

WQ

Women's Quarterly

2019 Spring Edition

PROFILE:

Tracy Weber and the Viles Arboretum Food Forest

CREATING A LIFE:

Murals - Art
larger than life

FEATURE:

Opioid epidemic
endangers women
and babies

Wednesday, April 10, 2019
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About this section

This special advertising supplement was produced by the Kennebec Journal/Morning Sentinel and is published quarterly. The next issue will be in July. The cover features Tracy Weber and a volunteer working on details of the willow tunnel, a living garden structure at the Viles Arbotetum in Augusta.

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Thanks to my teachers for life’s best lessons

Just a Thought

By Terri Hibbard



In February, Brunswick celebrated Longfellow Days with poetry readings and lectures all over town. One cold Monday evening I ignored my yearning to stay where it was warm and comfy, got into my frigid car and drove to the Brunswick

Inn. Poet and bookstore co-owner, Gary Lawless, was set to guide us in appreciation of the work of Edwin Arlington Robinson.

A lively and friendly group gathered in the bar before a roaring fire (fires always roar or crackle in writer lingo) and enjoyed special cocktails while listening to or taking turns reading aloud some of Robinson’s most well-known poems.

Lawless had named the event “Alcohol, Depression and Suicide: the Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson.” Many of us can’t possibly remember the poetry we had to read in high school, but if we ever read this one, we remember. It begins:

*“Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored and imperially slim.”*

And ends:

*“So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.”*

In Mr. Pearly’s 10th grade English class at Lawrence High School, our heads snapped up and our mouths dropped open as our teacher strode around the room reciting “Richard Cory” and other Robinson poems. These were unlike the poetry we’d encountered before— “Beowulf” for example, and other yawn-inducing verses that we’d had to slog through so as not to flunk English.

Mr. Pearly awakened me that day to the power of poetry. He was a smart guy, part Native American, with a fiery temper and no patience for students who didn’t pay attention. I well remember the day a blackboard eraser whizzed by my ear with the speed of a bullet, the price of chatting across the aisle.

For punishment, Mr. Pearly gave me a special assignment, due the following day: A 500 word paper on the Germanic sources of the English language.

Huh? Me?

Well, yes, and no excuses. I had to get to the Colby College Library, figure out how to ask for help, get books spread out before me, scribble some informa-

tion that might work and somehow write the paper— probably with lots of adjectives to plump the word count.

I did it. Thanks, Mr. Pearly for helping me learn to do things that seem overwhelming. And thanks for instilling an appreciation of poetry and the power of language. I wish I had tracked him down decades ago to thank him for changing my life.

That’s what teachers do, every day. We don’t thank them most of the time and don’t pay them adequately for the incredibly important work they do: helping to open young minds and instill a thirst for knowledge. Of course, they have to do much more than that now— everything from teach the importance of oral health and hand-washing to the kind of counseling and mentoring that can make the difference between a good life and a lost one.

Mrs. Terrill, my science teacher in (I think) seventh and eighth grades, also taught lessons that served me well for a lifetime.

Explaining the meaning of personal rights, she said “Darlene (that’s me), you have a right to swing your arm, but your right ends where Bobby’s nose begins.”

Got it.

When we were all trying to sell magazine subscriptions, Mrs. Terrill told the class why she bought a subscription from me rather than someone else in the class.

“Most of you rang my doorbell and waited for me to come down to the porch. Darlene rang the doorbell and walked up three flights of stairs to my door.”

Lesson: Extra effort pays off.

Brooks Hamilton, my journalism professor at the University of Maine saved my college education. When I confessed that I would have to leave school before my senior year because I had run out of money and my family was not able to help, he took it personally, got together with a dean and created a job for me in the journalism office.

I had no office skills but with his help, learned to do what needed to be done. That job along with a scholarship that the dean hunted down and another on-campus job got me through to graduation.

Fortunately I had a chance to stand up and thank Mr. Hamilton at his retirement celebration.

If only society could thank teachers in a way that would be meaningful— by respecting them, thanking them and paying them for the invaluable work they do for our children.

By contrast, Mike Trout, a baseball player for the Los Angeles Angels, got a 12-year extension of his contract worth more than \$430 million. What he does for that money is sometimes hit a ball, sometimes catch a ball and sometimes do a little running.

Tracy Weber and the Viles Arboretum Food Forest

BY BONNIE SAMMONS
Correspondent

Tracy Weber is at home in any kind of garden. On a stifling July day at the Viles Arboretum in Augusta, Maine she directs the groundwork for what will one day be a special type of garden, a Food Forest. Her volunteer crew includes her parents, Mid-Maine Permaculture Team members and others from the community.

For many, this is their first experience with permaculture, a regenerative way of working with the earth. Their task is to sheet mulch a portion of a five-acre field in preparation for planting fruit trees, shrubs and perennial food-bearing plants. They cover the ground with large sheets of cardboard, anchor them down with U-shaped metal pins and then put a layer of wood chips on top.

Weber is clearly accustomed to such work. She toils along with the crew pushing wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow full of wood chips up the slope and spreading them over the cardboard.

This is one phase of a master plan that will unfold over the next three years. It began a year prior when she first pitched her idea for the Food Forest to Mark DesMeules, Executive Director of the Viles Arboretum. This is no small task but Weber is tenacious, resourceful, committed and has the skill set to make it happen. As a professional gardener, she works with homeowners' flower gardens. As a staff member at Northern Tilth in Belfast, she develops nutrient management plans for farmers with the goal of maintaining healthy soils.

"As soon as I could walk", said Weber, "I tagged along with my mother in the garden. I got to know plants up close. They were at my eye level."

She grew up in South China, Maine where the family home's access to woods and fields provided the backdrop for her early connection with nature. She interacted with plants - their smell, feel, color and even their taste. She ate familiar wild plants - berries, fiddleheads, mushrooms - and discovered new ones like cattails when she skipped a day of kindergarten to go to a foraging class with her parents.

Nature and gardening were an integral part of life. But when a new neighbor who happened to be a professional gardener moved into town, Weber had a revelation: You could make a living as a gardener! A seed was planted. After earning a degree in Agronomy



Tracy Weber with first crop of seedlings.

Bonnie Sammons photo

and horticulture from the University of New Hampshire, she did several agricultural internships and was on her way to continuing her love affair with plants.

