

MOUNTAIN MESSENGER

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Tragedy of the "Posted" Commons

By Dan Rhodes

No Mainer needs to be reminded of the absolute gift of this state's natural splendor. Even the simple privilege of breathing fresh air might seem trivial, but there are many places where even clean air is a novelty. I have visited places where, in their drawings, school-children color the sky brown or yellow, reflecting their daily reality because of rampant air pollution. Even today, when I'm on the trail on a crisp Maine morning, the sun is climbing, and the sky is a perfect shade of deepest blue, I think about those kids.

Nowhere is perfect, and even someone not from Maine can see it has its own share of real, pressing issues. But still, I am constantly in awe of this land, of this seeming sanctuary of greenery, rivers, beaches, and mountains. Maine's tradition of public access to land fosters collective appreciation of these gifts. While not unique in the world, this (excellent) tradition is new to me. Different places call it different things, but ultimately, what it comes down to is the "right to wander."

Of course, there are exceptions, and access to private land, especially, is conditioned on the landowner's knowledge and permission. I would never argue landowners don't have a right to determine who comes and goes on their own land, but I applaud every private landowner who commits to honoring this tradition. When the dreaded "Posted" signs pop up in a place that was previously accessible, it has

a real and tangible impact on everyone in the community. Whether new landowners are simply unaware of Maine's tradition of public access or old landowners have a grudging change of heart because land users abused their goodwill, the result is the same: something shared is lost, and the wild we can wander gets just a bit smaller.

So many Mainers have an interest in seeing public access continue, but even so, over time, more Posted signs appear. There is a very real race going on between those who would preserve and enshrine public access, and those who (for whatever reason) decide to take that access away, to keep it for themselves. But for every Posted sign that goes up, countless other noteworthy accomplishments are preserving public access. I'm proud to support the High Peaks Alliance and groups like them in leading this effort throughout Maine.

It's not my place to tell Mainers what they have: you know already, and better than I ever will. But having lived in so many other places where the expectation is that anything other than your own land (if any) and public spaces are strictly off limits, I do hope Mainers recognize how fragile this endowment of natural beauty is, and that the danger is not sudden change but rather the slow erosion of access, heralded by simple signs that read "Posted."



HPA's Lead Rec Ranger, Matt Kusper, of Rangeley, removing Posted signs from the newly conserved lands in Barnjum.

Submitted photo

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MAINE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY

July 26 — Leavitt Institute Class of 1963 will observe the 63rd class reunion on July 26, 2026 at the home of Dale Talbot. Come and get acquainted again with our classmates (family). It will be a great time. Contact Dale at 207-251-5788 or Marion at 207-946-5579.

July 26 - Concert at Norcross Point, Bella Ann, 2-4 p.m., Norcross Point, Bowdoin St., Winthrop, FMI call 458-5485 or www.concertsatnorcrosspoint.com.

AUGUST

Aug 2 - Concert at Norcross Point, Calypso Soldiers, 2-4 p.m., Norcross Point, Bowdoin St., Winthrop, FMI call 458-5485 or www.concertsatnorcrosspoint.com.

Aug 9 – Concert at Norcross Point, The DE Experience, 2-4 p.m., Norcross Point, Bowdoin St., Winthrop, FMI call 458-5485 or www.concertsatnorcrosspoint.com.

August 12 - Mosher Hill Falls Community Forest

(Farmington), 10 a.m., 200-acre community woodland with an informal loop trail featuring a 45-foot waterfall, conifers, and wetlands, ongoing High Peaks Alliance conservation project, registration is free but required, as space is limited, <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/highpeaksalliance/event/woodwalks/>.

Aug 16 - Concert at Norcross Point, LQH, 2-4 p.m., Norcross Point, Bowdoin St., Winthrop, FMI call 458-5485 or www.concertsatnorcrosspoint.com.

August 16 – Leavitt Area High School Class of 1976 50 Year Reunion, 1-4 p.m., Highlands Golf Course, Turner, dress code casual, no fee to attend (food and beverages will be available for purchase), RSVP on the LAHS Facebook page or text to (207) 649-1247.

Aug 23 - Concert at Norcross Point, Katie Daggett & Ed Desjardins, 2-4 p.m., Norcross Point, Bowdoin St., Winthrop, FMI call 458-5485 or www.concertsatnorcrosspoint.com.

