

HEALTHY LIVING

Fall 2015



There are many ways to enjoy Maine's winter wonderland

by Sheila Grant

People who enjoy outdoor recreation can find a multitude of ways to enjoy this region during the colder months, including ice skating, snowshoeing, cross-country and downhill skiing, ice fishing and snowmobiling. As the Scandinavian people observed a long time ago, "there's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong gear," so bundle up, get out there and have some fun this winter!

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing

Many cross-country ski and snowshoe enthusiasts head out onto the region's extensive snowmobile trail system or unpaved logging roads to stretch their legs and get some fresh air. That's fine, as long as you keep an ear open for snowmobiles and get off the trails – today's machines go fast, and are sometimes rental or new sleds being driven by inexperienced operators.

The Birches Resort in Rockwood has 38 miles of trails for cross-country skiers of all experience levels. Brassua and Moosehead lakes, and Baker Pond can be accessed from this trail system. The resort offers three yurts for guests hearty enough to tackle overnight cross-country ski trips. The resort offers equipment rentals, and full or half-day trail passes, and skiers are welcome to use the facilities at the main lodge, which include a dining room, lounge and bar. A trial map is available from the resort, or from the Moosehead Lake Region Chamber of Commerce.

The Appalachian Mountain Club has 120 miles of trails to the east of Moosehead Lake that are free to the public. Connect to these trails via the winter parking lot at the end of the plowed Katahdin Iron Works road, the end of the Frenchtown road south of Kokadjo, or from the Smithtown Road, if it is plowed. Maps are available through the Moosehead chamber. Meals are often available at AMC lodges by reservation. Visit www.outdoors.org for more information about AMC trails and lodges.

Organized group outings are another way to discover new ski

and snowshoe trails. The Natural Resources Education Center in Greenville offers several winter outings, including deer yard tours, cookouts, and other fun for all ages. There are also trails available for public use behind the organization's Moosehead Lake Visitor Center, 480 Moosehead Lake Road, in Greenville. For more information about NREC trails and programs, visit www.nreemoosehead.org or email Tim Obrey at president@nreemoosehead.org.

The Connecting with Nature program is an offshoot of the suicide prevention nonprofit JD Foundation. The program is designed to help people, especially those who might hesitate to venture outdoors alone, get fresh air, exercise, companionship, natural resource education and more. Anyone can join the weekend excursions, which are held once or twice a month, year-round. Participants have ranged from age 2 to 90. There is no charge for the outings, though donations are gratefully accepted.

Participants typically meet at JD Foundation headquarters at 107 Main Road in Abbot, and are asked to wear appropriate clothing for the day's activity, and to bring their own snack and water bottle. Those who have gear bring it. The JD Foundation has accumulated gently used gear to loan to participants as needed. To learn more about Connecting with Nature, call 876-2295 or visit www.thejdfoundation.org.

Downhill skiing

Thanks to the community group, The Friends of Squaw Mountain, the Big Squaw Mountain Resort is up and running. The resort features 33 groomed trails, a triple chairlift, and a recently renovated ski lodge. There's an active ski school offering multiple skiing and snowboarding programs. The resort also offers a full-service restaurant, and a shop for ski and board rentals. There's a Mogul Mites program on Sundays from 10 a.m. to noon for children in Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Big Squaw also hosts several special events each year. On Friendship Day, top donors are



SNOWSHOEING is a low-impact, inexpensive way that people of most fitness levels may enjoy nature during the winter months.

invited to bring a guest and enjoy free skiing, dinner and live music. The resort also hosts the Plum Creek Timber Classic, a K-8 race open to skiers of all ability levels. There's an annual Easter Egg Hunt, which also includes live music and a barbecue. And on the last weekend of skiing last spring, all pass holders from any Maine mountain were invited to enjoy free skiing and live music when they brought a friend. For updates on the resort and its events, follow them on Facebook or visit www.skibig-squaw.com.

Ice Fishing

A quick trip to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife website, or to your local town office, will provide ice fishing regulations, as well as a list of waters open to hardwater fishing. Drilling those auger holes can be a solitary pastime, but with multiple fishing derbies in the region each winter, those who want fishing buddies to pass the time with can surely find them!

The Moosehead Lake Togue Derby, which launched in 2008,

is meant to help control the lake trout population in Maine's largest lake. Ricky Craven, of NAS-CAR fame, hosts the event each year and visits with anglers both out on the lake and at the prize ceremony. Proceeds benefit the Natural Resource Education Center's Fisheries Internship/Enhancement program. Prizes include cash for the three largest togsue, and a grand prize drawing from all entry tickets that typically includes an ice auger and other fishing gear donated by Indian Hill Trading Post. There are also dozens of smaller gifts awarded in the fish pool. This year's derby is scheduled for January 23 to 25.

The Dexter Fish & Game Association has been sponsoring a derby on Wassookeag Lake each winter since 2010. The event is typically held from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. on a Saturday and Sunday in mid-January – 2016 dates have not yet been announced. Trophies are awarded for the largest catch in several fish species. There's also a raffle for a variety of prizes, and there's usually a lunch available, by donation, featuring the buyer's choice from many slow-cookers full of hot chili, beans and stews. Proceeds benefit the association. For more information, contact Jim Nicholas, president, at 924-5082.

The 54th Schoodic Lake Ice Fishing Derby is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 13 and Sunday, Feb. 14. According to organizers, this is the longest running, consecutively held ice fishing derby in the state. The event is sponsored by the Milo Fire Department. To be eligible for prizes, fish must be caught from Schoodic, Schoeis, Ebenezer and Boyd lakes. The prize drawing will be held at 7 p.m. on Sunday at the Milo Town Hall. Prizes vary from year to year, and the prize values total more than \$15,000. There are cash fish prizes, as well as registered fish drawing prizes, and the Grand Prize drawing – for a new snowmobile this year. Tickets cost \$10.