A decade of postgraduate gardening found her feeling that "something wasn't right. I was forever pulling out plants only to replace them with new ones. I felt that I was fighting things that I really loved. It didn't make sense."

The soil and gardens she remembered from her childhood were far removed from what she was seeing in her work.

One day she was gardening for an elderly pediatrician. When she stepped on the edge of his garden which was mulched several inches deep with shredded leaves "it sprang back like a sponge," Weber recalls. The leaves "started to wiggle and all these worms came up."

This was living soil in the making. It was part of the natural cycle that she had wit-

The Viles Arboretum Food Forest is envisioned as a place for community where people of all ages can gather for harvesting events and to learn about permaculture. Volunteers can help with minimal maintenance tasks. Children can run and cartwheel through the willow tunnel and explore pond life. Folks can relax in the shade of a beautiful food-bearing ecosystem.



Bonnie Sammons photo

Tracy Weber and other volunteers moving wood chips for the sheet mulching process that prepares the soil for planting without the need for plowing.

More WEBER, PAGE 5

Weber

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

nessed since childhood. This made sense.

It was a turning point. But Weber describes her evolution as “slow, solitary and experiential.” She had no mentors or classes. By chance she stumbled upon permaculture. She recalled hearing of this design process from a fellow intern during her post-graduate days. He had described it in glowing terms as an agricultural method that works with nature to maintain healthy ecosystems with less work than traditional means. At the time, she had dismissed it as a “lazy person’s way to garden.” Now ready to explore a new path, she enrolled in the Whole Systems Permaculture Design Course at the farm of Ben Falk in Vermont.

The principles she learned in the nine-day crash course made sense too. They aligned with her expanding view of gardens as dynamic living ecosystems and resonated

with her childhood experience of the natural world. The next step was to gain real-world experience by volunteering permaculture design service in 2014. She chose a bold project - The Viles Arboretum Food Forest.

DesMeules, who had never heard of permaculture, accepted Weber’s offer to raise funds, create a design and install a food forest at the Arboretum. It would be a complement to the existing community gardens and apple orchard. It was evidence of Weber’s skill and determination that by the fall of 2016 she had raised funds to begin the project. With the help of Lisa Fernandez, Maine’s premier permaculture leader, the design process began. An initial stakeholder meeting incorporated ideas from the community. Materials were donated or purchased from local sources and businesses. By the summer of 2018, with a pond completed and groundwork in progress, a 40 foot willow tunnel was planted. Fruit trees (plum, peach, mulberry) were planted with help from the usual volunteers and, Weber said, from sixteen Maine State Prison “great, fantastic, hardworking” inmates.

The rest of the story...

At this writing, five hundred volunteer hours have been recorded. The remainder of the plan will unfold over the next two years. It is envisioned as a place for community where people of all ages can gather for harvesting events and to learn about permaculture. Volunteers can help with minimal maintenance tasks. Children can run and cartwheel through the willow tunnel and explore pond life. Folks can relax in the shade of a beautiful food-bearing ecosystem.

The beauty of permaculture is that it can, with good planning, create the “lazy person’s garden” that Weber had earlier disdained. It can yield each year with less work than an annual garden. It can create not only a perennial food bearing ecosystem but an inviting haven for recreation, learning, and community all while maintaining, even regenerating the land.

Local businesses that provided materials for this project include: Selby and David Landmann, Comprehensive Land Technologies South China; EJ Prescott, West Gardiner; Steve’s Appliance & Furniture, Sidney; and Home Depot, Augusta.

Viles Arboretum

The 224 acre Arboretum began in 1981 with the planting of 120 trees by the Maine forest Service. Today it has evolved into a community resource with miles of trails that wind through numerous plant and tree collections. Community garden plots are available. A visitor Center hosts educational events. The Beyond Borders Farmer’s Market sells fresh vegetables and offers Somali food.

Permaculture

The development of agricultural ecosystems that mimic nature, are sustainable and self-sufficient. It was developed in the 1970’s by Tasmanian Bill Mollison. It incorporates ancestral ways of land management with current best agricultural practices.

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For information on permaculture and the Viles Arboretum: vilesarboretum.org/index.php/home, northeastpermaculture.org and wholesystemsdesign.com.

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Shaina Fletcher pays it forward to transform lives

BY WANDA CURTIS
Correspondent

Life is full of hardships and obstacles. Some people experience more than others. It's not the hardships and obstacles that define an individual though. It's the individual's response to the trials that defines who they are in the end.

China resident Shaina Fletcher learned at an early age to "roll with the punches" that life brought her way. She said that her home life wasn't very stable so she found a home away from home at the Buker Community Center near where she grew up in Augusta. She walked to school every day, no matter what the season. After school, she played music in an after-school program then walked to the Buker Center where she would spend several hours.

"There I did karate and right across the hallway was this small boxing gym called O'Leary's," said Fletcher. "I was so small that I had to go on my tip toes to look through the door window. For a few weeks, I found myself looking through this window often, my mind blown away watching those who worked out there. Mike O'Leary would always catch me looking through the window. He would smile and wave every time."

After a while, O'Leary opened the door. Fletcher said that she was very shy at the time and just stepped backwards saying nothing. Then O'Leary asked her a question that changed her life for the better.

"Is there something here that interests you?"

Fletcher said that she nodded her head. O'Leary took her under his wing, she said, and began to teach her all about boxing.

"Going in was a little scary for 11-year old me," said Fletcher. "Mike started to introduce me to the amazing world of boxing from that day forward. I remember the moment I put on gloves. Something inside me clicked and deep down I knew this was for me."

According to Fletcher, O'Leary saw how quickly she progressed and so he pushed her even harder. Not much later she got her first pair of hot pink boxing gloves. Each time she went back to the gym, she said O'Leary paid special attention to her.

"As I became stronger and learned things faster, he started training me harder to see if I would continue to keep going," said Fletcher. "I loved that! He helped show me that I was stronger than a normal 11-year-old."

Fletcher, who is now 20 years old and married, recalls being bullied while growing up because she had dyslexia and Asperger's



syndrome and had to work harder than most people throughout her life.

"I was never the cool kid in school and learning things was harder as well," said Fletcher. "If it was not for Mike taking time showing me that I was more than just an everyday face, I would not know where I would be right now."

Fletcher said that by taking time for her at the gym, O'Leary made her feel that she was worth something.

