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Beat Cabin Fever at Your Local Library

by Sheila Grant

As the chilly days of autumn and even colder days of winter tick by, the walls can start closing in. Good thing we have public libraries! Most libraries hold more books than the average citizen could read in a lifetime. They also now often offer audio books and movies. It's easy to keep up with current events via library copies of local newspapers, and anyone can enjoy a subscription to most popular magazines there, as well. Libraries also have public access computers for those who don't own a personal computer with high-speed internet service, and many offer Wi-Fi that can be utilized by any patron with a laptop.

If all that weren't enough to keep any individual or family busy through the cold-weather months, libraries also host a wide variety of regular weekly events as well as special events for all ages. Newport residents will want to check with the Newport Cultural Center, 368-5074, to get a schedule of their monthly literacy events and weekly children's events.

The Milo Free Public Library hosts a book group at 1:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month. "We have the Dover-Foxcroft Learning Center coming over here three times a week for people to prepare for their General Education Diploma testing," said Rochelle Williams, library director. Those classes are held on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, and on Monday evenings. The library has a Friday-afternoon children's program in the works. "The other thing that we have is a drawing class every Thursday morning from 9 to 11 a.m.," said Williams. "The teacher has a lot of knowledge, and is re-

ally good." Call 943-2612 for more information about Milo Free Public Library programs.

Bridge players of all ages gather at the Guilford Memorial Library every other Monday at 2 p.m. "And every Tuesday from 1 to 3 p.m., we offer trouble-shooting computer help with laptops, Tablets, etcetera," said Heidi Dow, library director. "We are hoping to start our sign language classes up again soon. And we have applied for a 'Let's Talk' program through the Maine Humanities Council. We will advertise when and if it comes about." The library had a children's program presented by the Appalachian Mountain Club in October, and hopes to offer something similar in February. Call 876-4547 or follow the Guilford Memorial Library on Facebook to learn more about upcoming programs.

At the Abbott Memorial Library in Dexter, Story Hour for preschoolers takes place Fridays at 3:30 p.m. The library has a very active Book Club for adults, too. "We pretty much read non-fiction that looks at our culture, history, biography, health issues and our environment," said Liz Breault, library director. The Book Club meets at 6 p.m. on the last Wednesday of each month. "The club keeps growing and during the summers we often have fourteen or fifteen readers participating."

There's also a quilting group which meets at the library at 6 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. "DDATT (Dexter Dover Area Towns in Transition) meets the first Friday of each month to show a film or offer a workshop which is co-sponsored by the library," said Breault. "Also, on the first Friday of each month, the

library hosts the Skeleton Crew, a support group for men and women suffering from osteopenia and osteoporosis."

The Thompson Free Library in Dover-Foxcroft hosts Children's Story Hour at 10:30 a.m. on Thursdays with stories, simple crafts and songs. A Knitting Group meets on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. The Book Club meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

During the holiday season, the library has a tree under which it collects books to be given out to children by the Dover-Foxcroft Area Kiwanis. And during the Hometown Holidays celebration on the weekend of December 5 and 6, the library plans to host a children's event, as well as its quarterly used book sale.

Call 564-3350 for more information about upcoming programs at the Thompson Free Library.

Abbott Memorial hosts a number of special events each year, as well. "Throughout the year a number of special programs are offered," Breault said. "We recently offered a program on the history and identification of the popular 1950s Ginny doll. A program on sushi making is in the works for this fall. At Christmas we offer a special holiday tea for our area patrons. We send out invitations [for the tea]. It's very formal. We serve the tea from silver services into china cups and saucers. It is very elegant with a long table and white tablecloth. The building is beautifully decorated for the holidays with a 15-foot glittering tree and greenery over all the fireplace."

Call 924-7292 for more information about programs at Abbott Memorial Library.