The Sangerville Fire Department's Annual Fishing Derby is typically scheduled for the Saturday following President's Day, so should fall on Saturday, Febru-

ary 20 in 2016. To be eligible for prizes, fish must be caught from Center, Manhancock and Harlow ponds. Anglers in adult and kid's age categories win trophies for first, second and third place fish. The first-place fish to an adult angler also wins a cash prize, while all of the kids who register a fish get their names entered into a drawing during which two bicycles and two fishing poles will be awarded. Another 40 or so prizes will be raffled off during the derby.

Snowmobiling

With the return of the "good, old-fashioned Maine winter" in recent years, snowmobiling has become more popular than ever. Snowmobile club members throughout the region work hard to ensure safe, well-groomed, well-marked trails, as well as a full calendar of fun events for snow travel enthusiasts. Nearly every town has its own snowmobile club. A list of clubs that are members of the Maine Snowmobile Association can be found at www.mesnow.com, and many include a link to individual club websites where information about clubhouse hours, the availability of food and hot beverages, and a schedule of poker runs, ride ins, cookouts, and other club events can be found.

A couple of the larger events take place in Greenville, and Newport. The Moosehead Riders host a B-52 Memorial Snowmobile Ride each January. There's usually a spaghetti luncheon at noon at the Moosehead Riders Clubhouse on Scammon Road either before or after the ride to the January 1963 crash site of the B-52 Stratofortress-C on Elephant Mountain in which only two of nine United States Air Force crewmen survived. For more information, call 695-3580 or email info@mooseheadriders.org.

In the Newport region, the 43rd Annual Dysart's Snowmobile Ride-in to benefit Pine Tree Camp will be one of the major events of the winter season. This weekend-long event, typically held in early February, includes

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Hate the cold? Stay active indoors this winter!

by Sheila Grant

If bundling up and enjoying Mother Nature during the winter months isn't your thing, that's okay. There are many options in-door options throughout the region to keep people moving until warmer weather arrives. Many communities have a large space, usually the town office or a school gymnasium, open for the public to use for walking during the winter.

The Greenville Consolidated School gymnasium is open for walkers from 6 to 7 a.m. on weekdays, as long as school is in session. Monson residents are welcome to go to the town office and get the key to the gymnasium at the Community Center. In Abbot and Milo, folks can walk in the public gathering spaces in the town hall during business hours. And in Corinna, the town's Recreation Department organizes a walking group and has access to the Elementary School from 6 to 7 a.m. Also ask about the co-ed adult soccer and basketball for all skill levels that are offered year-round in the school gymnasium.

Residents may walk in the Dexter Town Hall from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on weekdays. Or head to the town hall from 12 to 4 p.m. every Saturday from now until the end of April for roller skating. There's a \$2 admission fee; skate rentals are \$1. Refreshments are available for purchase, as well. There are also teen dances scheduled at the town hall from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on weekend evenings when volunteer chaperones are available—contact Recreation Director Mike Martin, recreation@dextermaine.org, to volunteer or to get more details about these events.

Also, check with your local adult education program for opportunities to learn Tai Chi Chih, various forms of dance, and for classes on nutrition and healthy living. The Piscataquis Valley Adult Education Cooperative is offering several classes this winter at the Penquis Higher Education Center in Dover-Foxcroft. Sherry Corbin, a retired nurse and a Gendai Reiki Master/Teacher will be teaching Meditation: A Workshop for Beginners. The class explores, "a basket full" of meditation techniques, including guided imagery, mindful, passage, mantra, mandala, Tai Chi Chih, affirmations, focused breathing, and even touch for pets. Students will also receive a list of local Tai Chi, Qi Gong and yoga teachers in case they wish to take their studies further after this introductory course. The one-week course runs from 1 to 3 p.m., November 2 to 9.

Corbin will also be teaching Tai Chi Chih, "a relaxing meditation consisting of 19 gentle movements and one pose," done in a standing or seated position. Tai Chi Chih originator Justin Stone recommended the practice daily, "to achieve heightened energy, serenity and health, longevity, and weight and blood pressure control." At the end of this class, students will be prepared to include Tai Chi Chih practice as part of daily life to enhance physical, mental, and spiritual balance. Classes are on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. from October 7 until December 9 and on Thursdays from 6 to 8 p.m. from October 8 to December 10.

There will be a free UMaine Center on Aging RSVP's Bone Builders class for adults 50 and older, presented in cooperation between the Adult Education Cooperative and the University of Maine Center on Aging Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. The class, funded by United Way of Eastern Maine, is ongoing in nine locations throughout the state. New students may sign up at any time. About 10 billion Americans have osteoporosis, and approximately 34 million have osteopenia (low bone mass which can be a precursor to osteoporosis). Bone Builders utilizes seated or standing ankle and hand weight exercises to strengthen bones while also improving range of motion, muscle strength and balance. The maximum class size is 15 participants, all of whom must provide a medical clearance from a healthcare provider before beginning the program. A new class begins this February in Dover-Foxcroft. For more information, call Cindy Whitney, RSVP coordinator, at 262-7924 or email her at cynthia.whitney@umit.maine.edu.



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FAMILY HOUSING is located at **Meadow Lane**, **Anderson Lane** (2, 3 & 4 bedrooms) and **Dow IV Apartments** (2 & 3 bedrooms) in Old Town. **Hillside Apartments** located in Bradley are one bedroom units starting at \$480/month plus electricity; rental assistance is available for some units and Housing Choice Vouchers are accepted. **Main View Apartments** located in Orono are one bedroom units starting at \$639/month plus electricity; rental assistance is available for some units and Housing Choice Vouchers are accepted.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM provides rental assistance to families and elderly/disabled individuals in open market rents in OLD TOWN and those towns within a 10-mile radius. The **Family Self-Sufficiency Program** and **Homeownership/Option Payments Program** are also available to qualifying participants currently on the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

FOR AN APPLICATION OR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: Housing Authority of the City of Old Town • PO Box 404 • 358 Main Street, Old Town, ME 04468-0404. Tele 207-827-6151 • Fax 207-827-1502 • Relay 711 • hacot@oldtownhousing.net • www.oldtownhousing.net

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Stay sneeze and wheeze-free this holiday season

(BPT) - Your goal may be to celebrate the holidays in style this year, but your allergies and asthma are making you feel like the Grinch. You may not even be aware of what's causing the extra sniffing, sneezing and itchy eyes.

