in your second act.

- **Transferability:** Professionals change careers for a wide range of reasons, including a desire to do something wholly different from their current job. But even if a chance to do something new is your primary motivation, it can be beneficial to find a second act where skills from your existing career transfer over. Transferability can help bridge the experience gap, making it easier to land a first job in a new field. Transferability also can



Metro photo.

make the transition easier on you, as you're less likely to feel like you're starting at square one if you can utilize your existing reservoir of skills in your new job.

- **Flexibility:** Flexibility also can be useful when changing careers. Teaching is a flexible

field that many established professionals look to when pondering a second act. If you prefer to try before you buy, then look for a flexible teaching position like an adjunct professor's role at a local college or consider substitute teaching. Flexibility also can pertain to where you work. Pew reports that one in four workers 55 and older teleworked in 2024, so if you're switching careers to spend more time at home and with your family, then a second act that offers the flexibility of remote working might be just what you need.

- **Opportunity:** If you aren't decided on what you'd like your second act to be, then researching growth fields that figure to offer plenty of opportunities can be a great place to start. Read up on burgeoning new fields or established professions experiencing staffing shortages. If you aspire to relocate to a locale that's more retiree-friendly, then look into places you're interested in and see which types of professional opportunities are available so you can continue to work as long as you'd like in your new home.

A second act that allows professionals to utilize their existing skills and offers plenty of flexibility and opportunity can be just what professionals need to make a successful transition to a new line of work.



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Beef Burgers With Onions, Spinach, Ketchup, and Blue Cheese

For the burgers:

- 1 1/4 pound ground beef
- 1 onion, peeled and finely diced
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon chilli sauce
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 4 ounces Stilton cheese, sliced
- 4 sesame seed burger buns
- 2 to 3 handfuls baby spinach
- 6 tablespoons crispy onions



For the sauce:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small red onion, peeled and finely diced
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely diced
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 8 ounces tomato puree
- 3 1/2 tablespoons tomato passata
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

- 1 tablespoon whiskey
- 1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper or taste
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika, or to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder, or to taste

For the sauce: Heat the oil in a pan and lightly sauté the diced onion and garlic. Stir in the honey and sugar and simmer briefly. Mix in the tomato puree, passata, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, and whiskey. Simmer until thickened. Season the sauce with salt, pepper, paprika, and chilli powder to taste.

For the burgers: Place the beef in a bowl, add the onions, salt, pepper, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and chilli sauce, and mix well. Shape into 4 burgers.

Preheat a griddle pan. Lightly oil the pan and grill the burgers for 8 to 10 minutes, turning once. During the last minute of cooking, top the burgers with cheese and allow to melt. Remove the burgers from the pan and set aside. Halve the burger buns horizontally and toast in the pan, cut-side down, for 1 minute, then remove.

Layer the bottom half of each bun with spinach and sprinkle with crispy onions. Place the burgers on top, drizzle with tomato sauce and cover with the top bun halves. Fix with a skewer if desired and serve with the remaining sauce separately.



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Move More May - Lets Go

Have you planned your Move More April? Time to get rid of that winter skin and get moving. With the weather changing and the sun shining this is a perfect time to get outside and enjoy the activities warm weather brings. There are many ways to get active and move more for April, here are a few.

1. Start a walking routine

Find a time of the day that works for you and go for a walk and make it a routine. Make an appointment every day to walk and put it on your calendar. If you do not have the time for a full hour walk, break it up into 2 30-minute sessions. Maybe 30 minutes in the morning and another 30 minutes after dinner. Walking on your lunch break is another way to get it in and refresh you. A lunch break walk can be invigorating and give you more energy to complete the rest of your day. It will help you focus and be more productive. You can make your walks a competition with friends. Maybe get a Fitbit and start a walking group with friends. See how many steps you can get in as a group. Set goals as a group and once achieved you can reward the group with a luncheon or dinner. Make it fun.

2. Join a class

Find a yoga class, weightlifting class, dance, Zumba or any type of cardio or strength class. The social aspect of group exercise can keep you motivated and involved. It can also be a fun way to get a lot of exercise. Experiment and mix it up to find what works for you.