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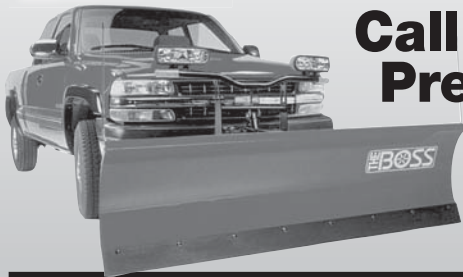
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Cold hands, warm communities

by Sheila Grant

The cold, dark days of winter can leave people feeling isolated and suffering from cabin fever. However, residents and guests to our region are lucky because a warm sense of community is strong here, as evidenced by the many events that provide family fun and opportunities to visit with the neighbors you might not otherwise see until spring. From craft fairs and public suppers to full-blown festivals, there are always fun ways to gather throughout the colder months.

Saturday, November 7

The Annual East Sangerville Grange Holiday Craft Fair is always on the first Saturday of November. From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., both floors of this historic building will be brimming with crafty displays. There's also a luncheon of homemade items beginning at 10 a.m. The traditional lunch menu includes minestrone, assorted quiches, croissant sandwiches and homemade desserts. The show features food items, knitted and quilted goods, soaps, lotions, baskets, folk art and more. The \$1 entry fee benefits the Grange Building Fund.

This is also the traditional kick-off date for the East Sangerville Grange Coffee House, held on the first Saturday of the month November through April. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and Ameranoche begins performing at 7 p.m. This local favorite is as well-known for its "terrific homemade desserts and STRONG coffee" as for the excellent line-up of performers. For more information, visit www.grange.org/eastsangerville177/.

The Newport Cultural Center's Annual Craft Fair is also scheduled for this day, with times to be announced. Call 368-5074 for more information.

There will be a Chicken & Biscuit Dinner from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the Sebec Village Reading Room. The menu also includes veggies, desserts and beverages. Cost is \$7 for adults; \$3 for children under 12. Proceeds will help the Sebec Village Associates maintain this community building. For more information, contact Jeanette Hughes, jhughes@observer-me.com.

There's also a Baked Bean Supper that night from 5 to 7 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church in Brownville Junction. For details, call 965-8070.

Sunday, November 8

The 5th Annual Friends of Community Fitness Turkey Trot and Walk begins at 11 a.m. "This is an approximate 3.5-mile route, some on-road and some on an old railroad bed," said Gayle Worden, director of the fitness center. The fee is \$15 or frozen turkey. "We also accept the 'fixins,' and any monetary donations." There is also a light luncheon at the fitness center, on High Street in Guilford, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. All proceeds from these events are donated to area food cupboards. Call 876-4813 for more information.

Wednesday, November 11

The Three Rivers Kiwanis is hosting a Veteran's Day Dinner from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Milo Town Hall. The turkey dinner with all the trimmings is offered to honor veterans and thank them for their service. There is no charge, and all area veterans and their families are welcome.

Friday, November 13

The Mayo Hospital Auxiliary Annual Fall Craft Fair is scheduled for 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Mayo Resource Center on Dwellay Avenue in Dover-Foxcroft. Muffins and coffee will also be on sale during the morning, with sandwiches on sale at lunchtime. Funds raised by the auxiliary help pur-

chase items the hospital needs but isn't able to fit into the budget, including big ticket items like the full-body bone density scanner and furniture for the conference room and cafeteria.

For more information about the Mayo Hospital Auxiliary Fall Craft Fair, call Lillian Smith, 564-4427.

Saturday, November 14

The American Legion Auxiliary's Annual Craft Fair takes place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the former BJHS Alumni Building in Brownville Junction.

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 41, Milo is holding their Annual Craft Fair, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Post Hall on West Main Street in Milo. The fair features not only craft vendors, but a bake sale, white elephant table, refreshments, and the Auxiliary will be accepting donations for the Milo Food Cupboard.

The Parkman Grange's annual Five Guns in Five Minutes Raffle comes to a close tonight during the annual Hunter's Supper from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and are available at KC's Store in Parkman, at Lovell's Hardware and Herring Brothers Market in Guilford, or by calling Don Pepin, 343-0274.

There will also be a Baked Bean Supper from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion Post 41 on West Main Street in Milo.

Sunday, November 15

The Bangor Ballet will once again visit the Center Theatre in Dover-Foxcroft to delight audiences of all ages with Nutcracker in a Nutshell, a shortened version of the classic Christmas story. The performance begins at 4 p.m., with price TBA. Call 564-8943 for more information.