"Two thirds of allergy sufferers have symptoms year-round, so it's not just a matter of the first freeze hitting and your symptoms disappearing," says allergist Bryan Martin, DO, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI). "Even after the pollen season dies down, there are environmental triggers to deal with - things like mold, dust and pet dander. The winter holidays can bring a whole new set of triggers."

The following are some ACAAI tips on ways to steer clear of allergic triggers that surface during the holidays, including some you may not have been aware of.

Oh, the weather outside is frightful

Half the fun of the winter holidays is being outside - caroling, building snowmen, sledding. But if you have asthma, you need to know that very cold, dry air can be a trigger. If you're heading outside and it's very cold, cover your mouth and nose with a scarf or face mask - particularly if you'll be exercising.

Over the river

If you're traveling for the holidays and have allergies or asthma, be sure to pack your medicines. Some hotels now offer allergy-free rooms, so inquire when booking your stay. If you're allergic to dust mites, bring your allergy-blocking bedding. If you need injectable epinephrine, make sure you have two for your trip.

Sneezing around the Christmas tree

Lots of traditions swirl around the holidays - and lots of dust, too. If you store ornaments and artificial trees in the attic without being covered, they may be full of dust, which can cause allergies to flare. Clean them thoroughly before putting them up, and when the holidays are over, store them in air-tight boxes so that next year you'll deal with fewer triggers. If you buy a real tree, know that some people have contact skin allergies to terpene, found in the sap of trees, as well as inhalant allergies to mold spores and pollen brought into the house by fresh trees and greenery.

Bring us a figgy pudding - or not

The holidays often involve events where other people prepare the food. If you or your kids suffer from food allergies, you're probably skilled at bringing something you know everyone in your clan can eat. You might also want to give the host a heads up if there are certain ingredients she needs to steer clear of. Check labels of anything that's prepared that you haven't eaten before. And know that lots of websites have allergy-safe recipes for holiday classics.

If you suffer from allergies or asthma, see a board-certified allergist. Allergists are trained to diagnose and treat your symptoms, and to work with you to create an individual action plan. To find an allergist in your area, use the ACAAI allergist locator tool.

The ACAAI is a professional medical organization of more than 6,000 allergists-immunologists and allied health professionals, headquartered in Arlington Heights, Ill. The College fosters a culture of collaboration and congeniality in which its members work together and with others toward the common goals of patient care, education, advocacy and research. ACAAI allergists are board-certified physicians trained to diagnose allergies and asthma, administer immunotherapy, and provide patients with the best treatment outcomes. For more information and to find relief, visit AllergyandAsthmaRelief.org. Join us on Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter.

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www.oldtownhousing.net/assisted.htm

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Dexter gym offers the right space and pace for every fitness level

by Sheila Grant

Millside Fitness in Dexter has experienced improvements, expansion, and strong membership during the past year, thanks to new owners Marcy and Trampas King. Twenty-four-hour access, a convenient downtown location, fees tiered for everyone from non-members through family and senior memberships, and a wide variety of fitness equipment and classes are just a few of the benefits of this facility.

Marcy King, who has more than 15 years of group fitness experience, had been involved with the management and group fitness instruction at Millside Fitness for over a decade before the couple purchased the center's fitness equipment in January of 2014. Later that year, "we bought the building and made significant renovations to better service our members," said King. When the new and improved Millside Fitness celebrated its Grand Re-opening in January of 2015, all of the fitness equipment had been relocated to the first floor of the historic building at 28 Main Street, and an eight-bicycle Spinning room and private Yoga room had been added on the second floor. Heat pumps were also installed, primarily to cool the building over the warm-weather months.

Millside Fitness has a wide variety of cardio machines, including treadmills, ellipticals and recumbent bicycles. There's also a dedicated free weight room, and Cybex selectorized weight equipment. Gym amenities include cable television, free Wi-Fi, locker rooms with showers, and tanning (by appointment only). There's also a large-screen television and DVD player on the second floor for members who want the space to work out to a favorite DVD.

While the winter schedule had not been set at press time, Millside Fitness offers about 20 group fitness classes per week. Anyone interested can get more details at www.millsidefit.com, but in general, "there will be classes conducted five early mornings per week, and multiple evening classes four nights a week, in addition to the mid-morning Senior-cise," King said.

During Senior-cise, students should wear comfortable clothing, and will do 30 minutes of light weights, resistance bands, and/or body weight exercises in both standing and seated positions. "We work all parts of the body, including the arms, legs and core in one class," said King, noting that core work improves balance, which is often a concern of senior citizens.

Other classes include Bokwa, during which participants draw letters and numbers with their feet while moving to music in

free form rhythm. With no choreography, Bokwa provides a great workout and a lot of fun while also being easy to learn. Zumba, which is choreographed, does not require participants to know every step so much as to just keep moving to the music and having a good time while burning calories.

Strength Training classes introduce people who are looking to build muscle strength and increase metabolism to techniques using free weights and body weight resistance exercises. While great for beginners, King said, the class is also good for those looking to maintain or increase strength.

And Shred is a 30-minute class that combines short bursts of cardio exercise with strength training exercises. Each exercise is done for 30 seconds before moving on to the next. "This class is short but packs a real punch so if you're short on time or simply need to change things up a bit, this is the class that will get you there," King said.

"And we have two styles of yoga," said King said. "I teach YogaFit, which is geared toward the more active individual, and Donna Kraft-Smith teaches Kripalu Yoga." The latter discipline is best known for its accessibility for students of all body types, ages, fitness levels, and interests.

Those who prefer a quiet workout may want to note that because of class schedules and many members' work schedules, the busiest hours at Millside Fitness are from 5 to 7 a.m., and 5 to 7 p.m. Members can access the facility anytime with keycard entry -- security cameras are in place for added safety.