Aug 30 - Concert at Norcross Point, Keiyana

Marie Trinidad, 2-4 p.m., Norcross Point, Bowdoin St., Winthrop, FMI call 458-5485 or www.concertsatnorcrosspoint.com.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

OQUOSSOC: Rangeley Region Skeet and Trap Association (RRS&TA) announces its 2025 shooting schedule, welcoming members and visitors to experience clay shooting sports, Wednesday: Trap and Skeet starting at 4:00 p.m., Thursday: Sporting Clays and Skeet starting at 4:00 p.m., Saturday: Five Stand and Skeet starting at 10:00 a.m., Sunday: Trap and Skeet starting at 1:00 p.m.

FARMINGTON: Nami Farmington Family Support Group, for family and friends of people living with a mental illness, 3rd Monday of each month, 6:30-8 p.m., Maine Health Franklin Hospital, 111 Franklin Health Commons, Farmington, Contact Louise (207) 592-9933 or Kathy (207) 318-1075

MADISON: Music Jams - Open Mic. 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, 1-4 p.m. Masonic Hall, Madison.

RANGELEY: The Lakeside Contemporary Art Gallery's spring/summer show, paintings by Ashton F. LeCraw, will run from May 29 - July 6th. All is welcome & artwork is available for purchase. LCAG is located at 2493 Maine Street, Rangeley & open Tues - Sat. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. & during theatre showing. <https://rangeleyarts.org/event/lcag-artist-reception-ashton-lecraw/> or call 207-864-5000.

FARMINGTON: Nine-ish- NA Meetings (In Person), 9:15-10:30 a.m., Franklin Memorial Hospital, 111 Franklin Health Commons, Farmington.

Food Addicts Meetings
FREE - Food addicts in recovery meetings: Tues Zoom and phone, Thurs phone and Sun in person. foodaddicts.org FMI call 441-8002 or 623-1924

Events for the Maine News Calendar should be received two weeks before the event in order to be considered for publication. Please refer to our deadline chart at this link for

MAINE CALENDAR PAGE

If you are hosting a free community event and would like it added to our calendar, please email your details to: advertising@turnerpublishing.net and include: Date of event; name of event; time of event; venue location; town; contact phone number. Late submissions may not be published. Emailed events are processed faster. Our Maine Events calendar page is FREE for free community events. Church, library and school event news is free on this page. If you are a business and/or charging admission/fee, there is a charge for a display ad on these pages. Email: advertising@turnerpublishing.net. Call 207-225-2076 for pre-payment options. Events for the Maine Events Calendar should be received two weeks before the event in order to be considered for publication. Please refer to our deadline chart at this link for specific publication deadlines: www.turnerpublishing.net/pdf/Deadlines.pdf