Saturday, November 21

The Annual SeDoMoCha Christmas Craft Fair in Dover-Foxcroft is slated for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is one of the larger craft fairs in the region, and draws a wide variety of vendors and products, including Christmas décor, gourmet doggie treats, knit and fabric items, wood carvings and more. Students from Foxcroft Academy offer food concessions during the fair as one of their annual fundraisers. For more information about the Christmas Craft Fair, contact Debby Kohler after 5 p.m. at 876-3436.

Thursday, November 26

Join the Piscataquis Regional YMCA for its Annual Turkey Trot 5k Run/Walk at 8:30 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day. The winning man and woman each get a pie. Adult registration is \$8; kids are by donation. Call 564-7111 for more information.

Sunday, November 29

The annual Community Fitness Christmas Craft Fair is from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the fitness facility in the former Guilford Primary School building on High Street in Guilford. The event includes a soup and sandwich luncheon and a cookie walk. About 20 crafters display items including jewelry, soaps, lotions, massage oils, jams, jellies, pickles, placements and fleece throws. Gym memberships and Community Fitness clothing is 20 percent off during the craft fair, as well. For more information, contact Gayle Worden at 876-4813.

Saturday, December 5

For details on multiple Hometown Holiday events this weekend, read Holiday Magic, page 15

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for the East Sangerville Grange Coffee House,

Continued on Page 20

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There's plenty of holiday magic to go around

by Sheila Grant

Spending time with family and friends is the best part of the holiday season. Local events with small-town spirit can help create those special memories this Christmas season. Communities throughout the region are working together to offer events that will get everyone into the holiday spirit while also giving local businesses a boost.

Greenville likes to start things off early, with its Deck the Halls celebration slated for Saturday, November 28. Each year, shop owners are decorated early and ready to greet customers in search of the perfect holiday gifts. Festivities include the Annual Deck the Halls Logion Breakfast, several outdoor activities for children, a Holiday Bazaar, and a Street Festival which includes a petting zoo, live music, holiday treats, sidewalk sales, demonstrations, and other family fun. The day also includes the Annual Deck the Halls Parade, the arrival of Santa, the town tree lighting, and as a grand finale, a free Family Sock Hop at the Greenville High School Gymnasium.

In most communities, the holiday kick-off will be the weekend of December 4 to 6, with the bulk of the activities falling on Saturday, December 5.

"Hometown Holidays is a county-wide event during which pretty much every single town tries to do something around the holiday theme," said Denise Buzzelli, executive director of the Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce. "We are also doing the Community Concert again this year - this will be the second year - where all the local churches bring their choirs, and each sings two pieces, and then they all sing two pieces together and ask the audience to join in. It's kind of neat. The denominational walls come down, and in the spirit of the holidays, we all sing together." The Community Concert is scheduled for Sunday, December 6, with time and a Dover-Foxcroft location to be announced.

Dover-Foxcroft events typically include a Kris Kringle Coffee at the Congregational Church, Christmas caroling and horse-drawn carriage rides downtown, children's activities at the fire station, and the highlight of the celebration that evening is a lighted parade during which Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive by fire truck, and Santa lights the town's Christmas tree.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will also show up on a fire truck to light the Christmas tree in Guilford. "We'll have a bonfire, and caroling, and hot cocoa and cookies over at the Guilford Historical Society," said Tom Goulette, town manager. Santa will light the town tree at King Cummings Park. The bonfire and caroling will be at the corner of Water and North Main streets. The Guilford Historical Society, just across the street from the bonfire, will be serving free cookies and hot chocolate. Santa will be handing out candy canes and listening to children's Christmas wishes, so parents may want to bring a camera along.

To make sure their town is decked out this year, Milo is holding a Home and Business Lighting Contest, with judging taking place from November 30 to December 4. Downloadable applications become available on November 16 at www.townmilo.org, on the Three Rivers Community Facebook page, and print copies will be available in the Milo Town Hall lobby. Winners will be announced during the Hometown Holidays celebration.