"It's a small facility," noted King. "We have 250 members, yet it doesn't really seem that way (because people come in at so many different times of day). We do not have a lot of different instructors. I personally teach the majority of the classes. And with every new membership comes the opportunity for me to show the member all of the equipment free of charge -- there's no personal trainer fee."

Non-members can pay a \$5 fee to use the equipment or attend a class. Membership fees vary from pre-paid for the year, for senior citizens age 62 and over, and fees drop further for seniors over age 75. There are also group rates for adults within the same household and for the commitment shy, a monthly and three-month rate are also available.

Memberships are arranged by appointment. For more information, call Marcy King at 924-7360.



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10 tips to make your home safer for kids

(BPT) - Home is where the heart is, and for most people, it's where they feel safest. Yet for children, the home isn't as safe as you might assume. In fact, you may be surprised to learn that 3.5 million children go to the emergency room every year for injuries that happen in homes.

Some parents are unintentionally putting their children at risk by making common mistakes in the home. For example, parents say they are worried about fire safety and 96 percent report they have a smoke alarm, yet 14 percent never check their smoke alarm battery, according to "Report to the Nation: Protecting Children in Your Home," from Safe Kids Worldwide and Nation-

"Parents just can't imagine a tragedy could happen to them, but it happens far too often," says Kate Carr, president and CEO of Safe Kids Worldwide. "Sadly, 2,200 kids die from an injury in the home every year. The good news is that we know how to prevent these injuries, and parents can take simple steps to protect their kids."

Safe Kids Worldwide teamed up with Nationwide and its Make Safe Happen program to help families keep kids safe in the home. "We know parents want to protect their children," said Terrence Williams, Nationwide's Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer. "It's our hope that by bringing this information to families and caregivers, we can

help them protect what matters most."

Here are 10 tips to make your home kid-safe so you avoid preventable injuries. To learn more, visit SafeKids.org or MakeSafeHappen.com.

1. Make sure there is a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas. Test the batteries every month.
2. Create and practice a home fire-escape plan with your family. Know two ways out of every room in case of a fire.
3. Give young children your full and undivided attention when they are in and around water. Only 1 percent of parents list drowning as a concern, according

to the Safe Kids report, yet every week a child dies from drowning in a bathtub.

4. For young children, use safety gates at the top and bottom of the stairs, attaching them to the wall if possible.
5. Keep cribs clear of toys and soft bedding, and make sure that babies sleep alone, on their backs, and in a crib every time they sleep. For children under the age of 1, suffocation is the leading cause of injury-related death.
6. Keep all medicine up and away, out of children's reach and sight. Think about places where kids get into medicine, like in purses, on counters and on nightstands.
7. Store all household cleaners, liquid laundry packets and other

toxic products out of children's reach and sight. Use cabinet locks to prevent young children from getting into products that may cause them harm.

8. Save the Poison Help line number into your phone and post it in your home where anyone can find it easily in an emergency: 1-800-222-1222.

9. Secure flat-panel TVs by mounting them to the wall and place box-style TVs on a low, stable piece of furniture.
10. Properly install window guards or stops to help prevent falls from windows. Each year, 3,300 children are injured by falling out of a window, yet 70 percent of parents say they have never used window guards or stops that prevent these falls.

Four simple steps to prevent food poisoning

(StatePoint) Food poisoning, an illness caused by bacteria or other pathogens in food, causes an estimated 48 million illnesses (representing one out of six Americans), 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths annually in the U.S., according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics.

With proper food safety practices you can lower your risk substantially, say experts. "Whether whipping up din-

ner from scratch or simply reheating leftovers, there are important food safety practices you must remember," says registered dietitian nutritionist and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics spokesperson Joan Salge Blake.

Salge Blake and the experts at the Academy are encouraging everyone to learn four simple steps for food safety.

Wash
Harmful bacteria can survive in many places around

your kitchen and be spread to food and family, without correct precautions.

Wash hands for at least 20 seconds in warm, soapy water. Scrub the backs of your hands, between fingers and under your nails. Proper hand washing may eliminate nearly half of all cases of food poisoning and significantly reduce the spread of the common cold and flu.

Use hot, soapy water to wash surfaces and utensils



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after each use, including appliances, countertops and cutting boards. Don't forget dishcloths and towels. Wash them frequently on the hot cycle of your washing machine. Disinfect sponges in a chlorine bleach solution and replace worn sponges frequently.

Separate
Cross-contamination occurs when juices or bacteria from raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs touch cooked or ready-to-eat foods. Keep these items separate from other foods in your shopping cart, grocery bags and refrigerator. Place them in plastic bags to prevent juices from leaking, and on the refrigerator's bottom shelf, so their juices don't drip on other foods.

As you cook, keep raw meats, poultry, seafood and eggs separate from ready-to-eat foods by using different cutting boards, plates and utensils.

Cook
"Many people think they can tell when food is done simply by checking its color and texture, but one out of every four hamburgers turn brown before reaching a safe temperature," says Salge Blake.

A food thermometer is the only reliable way to ensure food has been cooked to a high

enough internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria. Internal cooking temperatures vary from food to food.

Refrigerate
Cooling foods promptly and properly slows the growth of harmful bacteria and helps prevent food poisoning. Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours, or one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Use a refrigerator thermometer to ensure the refrigerator is set at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below and the freezer at zero degrees Fahrenheit or below.

Tasting just a tiny bit of contaminated food can cause serious illness, so toss all expired foods. If you're unsure, remember: when it doubt, throw it out.

Check out free resources, including the Is My Food Safe? app and the information available at HomeFoodSafety.org.

Food poisoning is a serious concern that can often be avoided. Learn to prep food with your family's safety in mind.

Life insurance tips for every stage of your life

(StatePoint) For many, life insurance is a one-time purchase. But your policy should keep pace with your life circumstances.