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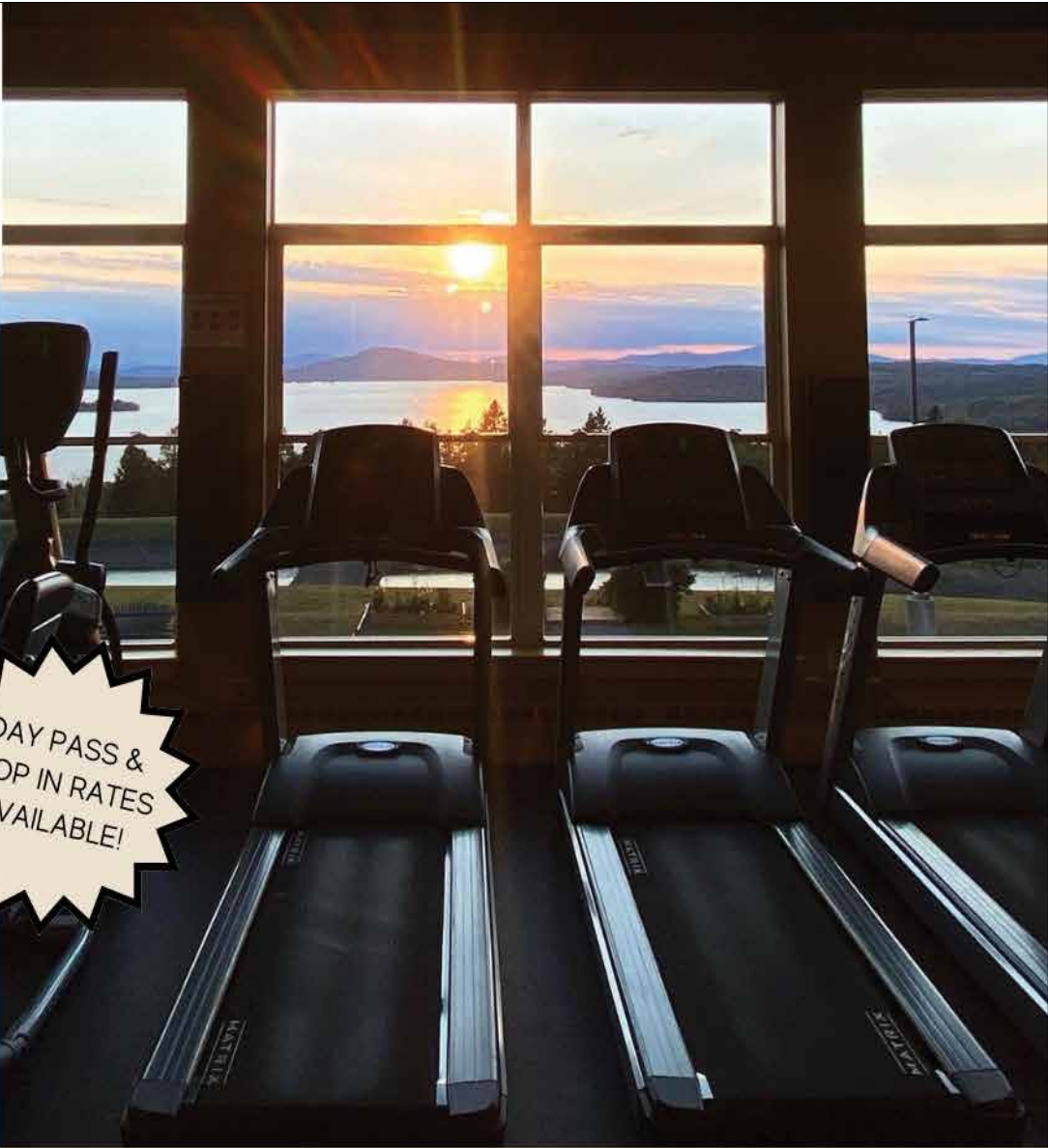


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MAINE OUTDOORS

V. Paul Reynolds

RANGELEY FLY FISHING FESTIVAL



A Quebec brookie mounted by the late David Footer.

Those outdoorsmen and women who have been there would rarely give you an argument if you contended that Rangeley, Maine is ground zero for those whose passion is to cast a long line on the Magalloway River or the Kennebago. So, it was fitting recently that the 5th annual White Nose Pete Fly Fishing Festival took place at the historic Rangeley Inn and Tavern.

Who the heck is White Nose Pete? It is a fish, a purely fictional big trout that, as the story goes, haunts the pocket waters of the fabled Rapid River, a real hook-jawed, fat-bellied slobber-knocker! Legend holds that a few trout men have hooked him long enough to see his white nose, but never long enough to get him anywhere near the net.

Sponsored by the Rangeley Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce, the festival was a two-day affair with lots to see and do. And a great chance to get caught up with old friends and make some new ones. Friday night at the Inn, two well-known and unforgettable fly-fishing characters had their names added to the Fly-Fishing Legends Honor Board. The new inductees were Rangeley guide Herb Ellis

and angler and artist Dave Tibbetts. Both men follow in the long shadows cast by such local and even national angling icons as Flyrod Crosby and Carrie Stevens, not to mention Herb Welch, Don Palmer, Ed Grant, Bud Wilcox and others.

Following the induction, a live auction was held, hosted by the always witty and sardonic Bill Pierce. A pile of money was raised from the donated items. My newest trout watercolor painting titled "Rapid River Runner," which retailed for \$195.00 and sold for \$400. Also auctioned off were some marvelous prints by Dave Tibbetts and the late David Footer.

The festival kicked off Saturday morning in full force, despite a light drizzle. Many of the vendors set up their displays in the Inn while others were under tents outside.

For me, one of the most remarkable and eye-catching displays was a number of brook trout mounts by the late David Footer. Footer's son was on hand to answer questions about the background of the impressive trout; many caught in Labrador or Quebec. Footer was a rare combination of superb taxidermist and fine artist. His trout under glass are alive



A large scale version of the fabled, elusive trout, White Nose Pete.

like no other board mounted brookies you will ever see.