Milo's celebration also includes Breakfast with Santa at the Penquis Valley High School Cafe on the morning of December 5; a Country Blessings Holiday Open House featuring door prizes, music and refreshments; the Park Street United Methodist Church Christmas Fair and Luncheon; a parade that ushers Santa into town; children's crafts and snacks in the Milo Town Hall Dining Room; visits with Santa; a Christmas tree lighting, caroling, and hayrides.

The Annual Kris Kringle Market in Monson runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 5, at the Monson Gymnasium. In addition to craft vendors offering jewelry, baskets, wooden items, wreaths, knit and fabric items, aprons, food and more, the event includes a gingerbread house contest, a Christmas Tree Competition featuring trees made from recycled materials, and the arrival of Santa to visit with children. Luncheon items will be sold by the Kris Kringle Market Committee, with proceeds going toward buying winter coats, ski pants, boots and a toy for children in need. The town's annual Christmas Tree Lighting

Continued on Page 24



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Proper Car Care:

Adjusted driving habits boost safety this winter

by Sheila Grant
As much as many of us hate to think about winter, a little forethought and preparation now will make for safer travels when snow arrives.

"We see more accidents early in the winter," said Lieutenant James Kane of the Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office. "People do become adjusted and their driving habits get better, but those first few storms can be quite hectic." It can be easy to forget, for instance, that areas where many vehicles are braking, such as at intersections, can become especially slick. "Leave more space when you are following other vehicles," Kane advised. "Be cautious when approaching intersections, because a lot of times they will be icy. Leave extra space, and leave extra braking time. Be prepared. Think about [if you do slide] what you are going to do, and where you are going to go."

Road safety begins long before drivers reach that first icy intersection, however. "Be prepared before you leave home," said Kane. "Make sure your vehicle is up to safety standards, and has snow tires. Studded tires can go on after October 2. With a lot of the accidents we handle, people are late getting their snow tires on, and during those first couple of storms they are trying to drive on summer tires that do not handle snow very well."

It's also a good idea to have sand or kitty litter in the trunk, not only for additional weight, but to use for traction if the vehicle gets stuck on ice, Kane said. Other essentials to have in the car include booster cables, a blanket, a cell phone, and a cell phone charger.

Motorists in Maine need to be aware that calling 9-1-1 won't always be an option, however. "Some of our roads are in remote areas. If you get off the road and get stuck, you may not have cell phone reception, and a car may not come by for a while," Kane said. "That can be a lonely feeling."

Give thought to whether staying put is the safest option, or whether walking out for help might be better. "Motorists need to assess how prepared they are," Kane said. "If they are prepared to walk a mile or more and have on appropriate clothing, they can do that. But that's where the planning comes in. If you might not be able to walk far enough to reach help, use the blanket, keep the vehicle running, and stay put. Obviously, be aware of carbon monoxide. Make sure exhaust is not coming up inside [clear snow away from the tail pipe], and leave a window cracked."

Give your car a safety check-up

October is Car Care Month, according to the American Automobile Association (AAA). The organization recommends that motorists use the following checklist to determine your vehicle's fall and winter maintenance needs. While many items on the list can be done by car owners, others require the trained eye of a car care professional. The AAA Winter Car Care Checklist includes:

Battery and charging system -- have the battery and charging sys-

Continued on Page 18



LT. JAMES KANE of the Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office, who reconstructs accident scenes, said that the first couple of snowstorms often bring a flurry of collisions.

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- Fall prevention
- Safety while shoveling
 - What shovel types work best for back safety.
- How to dress in layers
- Importance of clear pathways, roofs, and driveways.
- Emergency preparedness.
- How to walk safely with your pet.
- ...and more!



Proper car care from Page 17

ment tested by a trained technician. "A fully charged battery in good condition is required to start an engine in cold weather," notes the organization.

Battery cables and terminals – make sure the terminals and cable ends are free from corrosion, and that the connections are tight.

Drive belts – inspect the underside of accessory drive belts for cracks or fraying. Many newer multi-rib serpentine belts are made of materials that do not show obvious signs of wear; replace these belts at 60,000-mile intervals.

Engine hoses – inspect cooling system hoses for leaks, cracks or loose clamps. Also, squeeze the hoses and replace any that are brittle or excessively spongy feeling.