Life insurance plays a key role in financial confidence and planning, according to the Lincoln Financial Group's recent M.O.O.D. of America Survey (Measuring Optimism, Outlook and Direction), which found that 77 percent of policy holders feel prepared to protect their wealth compared to 61 percent of non-owners. Additionally, the survey found that life insurance owners feel more prepared for retirement, and potential income disruption.

To ensure you have appropriate coverage, consider the following.

Young Newlyweds

You may rely on two salaries to maintain your lifestyle. Would one person be able to continue living in the same manner on just one income? Are your savings adequate for your spouse to afford rent or mortgage payments and pay off debts without you?

Premium rates are based on age and health status, so the earlier you buy, the less you'll potentially pay. Consider locking in lower rates now.

Term life insurance is typically the most affordable option, providing coverage for a set number of years. Identify financial obligations and purchase a policy big

enough to cover them. As your financial commitments increase, you can add more coverage as needed.

Growing Families

Between diapers, childcare, dance lessons, braces and education, raising a child in the United States can cost around \$250,000 for a middle-income family, according to USDA estimates.

Life insurance is crucial for allowing your family to maintain the lifestyle you've built for them, even if the unthinkable happens.

The primary breadwinner should have a policy big enough to replace the income required to see children through to adulthood. But a non-working spouse might need coverage too. If that spouse was gone, there might be added household expenses, such as childcare.

Revisit your life insurance after the birth of every child. If coverage is lacking, consider a small policy alongside your existing one, which is generally more cost-effective than buying one larger policy.

Retirement Ready

The kids are grown, the house is paid off, and you're embarking on retirement. Do you still need life insurance? If no one is depending on you financially, it may be safe to scale down and maintain a smaller policy and focus on



long-term care insurance instead.

But, you might also have good reasons to maintain status quo. For example, how big a hardship would it be for your spouse to lose your pension and Social Security benefits? Life insurance can help offset those losses and is useful in

helping inheritors pay taxes on a large estate. Or if you have a cash value policy, perhaps you have plans to leverage it as a source of supplemental retirement income.

Remember, life insurance doesn't need to be static. It can be adjusted to fit your changing

needs. For more tips, visit www.lfg.com. Additional information on the solutions available for meeting specific needs can be found at www.lfg.com/LIAM.

No matter your age, plan your legacy and have a clear idea of what to leave behind.

Ways to boost your brain health

(BPT) - When you think about health and wellness, what first comes to mind? Most likely it's along the lines of fitness, healthy eating and doctor's appointments. But have you ever considered the importance of brain health as you age?

According to the National Institute on Aging, research shows that a complex interaction between your DNA, diet, physical activity level, sleep quality and every other aspect of your environment affects your brain health and cognitive function. This means that your bad habits can trigger changes in your brain and contribute to the decline of your brain health.

Stay sharp as you age with these easy ways to boost your brain power:

*Eat brain food. While a good diet can improve your all-around health, certain foods keep your brain functioning optimally, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Some of these top "brain foods" include wild salmon, nuts and seeds, avocados, blueberries, dark chocolate and whole grains. Your brain loves both omega-3 essential fatty acids and anything with antioxidants.

*Exercise your brain. Your body isn't the only thing that needs exercise. Puzzles, brain teasers and games help create new associations within your brain to keep it fresh. As an added exercise, try completing everyday activities with your non-dominant hand, such as combing your hair and brushing your teeth.

*Continue to learn. The learning shouldn't stop once you leave school. Continue to try new activities and test your brain by reading, taking classes or learning a language. Keep your brain active by teaching it some new tricks.

*Take a well-rounded supplement. Your brain also requires a number of vitamins and minerals to function properly. For example, the three B vitamins (folic acid, B6 and B12) are all related to healthy brain function. Be sure you are getting enough of these essential vitamins and consider taking a supplement to boost your brain power even further. The ingredients in Proceera AVH promote blood and oxygen flow to the brain, support key neurotransmitters and provide neuroprotection. This helps support brain health and cognitive function. Maintaining brain health contributes to a well-balanced mind, body and spirit for an all-around healthier and more active lifestyle.

*Keep a sleep schedule. Not only is sleep fundamental for your keeping your physical body, but it has restorative properties for your brain as well. A good night's sleep helps you to look at problems in a new light and improves your ability to think creatively. If you're having trouble getting at least six hours of sleep per night, try ditching the technology before bed. Too much screen time before you rest your eyes reduces the quality of your sleep.

*Maintain your social calendar. Humans are social creatures who need a variety of brain stimulation to maintain a sharp mind, including social activity. This becomes especially relevant as you age and your neurological processes start to slow down. Socially active older adults are less likely to develop both cognitive and physical limitations. Try a weekly card game with friends or volunteer for a local organization to continue to get out and meet new people.

For more information on brain health, visit <http://www.proceera-health.com>.

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WONDERLAND from Page 2 A

an auction, a public breakfast, a chicken barbeque, a beauty pageant, a public supper and more. Last year, there was also a whoopie pie contest, a Rave X Outer Limits Freestyle Show, and fireworks. But the highlight of the fundraising event is the Egg Ride, during which local celebrities and other riders stuff raw

eggs into their snowmobile suits before making the trek from Levant to Newport. Each egg represents a donation pledge. Proceeds from the ride help send adults and children with disabilities to Pine Tree Camp each summer. For details about the 2016 event, visit www.pinetreesociety.org and click on Events.



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Heart yourself with Omega-3s



(BPT) - Across the globe, heart health is becoming a growing concern. In order to combat a rising epidemic of heart disease and other heart-related illnesses, more and more Americans are placing a greater emphasis on the critical role of nutrition and a balanced diet.

More than likely you've heard about the importance of a diet rich in Omega-3 fatty acids and its associated health benefits. However, despite this knowledge, it can be difficult to consume enough Omega-3s through diet alone. Knowing where to find the best sources of Omega-3s can be key to a heart-healthy lifestyle.

What are Omega-3s?