3. Stretch and move throughout the day

Stuck at your desk all day? Incorporate some desk stretches like rolling and stretching your shoulders and neck. Stretch your arms and fingers. Incorporate a few exercises into your routine to keep your body active and your muscles engaged. Take frequent breaks to stand up and stretch. Do some side bends and leg lift to keep you limber. Gentle squats and deep knee bands can give you a little boost. Frequent, little movement throughout the day can make a big difference in your fitness level. Just keep moving. Take a long way to the water cooler or the coffee clutch area. If you

have stairs, use them frequently. Sitting for long periods of time relaxes the muscle in your core and can impact your back. It is so important to take frequent breaks from sitting to stay limber and injury free.

4. Add variety to your plan

Try different exercises and mix them up. Do not limit yourself to the same routine every day. Maybe bike one day and walk the next. Take a long hike or play pickleball to mix it up.

Swimming is also great exercise that you can incorporate. Go bowling. Take advantage of anything you can do

to get more exercise into your day. Do yard work and pull weeds. Landscaping and raking leaves can be great exercise. Variety is the spice of life so keep moving.

5. Stretch while you watch TV

Instead of couching it in front of the TV. Lay on the floor and do some sit ups or pushups and plenty of stretches. You can do a lot of sit-ups in place of watching commercials. Challenge yourself to do some simple exercises like squats, lunges, or planks while you watch your favorite shows. It is a win-win! In the age of streaming, there are not always commercials, but find 3-5 minutes before starting that next episode to do a lap around the living room or jumping jacks. Or simply unplug awhile from all electronics and get moving.

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Anna Staehli Wiser
DPT, FAAOMPT,
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Strength at Every Age: How to Protect and Enhance Muscle Performance

Aging does not have to mean slowing down. Although hormonal shifts, gradual muscle loss, and changes in collagen production occur over time, the musculoskeletal system remains remarkably adaptable.

With the right combination of progressive strength training, thoughtful nutrition, and evidence-based medical care, people can maintain strong muscles and resilient tendons well into midlife and beyond.

Below is a summary of treatments and strategies that research suggests may help support muscle and tendon strength, organized by the level of available scientific evidence.

Hormones and Tissue Health (High Level of Evidence)

Estrogen in Women

After menopause, estrogen levels decline significantly. Estrogen influences collagen metabolism and connective tissue structure, and receptors are present in tendons, ligaments, muscle, and bone.^{1,2} Research suggests estrogen deficiency alters tendon collagen turnover and may contribute to age-related tissue changes.²

Menopausal hormone therapy reduces bone loss and fracture risk and may support overall musculoskeletal health in appropriately selected women when prescribed by a qualified healthcare provider.³ Hormone therapy carries potential risks and should be individualized in consultation with a healthcare professional.^{4,5}

Testosterone in Men

Testosterone supports muscle mass and bone density. Testosterone replacement therapy can increase lean muscle mass and improve bone mineral density in men with clinically low tes-

tosterone levels when prescribed and monitored by a qualified healthcare provider.^{6,7}

As with estrogen therapy, testosterone therapy carries potential risks and should only be used in appropriately evaluated individuals under medical supervision.⁸

Nutrition and Supplements

Vitamin D (High Level of Evidence)

Vitamin D is essential for bone mineralization and muscle function. Deficiency is common, particularly in northern climates. Studies show that correcting vitamin D deficiency can reduce fracture risk and improve muscle performance.⁹

Protein (High Level of Evidence)

Age-related “anabolic resistance” means older adults require adequate dietary protein to maintain muscle mass. Sufficient protein intake remains one of the most evidence-supported strategies for preserving strength with aging.¹⁰

Creatine Monohydrate (Moderate Level of Evidence)

Creatine is one of the most studied and well-tolerated performance supplements. When combined with resistance training, creatine supplementation has been shown to improve strength and increase lean muscle mass in older adults.¹¹

Omega-3 Fatty Acids (Moderate Level of Evidence)

Omega-3 fatty acids may support muscle protein synthesis and help reduce inflammation. Research suggests omega-3 supplementation may enhance the muscle-building response to exercise and potentially support recovery.¹