"Mike taught me the core values of life by using the language of boxing, showing me my disabilities were not disabilities but strengths no one has used and a new way of thinking," said Fletcher. "He gave me confidence and a place to succeed in my own 'Shay' way."

Each day when Fletcher would enter the gym and start punching the bags, she said that O'Leary would tell her that she was the only person who would make herself succeed or fail.

"He would also say that the key to being successful is to always try your best and give your all."

After training for a period of time, Fletcher said that it was time to put her training into practice. She said that one month out of each summer the gym was reserved for fighters. She said that she was the youngest individual to be selected to fight and be a boxer back then.

"I wanted so bad to be on the list to train how to fight, more than anything," said Fletcher.

O'Leary informed her that she had to prove to him that she was ready to put in the work and

time that it takes to become a fighter. She said that she did just that.

"Mike only picked 4 out of the 25 that wanted to train during that one summer month," said Fletcher. "In the end I was picked first. That's when I sparred and fought for the first time. Not only did I do well in training, I won my first fight. I was the only woman and the youngest in the small group of people that was picked. I sparred people taller and older but that never phased me. I wanted to succeed like none other. Some days were harder than others but I loved what I did and still do."

As Fletcher got older and stronger, she said that O'Leary reminded her every day that the skills he taught in the gym were never to be used to hurt people outside the ring.

"With knowing what I know, comes responsibility," said Fletcher. "He showed me that it was okay to be a tough girl but that as much as I was tough, it's important to be kind and to be the better person to others. He taught everyone that. To this day, he coaches the same as he did when I was a little girl."

After she became an adult, Fletcher also became a boxing coach to give the same opportunity to others that was given to her. Every Monday she and O'Leary coach and encourage about 45-60 people with many different types of disabilities at O'Leary's Fitness in Waterville. She said that they not only coach people to become fighters but also to work out and be healthy.

"Going in was a little scary for 11-year old me. Mike (O'Leary) introduced me to the amazing world of boxing. I remember the moment I put on gloves. Something inside me clicked and deep down I knew this was for me." SHAINA FLETCHER



Contributed photos

Above: Shaina Fletcher teaches boxing skills to people of all ages with disabilities and also to children at O'Leary's Gym in Waterville.

Left: Shaina Fletcher credits her trainer Mike O'Leary with teaching her important lessons through the language of boxing.

"As much as Mike put time into me, it's now my turn to do the same for others," said Fletcher. "Fitness never belongs to just one person but all. No matter what kind of disability, size, gender, and age."

Fletcher said that another of her goals as an adult woman now is to bring families together, something that she longed for growing up, by making Saturday night at the gym Obstacle Night.

"A place to have kids, teens, and adults come together in fitness with smiles on their faces," said Fletcher who also teaches fitness to children as young as five years old during the week.

Fletcher claims that her end goal, is to keep O'Leary's legacy going strong and showing others the same love, care, and kindness that he showed to the bright eyed little girl who stood quietly peeking through the door on her tip toes almost 10 years ago.

"Now it's my turn to keep the chain going and do the same as him," said Fletcher. "Mike is the kind of coach and man who does everything for others and expects nothing back. He still coaches the same as he did when I was a little girl. He coaches people who want to learn how to box for the fun and fitness side of things and those who want to compete. He's someone that you can always count on."

In her free time, Fletcher also volunteers with the Oakland Fire Department. She said that it's another way of giving back to her community.

“Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II”

BookTalk

by Nancy P. McGinnis

“Do you enjoy doing crossword puzzles?”

“Are you engaged to be married?”

If you were a young female schoolteacher or a promising female college student in the 1940s America with demonstrated aptitude in math, science and languages, you might have received a mysterious letter posing this rather odd pair of questions.

Many of those who answered in the affirmative to the first question and in the negative to the second, found themselves swept up in a patriotic adventure vaguely described as helping the war effort, persuaded by “Your Country Needs You, Young Ladies.” Signing confidentiality agreements, sworn to secrecy upon penalty of being shot, these women never uttered a word about the nature of their work to parents, siblings, partners, children, friends, or anyone, at the time or for decades afterward.

Only in 2017, shortly after the women’s astonishing work had finally been declassified by the US Government, did award-winning journalist Liza Mundy chronicle their remarkable saga, bringing to light a largely unknown chapter in our national history. Her best-selling book, “Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II,” is the result of her painstaking research as well as more than two dozen interviews with the former “code girls” and their family members. More than 30 pages of her meticulously-annotated references and sources attest to the author’s quest for historical accuracy. Thanks to her passion for detail and her engaging writing style, the women’s all-but-erased stories spring to life. Eight pages of vintage and more recent photographs illustrate and underscore the remarkable story.

During World War II, more than 10,000 women were recruited by the US Navy and the Army from small towns in the South and Midwest, and from elite Northeastern college campuses, to work on breaking and creating complex codes for the military and diplomatic forces. While code breakers received postwar accolades for their instrumental

role, no mention was made of the fact that the majority of them were female.

But as World War II loomed, a reporter described the women flocking to a recruiting station as “a tidal wave of patriotic pulchritude.” Mundy explains, “Code breaking required literacy, numeracy, care, creativity, painstaking attention to detail, a good memory and a willingness to hazard guesses. It required a tolerance for drudgery and a boundless reserve of energy and optimism.”

We now know that these women, who lived in cramped, Spartan quarters, endured sexual harassment in the male dominated US military environment, and often worked twelve hours a day for seven days a week, unquestionably helped to shorten the war and secure the Allied victory. Their deciphering of the Japanese Pacific ship movements allowed the US in 1943 to intercept and take down Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, commander of Japan’s Combined Fleet and mastermind behind the attack on Pearl Harbor two years earlier.