Omega-3 fatty acids are a form of polyunsaturated fat that helps support heart and joint health while maintaining healthy blood pressure levels. Considered "essential" because the body needs them to function but can't create them, Omega-3s must come from dietary sources like fatty fish, nuts or supplements such as krill oil. Unlike "bad" fats that can clog arteries and raise cholesterol, these "good" fats play a crucial role in reducing the risk of heart disease.

The benefits

In addition to supporting a healthy heart, here are just some of the great Omega-3 benefits: Supports healthy triglyceride levels, Supports eye health and vision, Supports healthy arteries, Important for cognitive (or brain) health, May support joint and bone health, Important for healthy skin

Omega-3 deficiency symptoms

It's also important to remember that the following symptoms may be caused by a lack of Omega-3s: Rough or dry, bumpy skin, Dry, dull, brittle hair and dandruff, Soft, peeling or brittle nails, Excessive thirst, Difficulty sleeping, Difficulty paying attention, Excessive mood swings, depression or unwarranted anxiety

Good sources of Omega-3

On average, Americans do not get enough Omega-3 fatty acids in their diet. Since Omega-3s are not produced naturally within the body, you can increase your daily intake with the following omega-rich foods and supplements:

Fatty fish (i.e., mackerel, herring, lake trout, salmon, anchovies and tuna), Walnuts, Flaxseeds, Dairy and Eggs, Supplements (i.e., MegaRed Krill Oil)

For those who can't or would rather not eat fish or the other food sources high in Omega-3s, supplements can be a great way to bridge nutrient gaps. Not all supplements are the same, so it's important to do your research and choose a product that has been clinically tested and proven to be beneficial. One supplement that has been proven to increase Omega-3 index within just 30 days is MegaRed Krill Oil because it's an easily absorbed Omega-3. Furthermore, MegaRed is sustainably sourced from Antarctic krill and has no fishy aftertaste, a side effect of some other Omega-3 supplements.

Consuming a balanced diet of healthy foods and supplementing that diet is the key to unlocking heart and overall health.

For more heart-healthy information, visit www.MegaRed.com.



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How to avoid or reduce illnesses this winter

by Sheila Grant

Fall is upon us, and flu season is not far behind. In addition to influenza, there are several other nasty bugs to watch out for these days. Luckily, there are also several simple precautions that can go a long way toward keeping you and yours healthy, including educating yourself to the risks and how to cut down those odds, and getting vaccinated.

While most influenza activity occurs from October to May in the United States, flu viruses are detected year-round, including during the summer months. Providers reported two positive rapid influenza tests, and one positive serology test in August in Maine. Summer and early fall are also the prime time for agricultural fairs, which provide an increased risk for variant influenza associated with swine contact, according to Kirsty Pratley,

RN CIC, the infection prevention and control coordinator for Mayo Regional Hospital in Dover-Foxcroft.

Upper respiratory infections (colds) are more common during winter. These viruses are spread in droplets from mouth and nose through coughing and sneezing. Pertussis (whooping cough), a bacterial infection, is also spread in the same way. Pertussis outbreaks have been on the increase over recent years, even in people who have received the vaccine.

Take steps now to avoid some of these illnesses later. Talk to your physician to see if a Pertussis booster vaccine is recommended. Because droplets spread these infections, it is also important to avoid spreading the droplets. "Cough or sneeze into the elbow or a tissue, throwing the tissue away and washing hands immediately," Pratley said. "It is also

important to avoid others who may be spreading these germs."

Noroviruses are also common during the winter months. Noroviruses wreak havoc on innocent digestive tracts, and then are easily passed along on the hands to other people, or live on surfaces that have been touched, or are transmitted to others during food preparation.

If that's not enough to make you want to hide under the covers indefinitely, Maine is also seeing an increase of drug resistant germs. Drug resistant germs are resistant to common antibiotics. As time goes on and antibiotics are used to treat infections, drug resistant germs continue to be created. Sometimes these germs can be carried in the body without causing a problem, but if the germ gets into a vulnerable area, for example under the skin or into the respiratory tract, a seri-

ous infection can follow. Because the germ can grow and thrive even when certain antibiotics are used to treat the infection, it can be extremely difficult to find an antibiotic which will treat the infection.

One of the types of bacteria that is resistant to many antibiotics is called MRSA, but Cloxacillin Resistant Enterococcus (CRE), Carbapenem Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) are also becoming a problem throughout the country. In Maine, hospitals report finding certain resistant germs when they are found in cultures taken from sick patients. According to the Maine Center for Disease Control, MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) used to be confined to hospitals but is now found throughout communities.

It would be difficult to distinguish MRSA from a typical staph infection visually, said CDC officials, noting that, "Anytime a skin infection is causing swelling, pain, redness, or heat, these are any type of puss or fluid, these are warning signs that you have a skin or soft tissue infection that needs to be seen by a provider." A culture can be taken to identify MRSA, and appropriate antibiotics may be prescribed. Staph infections are spread by direct skin-to-skin contact, or through contact with items like towels and athletic equipment.

"It's really important to understand that we use antibiotics to treat infections caused by bacteria, and those antibiotics are very specific in the way they work," said Pratley. "That's why, when people get a prescription for an antibiotic because they have an infection, they need to take it exactly as prescribed. If they stop taking the antibiotic before the course is finished, they risk creating resistance in the organism that is causing the infection."

The tick-borne diseases Anaplasmosis and Lyme disease are also on the rise in Maine. "These infections are caused by the black-legged tick," Pratley said. "They can be very serious, even fatal. Avoiding tick exposure is essential. Avoid contact with ticks. Wear repellent such as DEET. Stay covered, avoid wooded and brushy areas with tall grass and leaf litter, and check carefully for ticks when coming in from outdoors."

The CDC has good instructions on how to remove ticks, if found on the body, Pratley advised. "There are several different types of ticks, and not all of them make a person sick," she said. "Black-legged ticks have to stay on the body for a length of time in order to pass along the parasite that makes a person sick. Once you've removed the tick, give your doctor a call to discuss whether you may need treatment."