Collagen and Gelatin (Moderate Level of Evidence)

Collagen is the primary structural protein in tendons and ligaments. Vitamin C-enriched gelatin consumed before exercise has been shown to increase markers of collagen synthesis.¹³ Another study found that collagen supplementation during resistance training improved

lower-limb rate of force development compared with placebo.¹⁴

A systematic review suggests collagen supplementation may modestly reduce joint pain and improve function in individuals with osteoarthritis.¹⁵

Curcumin and Ginger (Modest or Mixed Evidence)

Curcumin, the active compound in turmeric, has demonstrated modest reductions in knee osteoarthritis pain in randomized trials.¹⁶ Ginger also shows mild anti-inflammatory effects and modest reductions in osteoarthritis pain compared with placebo.¹⁷

Glucosamine and Chondroitin (Modest or Mixed Evidence)

Research findings for glucosamine and chondroitin are mixed. Some individuals experience symptom relief for osteoarthritis, but more recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses have found overall benefits to be small, inconsistent, or not clinically meaningful.^{18,19}

Resistance Training: The Most Powerful Strategy (High Level of Evidence)

Progressive resistance training is the single most effective intervention for maintaining musculoskeletal health with aging. Mechanical loading stimulates collagen remodeling in tendons, increases bone mineral density, and promotes muscle hypertrophy and strength. Regular strength training has also been shown to improve balance, reduce fall risk, and preserve functional independence in older adults. For these reasons, resistance exercise remains the cornerstone of injury prevention and healthy aging.¹⁰

The Big Picture

No supplement or medication replaces the foundational role of movement. Strength training, adequate nutrition, and maintaining overall health remain the most reliable strategies for protecting musculoskeletal function as we age.

When combined thoughtfully, evidence-based

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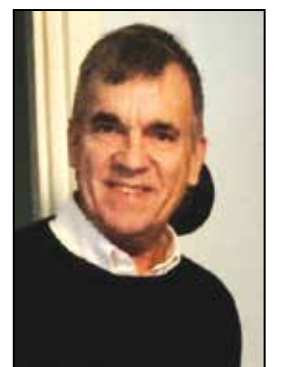
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medical therapies and nutritional strategies may provide additional support for maintaining strong muscles, resilient tendons, and healthy joints throughout life. Individuals experiencing persistent joint pain, tendon injuries, or declining strength should consider consulting a qualified healthcare professional to determine the most appropriate treatment plan.

This article is intended for educational purposes and should not replace individualized medical advice from a qualified healthcare professional.

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Spring Brings Grandma Gatewood, Silent Auction and Hansel and Gretel to The Public Theatre

Grandma Gatewood Took a Walk, playing May 8-17, tells the true and inspiring adventure of Emma "Grandma" Gatewood. In 1955, at the age of 67, she told her children she was "going for a walk," and set out with her duffel bag, shower curtain (to keep dry) and a pair of Keds sneakers to walk the Appalachian Trail. Two thousand miles later, she became the first woman to solo hike 14 states from Georgia to the top of Mt. Katahdin in Maine. Don't miss this celebration of the resilience of the human spirit and the courage required to walk into the unknown. You'll find an added weekday matinee Thurs, May 14, at 2pm. Grab some great seats before they're gone.

During the run of Grandma Gatewood, The Public Theatre's Annual Silent Auction fundraiser will be taking place. There's something for everyone at the Silent Auction, featuring

items from businesses and craftspeople from around the state. You can be a part of this important fundraising event by donating an item to be auctioned off. Sponsorships are also available.

Our spring children's show is Hansel and Gretel by Tanglewood Marionettes, playing Saturday, May 30. Based on the classic fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm, this beloved story comes to life with dazzling marionettes, music and a colorful set in the shape of a giant storybook. Follow Hansel and Gretel into the woods, where they meet a witch and overcome a series of challenges, which help them to discover their inner strength and find their way home. All tickets are just \$15 each!

For tickets to all shows and more information about the Silent Auction, visit ThePublicTheatre.org or call 782-3200.