While a friend looked after my Northwoods Sporting Journal vending table, I took a break and sat in on a wonderful and informative slide presentation by guide and outdoor writer Bob Romano. Bob, an Italian from the Bronx, showed up in Rangeley to fish more than 40 years ago and never left the Western Mountains. He is as colorful as he is informed about Rangeley and its precious fishery. Romano surveyed area guides and asked them to name their favorite two flies. He also chatted about

why these flies got top billing with the Rangeley fishing guides. As you might suspect, no two guides think alike when it comes to their go to flies. Angler/historian Leslie Hilyard, for example, hoves to the Green Beauty and the Jitterbug.

What's a Jitterbug? It was news to me. Sounds like a bass bug, but it is a serious trout fly, and surprisingly it was tied and created by the boss lady herself, Carrie Stevens!

What I also learned was that a highly effective wet fly is the Hare's Ear. Bob Romano swears by it. The only Hare's Ear I ever used or heard of is the Hare's Ear nymph, which is almost as

popular as a Copper John.

Isaac Walton, or some other angling forebear, observed that angling is much like mathematics in that it can never be fully learnt. And as you know, if you fish that is part of the fun of it all. The Rangeley Lakes Region White Nose Pete Fly Fishing Festival is a gathering



Rangeley guide and outdoor writer Bob Romano and his wife Trish chatting with Mary at the Fly-Fishing Festival.

of more than just interesting and convivial souls. It is a treasure trove of the most seasoned and experienced anglers in Maine. And they will talk to you.

In 12 months, Rangeley will do it all over again. Put it on your calendar. It is well worth the drive.

The author is editor of

the Northwoods Sporting Journal. He is also a Maine Guide and host of a weekly radio program "Maine Outdoors" heard Sundays at 7 p.m. on The Voice of Maine News-Talk Network. He has authored three books. Online purchase information is available at www.sporting-journal.com, Outdoor Book

Evergreen Golf Club

Tip of the Week

Shaping the height of golf shots is how every advanced player adjusts when playing in different conditions. For example, when it is windy (nearly all the time in Florida) you must be able to adjust ball flight. One easy way is to move the ball to the front of your stance when trying to hit it higher. Alternatively, moving it back in your stance will lower the ball flight. Another way to hit it higher is to lower your back shoulder to change your spine angle. Leveling your shoulders will help you to hit it lower. I hope these tips can help you on a day when the wind picks up or when you are trying to shape a shot.

George Buck,
Evergreen Golf Club

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Mourning Maine's Dead: Victorian Hair Jewelry & Crafts

RANGELEY - In 19th-century Maine, death was ever present. To grapple with loss, Victorian Mainers could turn to art and craft to mourn and remember their loved ones. Their material of choice was human hair. Mary Baker made a good living crafting flowers, wreaths, and jewelry from human hair. Her Portland home-based business tapped into a national craze for Victorian hair jewelry, which not only memorialized the dead but also connected to the living. From snips of a loved one's hair in a locket, to braided hair friendship rings exchanged between schoolgirls, to a large-scale wreath of flowers containing the hair of an entire family, Mainers embraced hair art as a symbol of mourning the dead and celebrating the living.

On Wednesday, July

22nd, at 6:00 PM, Dr. Elizabeth DeWolfe will be speaking at the Rangeley Public Library. Elizabeth DeWolfe is Professor of History at the University of New England where she teaches courses in women's history, archival research, and American culture. Dr. DeWolfe is a historical detective: she hunts archives for the traces of ordinary women, piecing together their all-but-forgotten lives from faint clues.

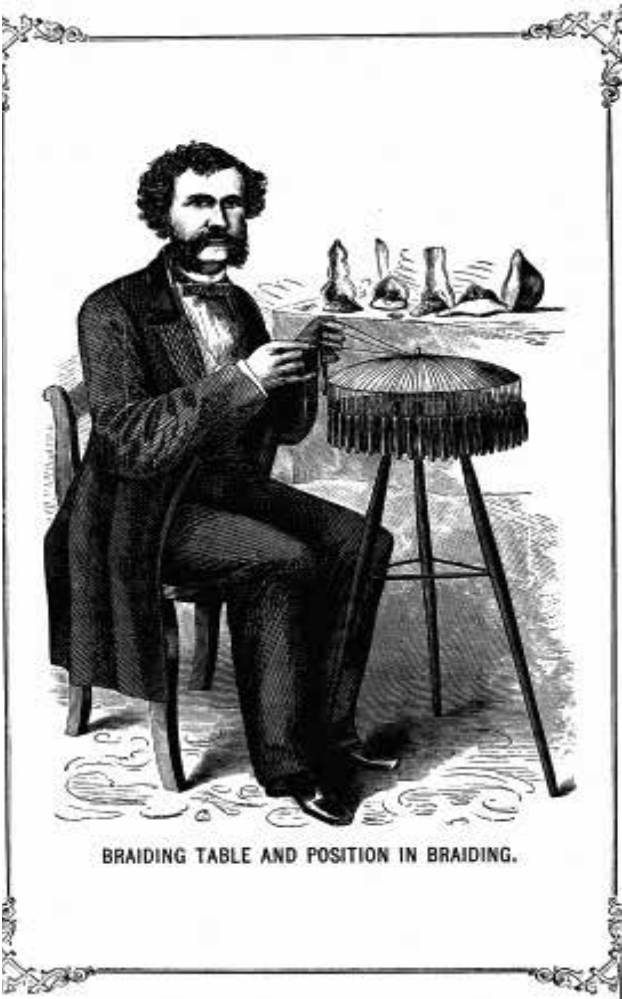
Dr. DeWolfe's latest work, *Alias Agnes: The Notorious Tale of a Gilded Age Spy*, reveals the tale of a Maine stenographer turned undercover detective. Her previous work includes the award-winning book *The Murder of Mary Bean* which illustrates the great opportunities as well as the dangers for young women working in the textile mills