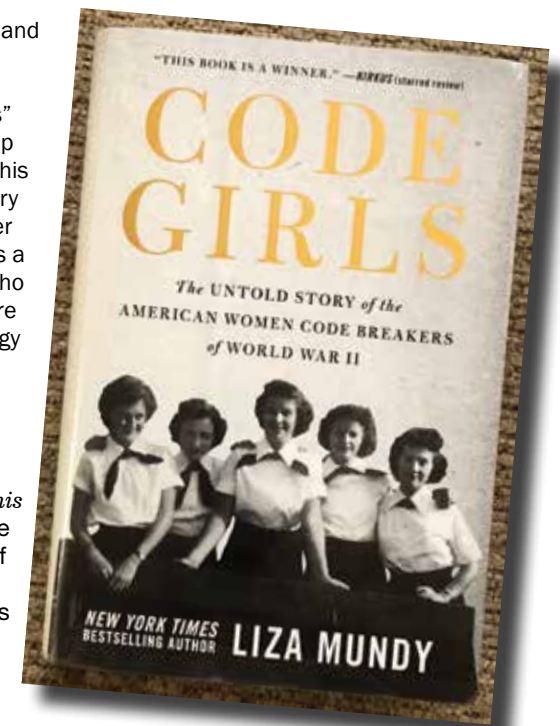
These dedicated women revolutionized the field of cryptology. But much of their work was maddeningly tedious and frustrating. Their pledge of secrecy also cost them recognition and opportunities for advancement. Most code girls downplayed their employment, referring to their secret mission as secretarial work; and once the war ended, they were generally expected to return to the traditional roles of marriage and motherhood. Not all did so willingly—or successfully.

Mundy relates how this work took its dramatic toll, not only on the women and their families, but also, on a larger scale, on our national culture. While the code breakers undeniably saved thousands of human lives, sooner or later many of them reckoned with the inescapable weight of responsibility for destroying thousands of others. They had no outlet to share the challenges and stresses of their experience with anyone except each other. While there were some triumphant “eureka” code breaking moments, there were unutterably bleak moments when other successes were accompanied by the poignant realization that across the globe, their own brothers, husbands, or friends were about to die – and they were powerless to save them.

From a women’s rights and feminist perspective, Mundy writes, “The nation lost talent that the war had developed. The 1950s and 1960s would not bring another critical mass of women to succeed the wartime code breakers, and in the 1970s and 1980s, women at the NSA [National Security Agency]

would have to fight a battle for parity and recognition all over again.”

Of special note: an abridged, young readers’ Kindle edition of “Code Girls” is due out this fall. It’s a welcome step in the right direction toward making this astonishing aspect of American history as widely accessible as possible. After all, as one reader marveled, “There is a whole generation of American girls who grew up with no idea that women were mathematicians, scientists, technology pioneers . . . and war heroes.”



Cover photo by Nancy P. McGinnis
“Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II,” by Liza Mundy is the result of her painstaking research as well as more than two dozen interviews with the former “code girls” and their family members.

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Opioid epidemic endangers the lives of Maine women and their babies

BY WANDA CURTIS
Correspondent

One of the greatest threats to the lives of Maine families today is opioid addiction.

A study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed Maine's rate of babies experiencing opioid withdrawal symptoms after birth was one of the highest in the nation. CDC data showed that Maine had a rate of 30.4 babies experiencing withdrawal symptoms per 1,000 live births. The average rate of babies experiencing withdrawal symptoms across 28 states included in that study was 6.0 babies per 1,000 live births.

Maine DHHS statistics reveal the number of drug-affected/substance-exposed babies peaked at 1,024 in 2016. The number declined slightly to 952 in 2017 and 904 in 2018. About 6,000 drug affected/substance exposed babies were born in Maine between 2013 and 2018.

NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME

Dr. Melissa Collard, Director of Women's Services at MaineGeneral Medical Center, explained that opiates cross the placenta and can cause the baby to become addicted. Those drug-affected babies display withdrawal symptoms after birth, called neonatal abstinence syndrome or NAS.

"Symptoms include loose stools which can break down the skin on the baby's bottom, high pitched cries, uncoordinated suck reflex making feeding difficult, seizures, sweating, frequent sneezing or yawning, tremors, increased muscle tone, and irritability with difficulty consoling," said Collard.

Besides withdrawal symptoms in babies, Collard said that chronic, untreated addiction is often associated with lack of prenatal care, increased risk of growth restriction, abruption (the placenta peeling away from the uterine wall), fetal death and preterm labor. Collard said that mothers with addiction issues may also engage in other high risk behaviors that can affect the health of the developing baby.

According to MaineGeneral Medical Center's pediatric hospitalist Gabrielle Harpell, babies exposed to opiates or other drugs in the womb may experience ADHD and behavioral issues as they grow older. She said there's also been speculation regarding the possibility that prenatal exposure to drugs may predispose a child to abuse drugs themselves later in life.

While in the hospital, Harpell said that families and/or caregivers are encouraged



MELISSA COLLARD, MD

"Symptoms include loose stools which can break down the skin on the baby's bottom, high pitched cries, uncoordinated suck reflex making feeding difficult, seizures, sweating, frequent sneezing or yawning, tremors, increased muscle tone, and irritability with difficulty consoling,"

MELISSA COLLARD, MD
MAINEGENERAL MEDICAL CENTER

"Recovery is never easy and it is rarely a linear trajectory. Just like with any other chronic disease, relapses can occur and when those happen we work to get the patient to the right level of treatment for their substance use disorder."

ALANE O'CONNOR, FAMILY MEDICINE PRACTITIONER
MAINE DARTMOUTH FAMILY PRACTICE



ALANE O'CONNOR, DNP

to participate in the infant's care alongside the staff. She said that many parents have little or no experience in caring for a newborn which makes caring for a drug-affected baby even more difficult.

"Substance-exposed infants require staff to provide significant amounts of education to the whole family who cares for this infant," she said. "Discussion about stimulation, appropriate feeding, appropriate swaddling, limiting stressful events in the room and many others are discussed. Care is clustered to limit disruptions to the infant. Parents or caregivers are encouraged to provide as much care as possible for these infants along with staff. The non-medication interventions such as swaddling are called non-pharmacological care and are the mainstay of treatment for withdrawal."

MOTHERS WITH ADDICTION SHOULD SEEK TREATMENT EARLY IN PREGNANCY

Both Collard and Harpell advise that pregnant women with addiction should seek treatment as early in the pregnancy as possible to protect their unborn child. Harpell said that she doesn't recommend quitting "cold

turkey" because that can cause harm to the child and could result in fetal death. Instead, both physicians advise women to contact their healthcare provider who can help locate appropriate treatment.