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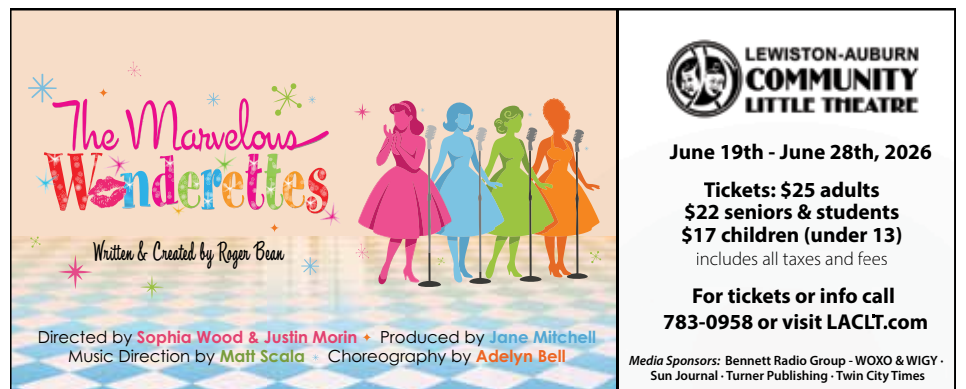
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Kennebec Savings Bank supports Maranacook Gear Library's efforts to expand youth access to outdoor recreation

AUGUSTA - Kennebec Savings Bank is proud to support the Maranacook Gear Library, a community-based initiative focused on increasing access to outdoor recreation and physical activity for children and families throughout the Maranacook region. Since launching in 2022, the Gear Library has engaged more than 400 fourth- and fifth-grade students through its Kids on the Go after-school program in Readfield, Mount Vernon,

Manchester, Wayne, and Fayette.

Following a year of planning, the Maranacook Gear Library introduced a mobile Community Gear Library Trailer in partnership with local libraries in Readfield, Fayette, Wayne, and Mount Vernon. Operating weekly since early January, the trailer allows families to borrow winter recreation equipment such as skis, snowshoes, skates, and ice-fishing gear at no cost. Strong community demand has led to the purchase of additional equipment to ensure continued access for families across the region.



“At Kennebec Savings Bank, we believe in investing in programs that strengthen communities from the ground up,” said Amanda Cooley, Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing and Communications Officer of Kennebec Savings Bank. “The Maranacook Gear Library is creating meaningful opportunities for kids and families to be active

together, build confidence, and feel connected, and we are proud to support that work.”

In addition to its lending program, the Gear Library supports youth running and cross-country skiing initiatives in local schools, hosts community events such as the annual Winter Carnival, and is launching a spring bicycle refurbishment program in partnership with the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. Kennebec Savings Bank's support reflects its long-standing commitment to community well-being and expanded access to opportunity throughout central Maine.

For more information, please contact Marketing Project Coordinator Cole Leclerc at CLeclerc@KennebecSavings.Bank.

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UPGRADING ONE'S CULINARY TALENTS

When Marie Crawford decided to enhance her culinary skills, she found that no cooking classes were offered in, or very near to, her home in Aroostook County. She signed up to take courses at the Maine Tasting Center in Wiscasset,

There, she had a choice of subjects ranging from preparing fiddleheads and shucking and serving Maine oysters, to Maine Heritage Beans & Bean Suppah.

Marie also turned her gastronomic galivant into a sightseeing excursion. She strolled along the banks of the Sheepscot and Back Rivers, hiked in the surrounding rolling hills and checked out the vibrant working waterfront, buzzing with activities including lobster fishing, sport fishing and clam digging.

Similar opportunities to combine a culinary learning experience with stimulating sightseeing abound throughout the United States. After a search to find cooking classes that are of interest, people may hunt for things to see and do nearby.

Among culinary courses at Bossier Parish Community College in Louisiana are food basic skills, development and preparation principles. The region's relationship with food traces back to the 1830s, when the Elysian Groves Plantation grew corn, sweet potatoes and other crops which were shipped to markets in the south and east.