Dr. Elizabeth DeWolfe

of the 1830s and 1840s. Dr. DeWolfe has also written about the Shakers, Victorian hair jewelry makers, and a Maine

woman's battle with bullfrogs in the Great Depression. This program is offered free of charge, but



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Betsy Sholl to read at 19th Ogden Poetry Gathering in Rangeley

RANGELEY - On Saturday, August 1st, lovers of poetry will gather at 3:30 p.m. in the Rangeley Public Library to honor poet Hugh Ogden (1937-2006), formerly of Poets' Island, Rangeley. Betsy Sholl will be the featured poet at the 19th annual Hugh Ogden Memorial Poetry Gathering.

Sponsored by the Rangeley Public Library and the Ogden Poetry Gathering Committee, the event is free to all. Light refreshments will be served. Members of



Submitted photo
Betsy Sholl will read at the Ogden Poetry Gathering on August 1st at 3:30 p.m. in the Rangeley Public Library. Free and open to the public.

the Ogden family will begin the Gathering by reading poems written by their father and grandfather. Then, community

members are invited to read a poem of Hugh's or one of their own that attends to what meant so much to Hugh: the beauty and mystery of the world, and peace among all living things. A sign-up sheet will be available just before the start of the evening since time will be limited.

Betsy Sholl, former Poet Laureate of Maine from 2006 to 2011, hails from Portland. The poems in her tenth collection of poetry—As If a Song Could Save You

(University of Wisconsin Press, 2022)—echo themes of family, music, joy, grief, and the natural world; the book is dedicated to her husband, Doug, who passed away during the COVID epidemic. Her ninth collection of poetry is House of Sparrows: New and Selected Poems (University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), winner of the Four Lakes Prize. Her other awards include a Maine Book Award for Poetry, an NEA Fellowship, and the Association for Writers and Poets' Prize for Poetry. She is faculty emerita of the Master of Fine Arts in Writing Program of Vermont College of Fine Arts. Awarded the 2020 Distinguished Achievement Award from Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, Betsy also won the 2024 Solstice Literary Award in Poetry.

To purchase copies of Betsy's books, please visit Books, Lines & Thinkers, 2513 Main Street, Rangeley (864-4355). To read some of

Betsy's poems, visit her website. <http://www.betsysholl.com>
Love for home and family as well as an appreciation for the everyday wonders of the world link Betsy Sholl and Hugh Ogden. Please join us to celebrate their poetry. If you can, please call the Rangeley Public Library at 864-5529 to reserve a seat. FMI contact Peggy at 860- 0392 or (myocom@gmu.edu) and visit <http://margaretyocom.com/poetry>

Mt. Blue Area Garden Club awards three community grants

FARMINGTON – The Mt. Blue Area Garden Club awarded three Community Grants this year, expanding the program beyond a single annual grant. Inspired by the quality of this year's applications, the club awarded \$1,500 in three grants to support projects that beautify public spaces, strengthen community connections, and promote environmental stewardship.