Tire type and tread – As noted by Lt. Kane, installing snow tires on all four wheels provides the best winter traction. All-season tires work well in light-to-moderate snow conditions, says AAA, provided they have adequate tread depth. Replace any tire that has less than 3/32 inches of tread. Note any uneven tire wear, which can indicate alignment, wheel balance or suspension problems that should be addressed to prevent further tire damage.

Tire pressure – check tire inflation pressure more frequently during cold weather. As the average temperature drops, so will tire pressure – typically by 1 PSI for every 10 degrees Fahrenheit. The proper tire pressure levels can be found in the owner's manual, or on a sticker typically located on the driver's side door jamb. Don't forget to check the spare tire! **Air Filter** – check the engine air filter by holding it up to a 60-watt light bulb. If light can be seen through much of the filter, it's still clean enough to work. If light is blocked by most of the filter, replace it.

Coolant levels – check the coolant level in the overflow tank when the engine is cold. If the level is low, add a 50/50 solution of coolant and water to maintain the necessary antifreeze capability. Test the antifreeze protection level with an inexpensive tester available at any auto parts store.

Lights – check the operation of all headlights, taillights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, and back-up lights. Replace any burnt out bulbs.

Wiper blades – the blades should completely clear the glass with each swipe. Replace any blade that leaves streaks or misses spots. Consider installing winter wiper blades that wrap the blade frame in a rubber boot to reduce ice and snow buildup that can prevent good contact between the blade and the glass.

Washer fluid – fill the windshield washer fluid reservoir with a winter cleaning solution that has antifreeze components to prevent it from freezing.

Brakes – if there is any indication of a brake problem, have the system inspected by a professional now to ensure that all components are in good working order before those icy driving conditions arrive.

Transmission, brake and power steering fluids – check all fluids to ensure they are at or above the minimum safe levels. It's a lot warmer to putter on that car now than it will be broke down beside the road somewhere in January!

In case of emergency...

As Lt. Kane noted, whether you opt to stay put or hike out for help, a well-equipped vehicle can make all the difference on Maine's remote roads this winter. In addition to sand for traction, booster cables, a blanket, and a phone, the well-stocked emergency kit should include:

- A shovel.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Window washer solvent.
- An ice scraper with a brush.
- An absorbent cloth or roll of paper towels.
- Extra warm clothing such as a heavy winter coat, snow boots, gloves, hats, and scarves.
- Warning devices such as flares or fluorescent triangles.
- Drinking water.
- Non-perishable snacks for pets and their humans.
- A first-aid kit.
- A basic tool kit containing screwdrivers, pliers and adjustable wrenches.

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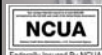
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Local agency helps folks keep warm each winter

by Sheila Grant
While it may be more common knowledge that Penquis oversees the "fuel assistance" program in this region, many residents don't realize that the agency also has programs that help weatherize the home; repair or replace faulty heating systems; and provide discounted electricity and cell phone service to those in need. Penquis, incorporated in 1967, was created to bring locally developed solutions to those experiencing financial challenges. Located in Bangor, with offices in Dover-Foxcroft, Lincoln and Rockland, Penquis primarily serves low- and moderate-income individuals in Penobscot, Piscataquis and Knox counties.

The federally funded fuel assistance program, officially known as the Low-income Heating Assistance Program (LiHEAP), serves over 9,000 residents annually. Applications are accepted from mid-August to the end of April, with the earliest appointments going to the elderly and families with small children who are clients from the previous winter. Applicants who meet income guidelines (available on the Penquis website) may receive help whether homes are heated with oil, kerosene, coal, pellets, wood, LP gas, or electricity.

"We know that the heating season is stressful time for so many Maine people. Keeping warm, worrying about pipes freezing, and high energy cost becomes a real burden and sometimes a safety issue. Many seniors and families rely on these programs to help get through our long Maine winters," said Barbara Stone, Division Manager for Housing and Energy Services at Penquis.

It does take some organization of household paperwork to apply. If available, applicants need to

Continued on Page 22



SHEREE BROWN, office manager for Penquis in Dover-Foxcroft. (Photo courtesy of Penquis)



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Cold Hands from Page 13

and The Jim Gallant Band begins performing at 7 p.m. This local favorite is as well-known for its "terrific homemade desserts and STRONG coffee" as for the excellent line-up of performers. For more information, visit www.grange.org/east-sangerville177/.