Mealtime in Texas often means brisket, chicken fried steak and pecan pie. At the Spread Oaks Ranch in Markham, selections include fresh-from-the gardens and greenhouse veggies and learning to pair wines with food. When they're not preparing, or

enjoying edibles, guests may select from a long list of activities including fresh and saltwater fishing, hunting birds and stalking deer, wild hogs and alligators.

Agriculture has long shaped Idaho's identity, and the state's food culture reflects a deep connection to locally grown ingredients and seasonal produce. Students at North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene may study classical cooking techniques, nutrition and baking fundamentals.

Similar classes – Culinary Essentials, Nutrition, Bakeshop I and II are also offered at the Danville Area Community College in Illinois. They're augmented by courses in salads, sandwiches, farm-to-fork and other topics, all taught by master chefs in a state-of-the-art kitchen.

The choices at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis, Indiana are equally varied and are available at nine locations. In addition to overall Culinary Arts classes, they include baking and pastry, dietary administration and beverage management.

Hands-on experience is a focus of study at Edmonds Community College in Lynnwood, Washington. It blends classic cooking techniques with regional flavors. Students gain experience working in local kitchens, including the College Café.

Opportunities to cook in a college café, perfect your pastry prowess, broil brisket and try out regional recipes are just a few of countless opportunities to upgrading one's culinary talents. Combining that learning experience with a sightseeing sojourn can offer benefits well beyond the plate and palate.



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A few years ago, we met Frankie and Joe through a mutual friend. What started as helping them search for an Arizona vacation home quickly turned into a genuine friendship.. They were living in the Boston area at the time, with a beautiful lake house tucked away in Roxbury, Maine—and before we knew it, they had invited us to come visit them when we were on the East Coast.

In 2023, during one of our Sprinter van road trips, we took them up on that offer... and Maine completely stole our hearts. From the peaceful lakes to the rugged coastline, to the kindest people you'll ever meet—Maine is just one of those places that stays with you. Roxbury ended up being one of our favorite stops of the entire trip, creating a connection to the state that we didn't expect but will always treasure.

Fast forward to early 2025...

We were hosting an open house in Trilogly at Vistancia here in Peoria, Arizona, when an adorable couple, walked in to see our listing. We had a friendly chat as they looked around and within seconds, I recognized their unmistakable New England accents.



So naturally, I asked, "Where are you from?" "Maine," Jodi said.

We lit up and started sharing our story—how we fell in love with Maine, how Roxbury was our favorite stop, and how we can't wait to go back for another visit. All of a sudden, they literally stopped in his tracks and said, "Did you just say Roxbury, Maine?!" Jodi continued to say, "I grew up in that area and spent all of my summers at Roxbury Pond as a kid." Just like that, we started sharing the stories and memories of Roxbury Pond, and the connection was instant.

Since then, we've not only helped them find their Arizona vacation home—we've built another incredible friendship. We've since visited them at Jodi's lake house in Mount Vernon, Maine. We are already planning annual trips to Maine to spend time with them, as well as Frankie, Joe and their new baby and our extended family in Portsmouth and the Boston area.

And that's when it really hit us...

We're not just helping people move—we're helping bridge two places we now love deeply.

Arizona and Maine may be completely different landscape, but they share something important: amazing people, a strong sense of community, and places you're proud to call home.

So, if you know anyone in Maine dreaming about sunshine, golf courses, and desert sunsets—we're here to help make that transition seamless (and maybe gain a few more lifelong friends along the way).

You never know when a client will turn into a

lifelong friend... but we're pretty sure if they're from Maine and looking for a home in Arizona, we're about to become besties.

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Most scams come to us with three common red flags: a contact from out of the blue that heightens our emotions and contains urgency. When you notice these three red flags together, take what AARP

calls an "active pause." Take an intentional step back and reflect on what you might know about the scenario – "Does this make sense? Have I heard something about this before?" This pause gives you time to apply logic—something the criminal playbook is written to avoid—and protect yourself and your assets.

If someone contacts you saying they represent the SSA, call the agency directly at 800-772-1213 or visit ssa.gov/myaccount instead of responding directly to the communication. If you shared your Social Security number and believe it was part of a scam, go to idtheft.gov for step-by-step guidance.

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