"Medication assisted treatment (MAT) has shown to be beneficial to mothers addicted to opioid during pregnancy," said Collard. "There is less risk for relapse, often the mothers attend support groups, are connected to social services to assist getting mothers ready for taking a baby home and they attend prenatal visits to ensure a healthy outcome. The growth and wellbeing of the babies are monitored with frequent ultrasounds. We are monitoring mother's weight gain, other possible issues that can be an issue such as mental health concerns. Babies born to mothers on MAT will be monitored for neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) from these substances."

Collard added that it's important for women to inform their health care providers about all medications and drugs they are using to ensure better outcomes all around.

"We hope that patients can feel safe to talk to us and be honest if they have a re-

lapse," she said. "We are here to help."

MANY WOMEN ARE ABLE TO ACHIEVE LONG-TERM RECOVERY

Family medicine practitioner Alane O'Connor, DNP treats women (including pregnant women) with addictions at Maine Dartmouth Family Practice in Waterville. She received a Community Addictions Leader award for her work with patients struggling with addictions and mental health issues.

O'Connor said many women are able to achieve long-term recovery, usually through the use of medication and behavioral health counseling. She said that by enrolling in treatment, many women are able to reach their goals of finding a job, buying a home, becoming a parent, or just living happy and healthy lives.

According to O'Connor, women with addictions are able to overcome by making a commitment to focus on their recovery and through their own very hard work.

"Recovery is never easy and it is rarely a linear trajectory," said O'Connor. "Just like with any other chronic disease, relapses can occur and when those happen we work to get the patient to the right level of treatment for their substance use disorder."

O'Connor advises any pregnant woman who has an addiction to make an appointment with a healthcare provider as quickly as possible. She said there are providers at Maine Dartmouth Family Practice (in Waterville) and the Family Medicine Institute (in Augusta) who specialize in the care of pregnant women with opioid disorders. She said that women can also go to the emergency room at either MaineGeneral Medical Center campus if they are in withdrawal and need immediate treatment.

O'Connor said that being in treatment during pregnancy is by far the safest option for both the woman and the baby.

"We are really seeking to avoid both intoxication and withdrawal," she said. "A stable, consistent dose of either buprenorphine or methadone is the standard of care during pregnancy."

O'Connor said that many women she treated for opioid disorders in the past, started out by taking prescription opioids and then progressed to heroin or fentanyl off the street. She said that's less true now.

"More often than not, we see patients starting with harder street drugs - likely because they are considerably less expensive

More EPIDEMIC, PAGE 9

Epidemic

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

and prescription opioids are not as readily available (with changes in Maine law)," said O'Connor. "The 'heroin' on the street is largely fentanyl these days and is incredibly lethal."

MAINE'S RATE OF OPIOID-RELATED OVERDOSE DEATHS DOUBLE NATIONAL RATE

Maine ranks number eight among the top ten states in the U.S. for their rate of opioid-related overdose deaths. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reported that in 2016 there were 301 deaths in Maine related to opioid use for a rate of 25.2 deaths per 100,000 persons. Maine's rate was nearly double the national rate of 13.3 per 100,000 persons. The number of opioid-related deaths in Maine peaked at 354 in 2017 and declined to 307 deaths in 2018.

Attorney General Aaron Frey responded to the decrease in Maine's overdose deaths with a prepared statement:

"Though we obviously welcome the slight reduction, the fact remains that the opioid epidemic is a public health crisis tearing apart Maine families and communities."

O'Connor urges anyone who needs help

overcoming addiction to seek help in either of MaineGeneral's emergency departments or with their primary care provider. MaineGeneral Medical Center now offers buprenorphine induction in both their Waterville and

Augusta emergency rooms, making treatment available 24/7. Anyone seeking treatment can find information at findtreatment.samhsa.gov/ or 211maine.org.

"Opioid use disorder does not discrimi-

nate," said O'Connor. "It impacts so many people. I suspect that most people living in Maine know someone or are related to someone with an opioid use disorder . . . We want to help people recover."

Drug Affected Baby / Substance Exposed Newborn Referrals Received by County per Calendar Year 2006 through 2018
Quarterly DHHS, OCFS Maine Automated Child Welfare Information System, January 3, 2018

COUNTY	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
ANDROSCOGGIN	18	19	37	36	55	82	97	121	104	128	134	118	144
AROOSTOOK	12	19	31	25	35	36	59	67	58	60	76	73	76
CUMBERLAND	32	40	41	56	50	69	63	102	109	103	83	114	85
FRANKLIN	1	1	6	4	10	13	15	16	7	16	10	11	11
HANCOCK	14	8	14	12	21	26	33	30	37	36	38	28	26
KENNEBEC	11	33	36	69	73	84	89	103	102	83	109	75	72
KNOX	4	6	9	9	20	23	37	32	19	27	36	33	37
LINCOLN	3	6	7	3	8	11	17	13	30	23	18	15	24
OXFORD	5	7	14	11	7	19	11	27	34	28	32	67	66
PENOBSCOT	65	73	81	139	162	155	187	182	226	239	213	167	113
PISCATAQUIS	3	7	3	7	8	1	18	15	16	24	21	16	11
SAGadahoc	1	2	6	3	8	6	9	17	8	15	10	12	15
SOMERSET	7	13	16	21	28	42	43	70	56	59	58	65	61
WALDO	2	12	17	16	26	29	23	29	32	33	54	36	43
WASHINGTON	8	9	6	21	18	27	32	47	41	42	41	49	47
YORK	11	18	18	18	38	43	38	55	82	96	91	71	72
Unknown/Non-Maine Resident	4	1	1	1	5	2	1	1	0	1	0	2	1
TOTAL	201	274	343	451	572	668	772	927	961	1013	1024	952	904

Source Maine DHHS Office of Child and Family Services.

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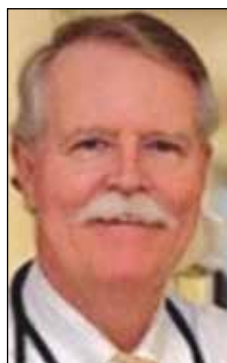
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New radio-frequency treatment can help reduce wrinkles

BY WANDA CURTIS
Correspondent

One of the first signs of aging is the formation of fine lines on the skin – wrinkles. As a person ages, the skin becomes less elastic and more fragile. Fat in the deep layers of the skin may decrease, especially in cases of extreme weight loss. This causes sagging and makes lines more noticeable.