Have you been asked lately by a health care professional whether or not you've traveled, and where to? That's because hospitals nationwide are preparing to care for patients suffering a surge of infectious illness, including patients under investigation for Ebola. "Critical Access Hospitals are considered first-

line hospitals and will be responsible for recognizing persons under investigation for Ebola and then caring for these patients for 12-24 hours until they can be transferred to a different hospital," Pratley explained. "Currently, there are several layers of screening processes in place to prevent people with Ebola from coming to the state. In addition to Maine, and healthcare systems and providers throughout the state are also developing additional ways to screen patients as an extra layer of safety.

"If sick patients come to the Emergency Department or doctor's office seeking care for their symptoms, they are asked whether they have travelled within the past month or so," she continued. "Depending on the answer to that question, the healthcare facility may ask for additional information and/or separate that patient from others while determining if there is risk of exposure. Ebola is just one of many germs causing serious illness in the winter. Ease of travel has increased the spread of these germs. Healthcare systems throughout the country are working to be able to care for sick patients and contain the spread of infection, no matter what the germ is."

How to beat the bugs

Pratley's job is to look at ways that germs spread, especially in healthcare environments, and to figure out ways to break that "chain of infection." Many recommendations that shape hospital policy and procedure would also benefit the general public.

Frequent hand washing is a must. Use soap and wash for at least 15 seconds – about as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" all the way through once. Overall good hygiene will help, too, keeping skin clear of many bacterial colonies and/or infections. Don't share items such as towels or razors. Clean exercise equipment or other shared items (computers, telephones, etc.) frequently. Alcohol hand sanitizers work well, and can be used in place of hand washing when it's more convenient.

"One of the things that we learned from SARS is that much of transmission happened in doctor's offices because patients were coughing and sneezing," Pratley said. Those germs traveled to chairs, magazines, and to other patients. So the CDC developed "respiratory etiquette," she said. "If you have a runny nose or cough, and you cough on your hands, wash them immediately. Or cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Ideally, cough into a tissue, deposit it into the garbage and then wash your hands – also when you blow your nose – every time. If you have a cough or cold, you shouldn't be going anywhere to expose others. If that's impossible, respiratory etiquette can help to stop the spread."

Pratley said that large gatherings of people should avoid shaking hands during flu outbreaks, because a person does not always know when he is contagious. People should also learn to ask each healthcare provider if that

Continued on Page 11A

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Log on to www.frrh.org, www.kvhc.org, or www.pineshealth.org to take the survey. All members of the community are invited to take the survey and enter a drawing for a chance to win \$500 towards heating costs! **Hurry!** The survey ends on October 31st at 11:59 pm.

The Aroostook County Health Network (ACHN) will sponsor 3 drawings in the amount of \$500 each: for one community member in each service area. All participants must be 18 years or older to be eligible for the \$500 heating cost drawings. All participants must reside in Fish River Rural Health, Katahdin Valley Health Center, or Pines Health Services' service area to be eligible for the \$500 heating cost drawings.

ILLNESSES from Page 10A

person has washed his hands before allowing contact.

"Understandably, it's very difficult for patients to ask their healthcare providers if they've washed their hands," Pratley said. "We are constantly trying to find new ways to remind healthcare workers to wash their hands. We're all human and we sometimes forget things. But if the patient musters up the courage to ask, that is very, very good. It empowers the patient and hopefully the answer will be 'Yes,' but if not then it should be 'Thank you for reminding me.' Every patient deserves clean hands and every patient deserves clean equipment."

Following the steps above will cut down on illnesses. So will getting a flu vaccination.

Nationwide, it is estimated that about 35,000 die of flu each year, according to Maine CDC data. "The people at the highest risk are the elderly, the very young and those with underlying medical problems," said CDC officials. "The way we try

to prevent it is through immunizations. Each year for the last several years the groups recommended for vaccination have increased." In fact, everyone is encouraged to get vaccinated.

While "bird flu" and pandemic (worldwide) flu have not been mentioned as frequently in the media recently, Pratley said healthcare providers are planning for "when, not if" a pandemic flu strikes. She advised people to check the Maine CDC website for tips on how to prepare.

According to the Maine CDC, no one knows exactly when the next pandemic flu will strike. The last extremely severe flu occurred in 1918-1919, and like the "bird flu" of concern now, that flu was caused by an avian strain of influenza. About 5,000 people in Maine died. Nearly half of those deceased in the United States were young, healthy adults — many died within the first few hours of becoming ill.

For more information about pandemic flu and other health concerns, visit the CDC website at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/bol/>.

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KIRSTY PRATLEY, infection prevention and control coordinator at Mayo Regional Hospital in Dover-Foxcroft, provides tips on staying healthy this winter.



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Don't let winter make you SAD

by Sheila Grant

If the short, dark, cold days of winter leave you with less energy, more cravings for carbohydrates, and feeling grumpy or down in the dumps, you might have Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), or as it's now being called in the medical vernacular, Depressive Disorder with Seasonal Pattern. "It's more of a problem in northern latitudes," said Jean Hamlin, MD, a family doctor with Milo Family Practice. "Around five percent of Americans have symptoms in any year, but around 10 percent have symptoms in northern latitudes, and even more may not have clinical depression but could feel down."

Depression, seasonal or otherwise, is characterized by a depressed mood and a lack of interest in doing things. With SAD, people tend to want to sleep more, whereas those with other types of depression may suffer from insomnia. Any change in sleep patterns can be a symptom, however, as can changes in appetite. "With seasonal depression, we see people craving carbs and wanting to eat more," said Hamlin. "People can also sometimes gain weight with this, feel more irritable, have decreased energy, more difficulty concentrating, and can sometimes feel more down about themselves, with more guilt or lower self-esteem."

Cases of SAD can range from mild to severe, and there are a range of treatments to try depending on the severity of symptoms. "One is talking with your doctor about whether medication is appropriate for you," said Hamlin. "This is especially important if you are having any thoughts of suicide." In some cases, medication is taken only through the winter months and then doses are reduced until the patient is able to cease medication; in case of severe depression, it may be best for patients to remain on

medication, she said.