Friday, December 11

The Center Theatre in Dover-Foxcroft will be presenting "A Christmas Carol," based on the story by Charles Dickens, adapted by Dani Maupin, and directed by Angela Bonacasa. The play runs from December 11 through December 19. Call 564-8943 or visit www.centertheatre.org for dates and show times.

Saturday, December 12

The Annual Christmas Party at the Parkman Grange is scheduled for 1 to 3:30 p.m. Children have the opportunity to complete easy craft projects for holiday gift giving. Cookies, spiced cider and hot cocoa are served. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on hand to visit with the children, listen to their Christmas wishes, and pose for photos. The Parkman Grange is also organizing the Santa Project for MSAD 4 area children this year. If you'd like to provide helping hands or a donation, contact Susan Manchester, 277-3942, for more information.

Almost last but never least is the Annual Procrastinator's Holiday Fair and Bake Sale from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sangerville and Dover-Foxcroft on Church Street in Sangerville. This annual fundraiser for the church features between 15 and 20 crafters. Breakfast and lunch items are on sale, and there will be a raffle -- the prize is often a hand-sewn quilt. Items on display include knit goods, jams, jellies, maple sugar products, honey, jewelry, soaps, artwork, pottery and other assorted crafts. For more information, contact Theresa Boettner after 6 p.m. at 564-8666.

There will also be a Baked Bean Supper from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion Post 41 on West Main Street in Milo.

Saturday, January 9

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for the East Sangerville Grange Coffee House, and David Dodson and the Lowdown begin performing at 7 p.m. This local favorite is as well-known for its "terrific homemade desserts and STRONG coffee" as for the excellent line-up of performers. For more information, visit www.grange.org/eastsangerville177/.

Saturday, January 16

The Maine Highland Sled Dog Races will begin at the Mason's Piscataquis Lodge #44 in Milo, where guests may also purchase breakfast and lunch in between watching the sprint races.

Saturday, January 30

Brownville Junction celebrates the Dog Days of Winter and the 7th Annual Beyond Sled Dog Race today. The events are co-sponsored by the Maine Highland Sled Dog Club and the town of Brownville.

Saturday, February 6

Each February, mushers and people who enjoy sled dog races flock to Greenville for the 30- and 100-mile Wilderness Sled Dog Races. This year's events kick off at 8:30 a.m. from Leisure Life Resort. Participants for the long haul leave the start line first, with 30-mile racers heading later in the morning. Mushers in the 100-mile race will make way for the check point in Brownville before heading back toward the big finish in Greenville. Sled dog rides and other activities are offered for observers who

Continued on Page 21

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Cold Hands from Page 20

turn out for the event. FMI, visit www.100milewildernessrace.org, email wildernessrace@yahoo.com or call the Greenville Municipal Office, 695-2421.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for the East Sangerville Grange Coffee House, and The Newell Family Band begins performing at 7 p.m. This local favorite is as well-known for its "terrific homemade desserts and STRONG coffee" as for the excellent line-up of performers. For more information, visit www.grange.org/eastsangervilleme177.

Sunday, February 14

Those with a sweet tooth will want to head for Greenville for the Annual Moosehead Lake Chocolate Festival. The Masonic Temple on Pritham Avenue becomes a sweet retreat from the winter blahs at this annual fundraiser. The entry fee nets you tickets for so many samples of about 40 different chocolate desserts that you are also given a box in which to take some home. There's a Children's Corner complete with crafts and kid-friendly chocolate concoctions, as well. Be sure to bid

on items at the Silent and Chinese auction items, too. All proceeds for the event benefit the Moosehead Lake Region Chamber of Commerce's advertising and marketing fund. FMI, call the chamber, 695-2702.

The President's Day school vacation week is also SnoFest time in Greenville. There will be family friendly events throughout the week. Typically, the Moosehead Riders Snowmobile club hosts a chili, chowder and more cook-off at their clubhouse on Scammon Road. Attendees get to cast one vote each for a chowder/soup, a chili dish and a signature dish submitted by local eateries. The club also holds snowmobile runs, a cookout, and other events. For this year's SnoFest details, check with the chamber, and visit the Moosehead Riders' website, www.mooseheadriders.com.