JOHN BURKE MD

In addition to the natural aging process, other factors can contribute to wrinkling of the skin. Exposure to ultraviolet light, like the sun, will speed the aging process because it breaks down the skin's connective tissue. This also contributes to sagging and more pronounced wrinkles. Repeated

facial expressions, such as squinting, smiling or frowning also contribute to wrinkles.

Smoking cigarettes can speed up the normal aging process of the skin because nicotine causes blood vessels to constrict in the skin. The decreased blood flow limits the amount of oxygen and vitamins needed by the body. Pursing the lips while inhaling and exhaling cigarette smoke may also contribute to the formation of wrinkles around the mouth.

PREVENTION

While some wrinkling of the skin is inevitable, it is possible to prevent some premature wrinkles. One major step to prevent wrinkles is to limit the amount of time spent in the sun without protection. Wearing long sleeved clothing, wide brimmed hats and sunglasses is helpful in protecting the skin from over-exposure to the sun. Using broad-spectrum sunscreens with an SPF of 30 or more also helps to protect the skin from harmful rays.

According to an online article "14 Foods That Prevent Wrinkles and Improve Skin," including certain vitamins and minerals in the diet can help to prevent wrinkles. According to The University Health website (universityhealthnews.com/daily/nutrition/top-foods-that-prevent-wrinkles-and-improve-skin/) certain foods contain skin-protective

Certain foods contain skin-protective nutrients and as well as wrinkle-reducing compounds and can help with wrinkle prevention. These include blueberries, sweet potatoes, squash, carrots, chaga mushrooms, kale, spinach, mustard greens, tomatoes, yellow bell peppers, Goji berries, rice bran and others.

nutrients as well as wrinkle-reducing compounds. These include blueberries, sweet potatoes, squash, carrots, chaga mushrooms, kale, spinach, mustard greens, tomatoes, yellow bell peppers, Goji berries, rice bran and others. Drinking enough fluids each day is also important in preventing premature aging of the skin. For smokers, quitting can help prevent future wrinkles.

TREATMENT

Once wrinkles have formed, there are a number of treatment options available to help smooth wrinkles or make them less noticeable. Augusta practitioner John Burke MD said recently that a technique known as "micro needling" was used for many years but was "fraught with problems including lack of sterility." He said that technique involved multiple microscopic needles repeatedly piercing the skin in a designated area which triggered a healing response in the superficial layers of the skin and resulted in a smoother and more uniform appearance.

"In recent years," he said, "more advanced medical-grade motorized versions have been developed which use a sterile tip and are used under clean and supervised conditions."

RADIO-FREQUENCY MICRO NEEDLING

According to Burke, a new technology known as Secret RF or "radio frequency micro needling" is now available, "it combines the superficial benefits of prior versions of micro-needling with the use of radio-frequency energy deeper within the skin to tighten the skin and stimulate growth of collagen."

Burke said that his practice Maine Laser Skin Care (with offices in Augusta and Scarborough) is the first and only aesthetic practice in Maine to use this technology.

"We have been using the Secret RF for over 6 months now and have had significant results with high patient satisfaction," said Burke. "Radio frequency micro needling is useful for fine lines and wrinkles certainly, as well as the crepiness that occurs in the skin with the aging process. We have also suc-

cessfully used the Secret RF for deeper scars such as acne scars as well as post-traumatic and surgical scars."

The most common areas treated with this technique, Burke said, are the face, the neck, and areas of scarring and loose skin on the body including stretch marks. He said that, "Secret RF is really the only minimally-invasive treatment that has been shown to be effective to improve loose and crepey skin on the neck."

Burke said that the current protocol calls for three treatments, at least one month apart, to maximize collagen stimulation and

skin tightening. However, he said they have seen progressive improvement of the skin even after the first and second treatments. He said that positive effects should last for at least a year after the third treatment.

"There are no permanent treatments in this field of medicine, as even plastic surgery's effects wear off over time," said Burke. "The clock can be turned back but the clock of aging can't be stopped."

The cost of Secret RF depends on the area to be treated and whether the full 3 treatments are needed. Burke said that the best way to find out if someone is a candidate for the procedure and the cost involved is to schedule a free and confidential consultation by calling one of their offices at 12 Shuman Avenue in Augusta 873-2158 or 438 US Route 1 Scarborough 303-0125. He said that the 3-treatment package reduces the price by at least 10 percent and they also accept CareCredit® with 6 months of interest-free financing.



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BEFORE



AFTER

Murals - Art larger than life

Creating A Life

by Susan Varney

So you want to do a mural. Art is fun. We are all artists - some are better than others or better loved by others. The best philosophy is to be who you are, love what you do, improve and grow as you go. Keep going.

Paintings come in all sizes from the size of a fingernail to a mural . . . Murals make a statement: from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco to the goddess on the back of the garage done with exterior acrylic paint.

I've never minded waiting for a train to pass if I get stopped at a crossing because I love seeing all the colorful, imaginative graffiti on the sides of the cars. I like outdoor art and every empty wall looks like a challenge for someone.

I particularly like British artist Banksy's work. Humorous, irreverent, snide as well as sweet and thoughtful at times. Banksy's work is an inspiration because a lot of it is very simple with a pithy message.

A lot of mural art can be done with one or two colors using a stencil design so the project is done very quickly without being seen . . . for those times and places where a comment is wanted but may not be appreciated.

Choose a suitable location for your mural. Artists paint murals on large, visible surfaces. The easiest surface to work with is a flat wall without a lot of obstructions. The amount of wall space you need depends on the size of the mural you plan to create. Be sure to factor in your ability to access higher parts of the surface you wish to paint.

A painter makes just about any surface work: corrugated metal, brick, cement, shingles, clapboards, plaster walls or ceilings. A bumpy surface can give your mural a unique texture.

Remember to get permission if you don't own the wall space.

Set up scaffolding or a ladder if you can't reach the entire wall. For most mural projects, you will

need some sort of boost to reach high areas. Use a small stepladder to access areas you can't otherwise reach. If you need to go reach up high, set up staging. Clean, wash, scrape, and repair wall before beginning project and pre-paint if you need a base.

Make a plan. Measure the area and using graph paper mark out the dimensions, adding doors and window or other architectural details.

Mark a grid on the wall in chalk and sketch the design from your plan.

Using your paper plan, sketch your design on the wall with a carpenter's pencil.