People with milder symptoms can take many steps to combat the winter blues. "One of the wonderful things we know works for seasonal depression is winter is light therapy, and that is especially appropriate if a patient is interested in it and doesn't have those severe symptoms such as thinking about suicide," Hamlin said. "Light therapy kind of gets at what we think might be causing seasonal depression." Current medical thinking is that the amount of light humans receive affects the levels of neural transmitters, such as serotonin, being actively used by the brain.

It has to be the right kind of light, however. "You can't get that from tanning – that's a myth," said Hamlin. "In fact, tanning can cause more harm because you're more likely to develop skin cancer." One reason that tanning is ineffective is that light must hit the retina of the eye in order to reduce seasonal depression, and the eyes must be covered during tanning for safety reasons. There are safe light therapy boxes available online and at stores such as Black Bear Medical in Portland and Bangor. Light therapy devices deliver 10,000 LUX of cool light. Patients using this treatment sit near the light (distance depends on light model) for about 30 minutes every day from October through March, doing normal activities such as eating breakfast or reading, so that eyes are open to receive the therapeutic rays. "If you find that you get depressed every fall and winter, you can use the light as a preventative measure," Hamlin said.

"Another therapy shown to be helpful is cognitive behavioral therapy, which focuses on changing your behaviors and changing your patterns of thought," said Hamlin. "That helps with any type of depression, including seasonal. The cornerstone of that is

planning fun activities for yourself. I think exercise is a great fun activity, especially if it helps you find ways to enjoy winter, such as skiing, skating – there are so many fun things we can do. That can be part of the treatment, too.

"As far as changing thought patterns, if you make one mistake and think you're a worthless person, for example, part of cognitive behavioral therapy is to learn to challenge that thought, put it into context, and see the good as well as the bad so that you don't become overwhelmed and just see the negative. People that have this type of therapy are also less likely to relapse."

Having a good social life is also helpful. "Being connected with other people socially is good for your mood," Hamlin said. "Getting out there with other people and planning activities you enjoy in winter, as well as in summer, is so important."

In fact, the link between sunlight, socialization, and physical activity is so important that the nonprofit suicide prevention organization, the JD Foundation, in Abbot, offers a Connecting with Nature program during which a registered guide takes groups of people hiking, kayaking, mountain climbing, snowshoeing, and for other outdoor excursions. The group is open to anyone, has had participants ranging from age 2 to 80-plus, and is especially good for those who might not feel confident venturing out by themselves. There is no fee, but donations are gratefully accepted. Call 343-1732 for more information.

And finally, while the jury is still out on the link between low vitamin D and depression, multi-

ple studies indicate that this may be a factor. Last year, researchers at the University of Georgia released findings that, among other things, noted that levels of vitamin D fluctuate with the changing seasons and in response to the available sunlight, and that a link between vitamin D levels and seasonal depression is logarithmic.

Dr. Hamlin said that vitamin D deficiency is a problem in northern climates, and that whether it's linked to depression or not, patients would be wise to talk to their doctors, get tested, and if found to be deficient, take a supplement to bring their vitamin D up to the recommended level.



DR. JEAN HAMLIN of Milo Family Practice provides advice to help patients beat the winter blues. (Contributed photo)

PENQUIS Job Opening

Life Skills Coordinator House Parent

Penquis, a social services agency serving Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Knox counties for over 45 years, is seeking candidates for the following open position.

A full-time 40 hours per week, Life Skills Coordinator to work at the Penquis Journey House (PJH), a maternity group home in Dexter, Maine.

The Life Skill Coordinator will provide case management services to homeless youth, conduct assessments, develop service plans and provide life skill training; collaborate with an existing network of providers; develop and maintain community outreach; collect data and maintain accurate records; assist with reporting requirements; work with a team of co-workers to oversee residents in the nurturing of their infants and/or young children and supports their efforts in learning proper self-care and gaining independence.

Required Qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in social work, health, child and family development or related field and one year related work experience. Must have a valid Driver's license and a licensed, registered and insured vehicle. Preference will be given to candidates with previous experience in a maternity group home setting.

Per Diem House Parents to work at the Penquis Journey House (PJH). Per Diem staff is called to work shifts as needed; which may involve a variety of hours, including a full time shift of two 24-hour shifts (32.5 paid hours – sleep time not paid).

The House Parent will provide in-home support to pregnant and parenting female residents, ages 16-21. They assist in the development of residents' individual service plans and provide the supervision needed to assure service plans are followed. The House Parent oversees residents in the nurturing of their infants and/or young children and supports their efforts in learning proper self-care and gaining independence. She will assist with the development of meal plans and meal preparation, assure that curfews and study times are followed, and assure resident safety. The House Parent will work with a team of co-workers to meet the various needs of the residents. Required Qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in social work, health, child and family development or related field and one year related work experience, OR high school diploma, training and education in adolescent behavior, family dynamics, child development and three years related work experience; knowledge and experience with healthy meal preparation, house cleaning, proper hygiene, and infant care; and a valid Driver's license and a licensed, registered and insured vehicle. Preference will be given to candidates with previous experience in a maternity group home setting. Position starts at \$11.64 an hour.

As required by business necessity, upon hire and periodically thereafter, must have clean background checks through the State Bureau of Investigation, Maine Department of Human Services, and the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Must not have an active record on the System for Award Management (SAM) website.

Penquis offers an excellent benefits package and competitive wages. An application form and job description are available from Penquis, 262 Harlow Street, P.O. Box 1162, Bangor, ME 04402-1162, Tel: 973-3500, TDD: 973-3520, from our offices in Lincoln, Rockland and Dover-Foxcroft, or you may apply online at www.penquis.org. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

In accordance with federal regulations, Penquis does not discriminate. Reasonable accommodation will be made for otherwise qualified persons with disabilities. Penquis is a tobacco and smoke free workplace.

www.penquis.org

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