Saturday, February 20

Monson will celebrate its Annual Snow Roller Day this weekend. Town Manager Lucas Butler says the festival is going to be "totally revamped" for 2016, but will include children's games, an event at the Monson Historical Society, a town-wide lunch option, and more. Traditionally, the historic snowroller is on display, some of the locals provide live music, games and events take place throughout downtown and on Lake Hebron, and the day is capped off with a bonfire and a dance. Call the Monson Town Office, 997-3641, for more information on this year's event.

Saturday, February 27

The Annual David D. Merrill Memorial Sled Dog Challenge is typically held on the last weekend in February, provided Mother Nature cooperates. The Sebasticook Valley Snowmobile Club usually serves up food and provides a place for folks to get warm at their 538 Durham Bridge Road clubhouse. Race classes include one- and two-dog skijoring, four- and six-dog professionals, sportsman, and an open class for teams of 10 or more dogs. For details on this year's event, visit the Down East Sled Dog Club website, www.desdc.org.

Saturday, March 5

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for the East Sangerville Grange Coffee House, and Tricky Britches begins performing at 7 p.m. This local favorite is as well-known for its "terrific homemade desserts and STRONG coffee" as for the excellent line-up of performers. For more information, visit www.grange.org/eastsangervilleme177.

Saturday, April 2

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for the East Sangerville Grange Coffee House, and Tom Dean begins performing at 7 p.m. This local favorite is as well-known for its "terrific homemade desserts and STRONG coffee" as for the excellent line-up of performers. For more information, visit www.grange.org/eastsangervilleme177.



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Local Agency from Page 19

bring a valid photo ID, social security cards for every household member, the most recent electric bill, a fuel bill featuring the customer's name and account number, a copy of the current lease if the applicant is renting, and proof of all gross income for every household member for the previous three months. Single parents also must provide proof of primary residency for minor children, and guardians must provide proof of that status.

The Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP) provides grants to repair or replace central heating systems that serve low-income households. These funds can only be used to replace dangerous, malfunctioning or inoperable heating systems that pose a health and safety threat. Additionally, only the primary heating source for the home is eligible. Awards are up to \$4,000 for homeowners; an award of up to \$300 may be available to tenants who qualify for LIHEAP for work on their rental unit heating system. The good news is that two applications are not required - those who apply for LIHEAP are automatically considered for CHIP, as well. For more information about CHIP, call Shannon Bean at, 974-2407 or 1-800-215-4942

Homes that have not been weatherized since September 30, 1994, and that are occupied by individuals who qualify for LIHEAP, may qualify for the Penquis Weatherization Program, which makes improvements that help reduce energy costs and improve home energy efficiency. The process begins with an energy audit to assess needed improvements, which may include insulation, weather-stripping, caulking, and some safety-related repairs. Priority, again, is given to the elderly, the handicapped, and to families with children under the age of 2. Unfortunately, homes with structural damage, leaking roofs, log construction with natural log finish, and those without running water or electrical service are not eligible. The Electrical Utility Assistance Program helps income-eligible households manage electricity costs through special discounts or credits. Funding comes from Emery Maine, Central Maine Power, Eastern Maine Electrical Cooperative and Fox Islands Electric Cooperative. Eligibility for these programs varies based on each electric company's criteria.

There's also a Central Maine Power Line & Pole Extension Program which assists income-eligible CMP customers in obtaining credit for new lines and poles.

To be eligible, applicants must not only meet income guidelines, but also Maine State Housing Authority requirements must not have used this program over the previous three years, and funding must be used for the applicant's primary residence.

Penquis also oversees the SafeLink Wireless program, which offers qualified customers a free SafeLink Wireless phone and up to 250 free minutes each month with no commitments, contracts, or bills. For more information, visit the www.safeinkwireless.com or call any Penquis office.

For additional information about any Penquis services, individuals can also contact Sheree Brown, Office Coordinator, at 50 North St., Dover Foxcroft, or call (207) 564-7116 or 800-215-4942. Knox County residents may call 596-0361 or 800-585-1605 and Penobscot County residents can call (207) 973-3500 or 800-215-4942.