The Community Grant Program was introduced last year to support beautification and community gardening projects throughout the Mt. Blue region. Its inaugural grant helped the Farmington Public Library complete a landscape redesign that removed invasive plants and replaced them with native species, creating a more welcoming, environmentally sustainable entrance. Building on that success, the club expanded the program

this year by awarding three grants.
"This year's applications demonstrated just how many meaningful projects are happening throughout our area," said Lisa Laflin, Chair of the Community Grant Committee. "We were delighted to support three organizations and help bring their ideas to life."
The 2026 MBAGC Community Grant recipients are:

Cape Cod Hill Community School (New Sharon)
Students and staff at Cape Cod Hill Community School will revitalize the school's front entrance with colorful native plantings, creating a vibrant and welcoming first impression for students, families, and visitors. The school's student-led Seed Squad already completed community planting projects at locations including the Holman House and the Franklin County Courthouse, and this project continues with that tradition of community stewardship.
Work First, Inc. (Farmington)
Work First will create a welcoming garden around its new Little Free Library and transform an existing gazebo into an inviting outdoor reading space. The project includes raised planting beds, flowers, shrubs, and containers that will encourage visitors to stop, read, and enjoy the landscape while supporting the organization's mission of serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
UMF Campus & Community Garden (Farmington)
The University of Maine at Farmington Campus & Community Garden will use its grant to repair greenhouse doors and ventilation systems, improving



Submitted photo
accessibility and extending the garden's ability to grow food and pollinator plants. Operated entirely through grants, donations, and fundraising, the garden has produced hundreds of pounds of fresh vegetables for local food pantries while also serving as an educational resource, community gathering space, and volunteer site for Master Gardener Volunteers.
The Mt. Blue Area Garden Club established its Community Grant Program to encourage beautification projects that enhance public spaces and promote environmental stewardship throughout the Mt. Blue region. Applications for the 2027 Community Grant Program will be accepted beginning early next year, with an April 1 deadline. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, schools, businesses, and community groups located in Farmington, Wilton, Chesterville, New Sharon, New Vineyard, Temple, Starks, Vienna, and Weld.
The Mt. Blue Area Garden Club is a member of the Garden Club Federation of Maine and National Garden Clubs, Inc. The club promotes gardening in all its phases, civic beautification, conservation, and community education throughout western Maine. New members and guests are always welcome. More information is available at www.mtbluegardenclub.org.



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*Bob Barton
Westbrook*

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Rangeley Congregational Church Women's Fellowship donates \$12,000 to charity

RANGELEY - This past year, Rangeley Congregational Church Women's Fellowship participated in two summer festivals in Rangeley and our Annual Holly Fair, where handmade crafts, Rada cutlery, jams, and baked goods were sold. All proceeds from these events are donated to charity. On Friday, May 8th, the women of the Rangeley Congregational Church and our Women's Fellowship community met to distribute \$12,000 to charity. Once again, we were fortunate to be able to distribute donations to 15 wonderful organizations, with a large percentage of these benefiting people in the Rangeley region.

Following is a partial list of organizations which received funds from our proceeds: Rangeley Meal Site, The Giving Tree, Rangeley Library, Grandmother's Purse, Rangeley Ski Scholarship program, Sargent Family Community Fund – Just One Day, Arbor House, Safe Voices of Farmington, Andwell Health Partners, Western Maine Community Action, Farmington Animal Rescue, and other national & international charities.

The Rangeley Congregational Church Women's Fellowship's participation in summer festivals and Holly Fair have generated proceeds which have benefited many organizations for over 30 years. Since 2017, the Women's Fellowship organization has donated over \$80,000 to charity.

This year marks our 31st Annual Holly Fair which will be held on November 21st at the Rangeley Congregational Church Barn from 10 am to 2 pm. Please come and find our tent at the 2026 Strawberry and Blueberry Festivals where your purchases will continue to help us, help others.

With sincere gratitude, the Women's Fellowship organization thanks the Rangeley community and summer visitors for supporting our efforts this past year. We are grateful for the opportunity to continue this important mission in 2026.



Enjoying the Monmouth Fair Carousel ride with the help of her mother Lauren is Ava Morrison of Gardiner. A nice Saturday of June 27 saw a good crowd at the "Little Fair with a lot of Pull."



Team leader Brody Libby controlling his team of Belgian work horses, Dylan and J.J. They were competing in the Monmouth Fair's 3000-3500 pound 12-foot percentage pull on the Fair's final day. They're pulling 6400 pounds of stone.

Bill Van Tassel photos



One of many 4-H club displays at the 2026 Monmouth Fair; This prize-winning booth makes note of our nation's 250 Anniversary of Independence from England.



This lineup of beautiful, Belgian draft horses resting while they await their turns in the Pull Ring at the Monmouth Fair on June 27.