Acrylic paint is easiest to clean up. Get basic colors: Blue, yellow, red, black and white. With primary colors you will be able to mix secondary colors. The amount you need depends on the size of the area to be painted.

Painting a mural is a big project. Take your time. Often one makes changes as the project progresses. That's fine. The best part of painting a mural is fitting it into your life. Work when you have time or energy for the project - wash your brushes and cap the paint cans for another day. Perhaps you have only weekends and evenings - so be it.

The inspiration for the River Goddess mural was the Vision Quest Tarot deck, the Native American Wisdom deck by Gayan Silvie Winter and Jo Dosé.

The river goddess symbolizes the power of the feminine, soulfulness, life, fertility and intuition - drinking from the well of wisdom and love. Healing, growth, prophesy and vision, all wonderful images to inspire.

Another favorite is the artist Shepard Fairey who did the Make Art Not War poster in the Vietnam War era. He also created the Obama Hope poster for his campaign in 2008.

His most recent work includes the WE THE PEOPLE campaign.

"Artists such as Fairey walk the line between critiquing mainstream culture and becoming it," Sara Goodyear in The Mainstream appeal of Outlaw Street Art, CityLab.



Susan Varney photo

The back of this two-car garage, facing the Kennebec, has a river goddess holding a jug of water on her shoulder which she empties, creating a river which flows by a field of sunflowers. The sun is rising or setting depending on your perspective. A raven flies overhead with a crescent moon in the gable.

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“Health Salad”: An old-fashioned favorite packs a colorful crunch!

BY NANCY P. MCGINNIS
Correspondent

Summer is finally around the corner and hearty winter meals give way to lighter fare. For a pleasing change of pace from classic coleslaw or other mayonnaise-based salads on your picnic table, try old fashioned “health salad.” Don’t be put off by the name, earned perhaps because the dish is indeed fat free, with a lower calorie count than classic coleslaw, macaroni or potato salad.

This colorful side dish, a mainstay of classic Jewish delicatessen offerings, is loaded with thinly sliced raw veggies in a slightly sweet, vinegar-based dressing. The latter takes on extra character as the crunchy sliced veggies release some of their flavorful juice into the mix. Let early spring radishes, scallions and tender carrots from your garden or farmer’s market this summer star in this recipe, and celebrate the season!

An excellent choice for your next family gathering, children (or grandchildren) can take pride in helping to choose and wash the vegetables and be in charge of gently mixing the ingredients chopped by an adult. This versatile recipe can also be adapted to taste and to incorporate available ingredients as Maine’s growing season progresses. It travels well to the park or beach and can stay out on the picnic or backyard buffet spread without the concern of spoilage associated with mayonnaise-based dishes in warmer weather.

Be sure to start with the freshest produce you can find and slice everything paper thin. Once combined with the dressing, allow the flavors to meld for at least an hour or so before serving. Health salad will keep, tightly covered, for several days in the refrigerator.

INGREDIENTS

(feel free to modify the selection and quantities of vegetables to taste)
Approximately 12-16 servings

Salad:

4 cups shredded cabbage (green, red or a combination)
1 small cucumber
1 small red onion
1 scallion, green and white parts
8 - 10 crisp radishes
1 medium clove garlic
1 or 2 sweet peppers (red, yellow and/or orange)
1 or 2 carrots

Dressing:

½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons sugar or to taste
2 ½ tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon olive oil

Garnish: A handful of fresh chopped herbs such as chives, parsley and/or dill

Instructions

Wash, pat dry, and trim the vegetables as needed. Slice each one paper thin, using a mandolin or sharp knife. Combine the sliced veggies in a large bowl with a tight fitting lid.

In a separate small bowl, combine the dressing ingredients; stir well to dissolve the sugar and salt. Pour the mixture over vegetables, tossing gently to coat evenly. Taste and correct seasonings as desired. Cover the salad and chill in refrigerator for about an hour. Toss the salad once or twice while it chills and again just before serving, garnished with a sprinkle of fresh chopped herbs if desired.



Photo by Nancy P. McGinnis

“Health Salad” is easy and fun to prepare, full of crowd-pleasing flavor, color and texture.

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Wise Words *from* Wise Women

BY TERRI HIBBARD

Don't you love it? An American politician declaring that the job must be "a complete dedication to the people and to the nation." Not a dedication to donors, the next campaign or one's own wealth and power. But a dedication to the people and nation.

By all accounts, Maine's own Sen. Margaret Chase Smith truly lived by her creed, showing a kind of honesty and integrity that seems lacking in Washington today. Smith was a Republican, but a moderate Republican who quickly broke with her party whenever she believed it was the right thing to do.

One stellar example occurred after Smith had been in the Senate for just a year. She was the first member of Congress to condemn the anti-Communist witch hunt led by her colleague, Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. At first, Smith thought McCarthy's accusations of Communists in the State Department might be right, but when he couldn't produce any evidence to back up his accusations, Smith squared her shoulders and stood up.

On June 1, 1950, she delivered a 15-minute speech on the Senate floor, known as the "Declaration of Conscience." McCarthyism, she said, had "debased" the Senate to "the level of a forum of hate and character assassination."

In that famous speech, Smith defended every American's "right to criticize ... right to hold unpopular beliefs ... right to protest and the right of independent thought. . .

"I don't want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the four horsemen of calumny (slander)—fear, ignorance, bigotry, and smear."

Yes. That's what she said. Nearly 69 years ago.

Six other moderate Senate Republicans signed onto her Declaration and McCarthy began referring to them as "Snow White and the Six Dwarfs."

Smith was the first woman to serve Maine in Congress, the first woman to have been a U.S. Representative and a U.S. Senator. She also was the first woman to run for U.S. President.

Smith was born Dec. 14, 1897 in Skowhegan. She was educated there and after high school graduation, taught school briefly, coached the high school girls' basketball team and worked at the Maine Telephone

and Telegraph Company. She then worked for several years as circulation manager at the Independent Reporter, a weekly newspaper owned by Clyde Smith.

Although he was 21 years older, she married Clyde Smith in 1930. When her husband was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1936, she went with him to Washington to manage his office, do research and help write his speeches.

When Clyde Smith became seriously ill, he asked that his wife be allowed to continue his work. She won a special election to finish his term and after he died, was elected on her own to the House in 1940. She was elected to the Senate in 1948.