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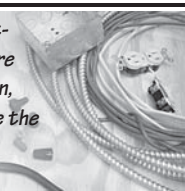
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Holiday Magic from Page 15

and caroling typically take on the evening of the Kris Kringle Market, as well. For more information, contact Libby weekday evenings at 827-4857 or weekends at 997-3268.

Newport also kicks off the holiday season this weekend. The Tree Lighting takes place on Friday, December 4, with time to be announced. Santa and Mrs. Claus usually attend this event to visit with children, read stories, and join in the caroling.

The Levi Stewart Community Theater in Corinna always produces a Christmas show. This year's show dates will be December 4 and 5. Last year's production of "Virgil's Christmas Catch" drew an audience of 350 people. Check www.facebook.com/LSCTheater for details about this year's show.

The holiday fun doesn't end with the big launch weekend. The 19th Annual Santa's Workshop Christmas Party in Abbot will be held on Sunday, December 13, at the Abbot Town Hall, with time to be announced. Children are invited to visit with Santa, enjoy cookies and candy canes, and to pick out a toy to take home. Families that need a little help putting something under the tree may sign up that day, or contact organizer Angel Ginn, 876-3985.

The annual Newport Cultural Center's Polar Express Party is scheduled for Thursday, December 17 and Friday, December 18, with details to be announced. Call 368-5074 for more information.

The Center Theatre in Dover-Foxcroft will be presenting the play, "A Christmas Carol," featuring the Slightly-off-Center Players, from December 11 to 19. For show times, visit www.centertheatre.org.

Morita's School of Dance in Herman, which teaches several local students, will hold its Christmas Recital from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 19 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. For details, call 848-5083.

For details about these events, as well as new additions to the holiday calendar, check with the Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce, 564-7533 or www.piscataquischamber.com; the Moosehead Lake Region Chamber of Commerce, 695-2702 or www.mooseheadchamber.org; or the Sebasticook Valley Chamber of Commerce, 368-4698 or www.ourchamber.org.



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Gift giving doesn't have to break the budget
 It can be a financial struggle to stuff the stockings and help Santa load the Christmas tree with gifts each year. Luckily, there are affordable ways to stretch holiday dollars.

Both dollar stores (every item is a dollar) and Family Dollar Stores carry inexpensive items appropriate for stocking stuffers. Small items may also be grouped to create gift sets - themed candles and holders; candy dishes and candy; or coffee mugs grouped with small packets of hot chocolate or coffee.

Very young children don't know what's new - and don't care. Check out local thrift stores. Many, like St. Augustine's in Dover-Foxcroft, hold back new items with the tags still on them to stock on the shelves in early December. Warm clothing, holiday décor, books, puzzles, games and toys for children of all ages are available, and new (and gently used) items go on the shelves constantly.

Consider joining www.freecycle.org where people who have things they no longer need offer those items to people who need them. It's free to join. The site finds new homes for everything from appliances to small mammals.

More free stuff can be had from Craig's List, though seekers may have to travel to gather the goods. Visit <http://maine.craigslist.org>. Under the "For Sale" heading, select "Free." Recent offerings have included toys, clothing, furniture, even firewood. Or get some fun stocking stuffers from the Absurdly Cool Freebie Finder at www.absurdlycool.com. Free items on the site have included a Christmas 1 GB flash drive, free coffee samples, free perfume samples, and a variety of stickers and collector stamps.

If your family is having an especially difficult winter, don't forget to check with local churches, the town office, and the local Kiwanis Club. Most communities have some sort of holiday gift drive for children. For example, the Three Rivers Kiwanis, Milo's Piscataquis Masonic Lodge #44 and Brownville's Pleasant River Masonic Lodge #163 will be running a Secret Santa Campaign from December 1 to the 20th. Families may sign up at the Milo or Brownville town offices or elementary schools for age-appropriate gifts for children, as well as the fixings for holiday dinner.

The Piscataquis Santa Project, which is coordinated through Penquis in Dover-Foxcroft, primarily serves residents in SAD #4 and #68 towns. Requests for assistance are generally accepted throughout November. Call 564-7116 for more information.

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