When Smith announced her candidacy for the presidency in 1964, she said "I have no illusions and no money but I'm staying for the finish. When people keep telling you, you can't do a thing, you kind of like to try."

We can't imagine such a thing today, but Smith was determined to raise no money, pay her own personal and travel expenses, have no staff except "unpaid amateur volunteers" and buy no advertising. She also refused to miss a single Senate vote while campaigning.

Not surprisingly, she lost every primary, but did get 25 percent of the vote in Illinois.

At the 1964 Republican National Convention, she became the first woman to have her name placed in nomination for the presidency for a major political party.

Despite her remarkable political career, she was defeated for re-election in 1972 by Democrat Bill Hathaway by a margin of 53 percent to 47 percent. Hathaway argued that she was too old and in poor health. She had once used a scooter after hip surgery, but not during the time of the election.

Smith then taught at various colleges before settling in Skowhegan to oversee construction of the Margaret Chase Smith Library. The Library was established as, "an archive, museum, educational facility and public policy center devoted to preserving the legacy of Margaret Chase Smith, promoting research into American political history, advancing the ideals of public service and exploring issues of civic engagement."

After an incredible life, Smith died in 1995 at age 97. Her ashes were placed in the residential wing of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.



"My creed is that public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation with full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, that honor is to be earned, not bought."

**SENATOR MARGARET
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Tea & taffeta, wool & wonder

BY SUSAN VARNEY
Correspondent

What are the things that make life worth living? It's spring, finally, time to think of gardens, wild mushrooms and flowing rivers, of friends and neighbors..

What is a neighbor? It's a person, an object, a country, a town, or even a planet. Some of us don't know our neighbors as in what is earth's closest neighbor? Some of us don't like our neighbors. Some of us are different from our neighbors as in they eat strange foods or were born in a far-away country. Hardly a day goes by that I'm not consulting an atlas.

In these interesting times it is important to have a good neighbor. Someone who lends a hand when needed, makes you laugh, shares stories and insights, celebrates important occasions, shares videos, books, garden produce, recipes and a cup of sugar if needed.

Any number of things signal a good neighbor. It could be her sheets hanging on the line and blowing in the wind or a yard sale where you exchange things you are tired of for things she is tired of, someone who feeds your pets when you are away, or keeps an eye on your house or takes your recycling to the recycling center.

What we love is neighbors who go for a walk with us or just stand in the street and talk, or invite us to a sunny chair on their porch, in for a cup of coffee, or take us kayaking on the river, or throw parties for special holidays, changing seasons or for no reason at all and invite you.

Creating an atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion is a good place to start. Smiling and waving at your neighbors when you pass on the street, driving slowly on the street being careful of pets, children and each other. Respecting property and shared borders, borrowing equipment and returning it promptly and in good condition, creating beauty not eyesores, making art with gardens and yards.

Neighborhood relationships evolve. One neighbor celebrates the summer and winter solstices, another celebrates birthdays at her tea house, another does art projects, and costumes are fun whether Bohemian Bouillabaisse or gypsy Halloween. Including friends, family and neighbors is fun . . . Putting a party together is like putting a jigsaw puzzle together. How did it happen? I tell people I was just lucky to be living in a neighborhood of people I like but it's really more than that. It's people inviting others into their lives. Being curious about the lives of others,

Creating an atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion is a good place to start. Smiling and waving at your neighbors when you pass on the street, driving slowly on the street being careful of pets, children and each other. Respecting property and shared borders, borrowing equipment and returning it promptly and in good condition, creating beauty not eyesores, making art with gardens and yards.

not in a gossipy way but in a getting to know you better way.

My friends are socially conscious, feminists, independent working women and men, retired, or semi-retired people aware of what is going on in the world, people with roots in the world, the community and the country. Some can trace their roots back to the Mayflower, some to Ellis Island, some to French Canada, some to freed slaves, some to the cradle of civilization. All are exceptional people from the medical field, teachers, mothers, postal workers, students, therapists, state workers, writers, reporters, editors, artists. All are readers, some have advanced degrees, some don't, some have grandchildren, some don't, some live alone, some don't, some take care of a family member, some don't, some volunteer, give blood, and write letters.

They all love to laugh, eat and have a good time, read poetry, share stories and make a better world whether in their back yard or beyond. All care about people and want them to be safe. All vote.

How is it done a friend asked? Simple. It's done by living your life and inviting others to join you once in a while. Keep it simple, keep it fun, keep it time-limited and ask your friends to contribute, i.e. pot luck snacks, a game, surprises, crafts, costumes so they are part of the entertainment not just to be entertained. Wear that old taffeta prom gown if it still fits!

And wonders never cease.



Photos by Susan Varney

Above: Tea House in the Pines overlooking the Kennebec.
Below: Friends and neighbors meet to celebrate a birthday at the Tea House in the Pines.



Nights out help moms recharge

Caring for children requires dedication and patience. Even though infants and toddlers may exact the most attention from mom, each stage of childhood presents new challenges. Motherhood is a task that demands much from women, and those demands can certainly pack on the pressure.

Couple the pressure of raising children with the growing trend of women serving as primary caregivers to aging parents, and it's no surprise many women feel as though they need a respite. That's what makes nights out with friends so essential. Here are just some of the many reasons why caregivers need to make time for socialization.

- **Caregiving can be alienating.** No matter how well-meaning moms and caregivers may be, they may grow to resent the work involved because the only interactions they may have on a daily basis are care-related. Women should get out regularly so they can focus on themselves and enjoy their relationships with friends.

- **Have a reason to get dolled up.** When other responsibilities take priority, putting on makeup or wearing nice clothing can take a back seat. Girls' night out provides a reason to wear fancy clothes, do your hair and don a little mascara. Girlfriends tend to notice these beautifying changes and offer compliments — which can be a nice ego boost.

- **Girls' night out is a free therapy session.** It won't take the place of counseling provided by a licensed therapist, but a girls' night out offers a chance to get things off your chest and seek advice from friends who may be in similar situations.

- **You can indulge a little and laugh along the way.** Loosening up with a glass of wine can help the conversation flow. Nights out with friends also will probably lead to a few laughs, which can certainly be helpful when life seems a tad overwhelming.

Regular nights out with friends can make it a bit easier for moms to juggle the responsibilities of being a mom, a caregiver or both.

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