

THE GUILFORD REGISTER

ADVENTURES & STORIES FROM THE MAINE HIGHLANDS



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CROSS COUNTRY SKI ADVENTURES

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WONDERFUL EXPLORATIONS ALL YEAR LONG

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RESOLUTION TO DO GOOD

By John McNamara

It is that time of year—the time when almost everyone makes promises to themselves. Pledges to eat better, drink less, exercise more, focus on family more—the list goes on and on. And every year, most of those pledges fail. It's not for a lack of trying, but for a lack of focus. It is so easy to say you will commit to something, but then never do it. Oftentimes, we claim that we're too busy, and there lies the problem. If we really want to make a change for the better, we have to make that pledge part of our routine.

I am just as guilty as the next person, or I was. I used to make all sorts of promises to myself—pledges to improve my life in some way. I did that for years, maybe even decades, before I realized I didn't need to define a promise at the start of the new year to improve my life or others'. I just needed to follow through with whatever pledge I made, whenever I made it.

Anyone who knows me well knows that I am always on the go—always staying busy. With that sort of lifestyle, it would be impossible to make a new or temporary pledge unless I figured out how to incorporate it into my already busy life. That is when I decided to make incremental changes throughout the year rather than scream some promise from the rooftops on January 1, only to give up on it by January 31.

As an example, instead of declaring on January 1st that I am going to stop drinking alcohol entirely, I might declare that I will reduce my alcoholic consumption by 50% in the coming year. Going cold turkey on something—anything—takes a lot of discipline, and not everyone has the capacity for such rigorous discipline. So, instead of setting myself up for failure before I even begin, I could set realistic goals—obtainable goals. Because, as I start to reach those goals more easily, I find, and you will too, that with more wins under my belt, I am more likely to continue to make more realistic goals, and before I know it, I might actually achieve all or most of what I set out to accomplish.

But to be honest, I am done with those simple promises to eat healthier, drink less, exercise more, etc. These days, my promises are bigger—focus on a larger audience, not just me. This year, I aim to do more good, and I strive to do that by getting more people to do good with me. If one of us does something good for someone else, that is great, but if hundreds or thousands or even millions of us were to do one good deed, or 10 for someone else, imagine the ripple effect of goodness—greatness that would be felt around the world.

It is not uncommon for me to pay for the car behind me in the drive-thru lane at any fast-food establishment (so much for the healthier eating pledge). I never know who that person is, or what kind of day or week they are having. I have no idea if they have more money than I do or anything about them, but I pay for their order, and they never get the chance to say thank you because that is not why I do it. I do it to be kind—to be good.

Recently, my wife and I went to a restaurant for dinner. Our son and his girlfriend were at a completely separate table, on a date. We knew they were there, and they saw us come in. We did not sit with them intentionally. They were on a date. After our

food was served, I told the waitress who we were (the parents of the boy in the booth across the room). While he was on a date with his girlfriend, we were going to pay their bill. No, that is not the special part of this story. We are his parents. We pay his bills all the time. It was what the waitress said next that almost brought tears to my eyes.

She said she could combine our two checks, but she wanted me to know that our son had already told her that he wanted to pay the bill for a man who sat alone in another booth in the restaurant. My son wanted to do a good deed. He was not looking for affirmations or thanks. He just wanted to do something good for someone else. Of course, we told the waitress to add that man's bill to ours, and after the man left, happy but confused about who had paid his bill, our son came over to thank us for paying his bill. We thanked him for being so sweet, kind, and generous. We need a lot more people like that in the world.

I am reminded of the movie *Pay It Forward*. It is a real tear-jerker and has an incredible message about how kind people can be when they want to be. In the world we live in today—so divisive, destructive, and dismantling, a movie like *Pay It Forward* is one we should all rewatch. A small action or decision can have quite the ripple effect. Pay for someone's meal, and they might follow and do the same for someone else. Of course, on the flipside, if you are abusive to someone, they might be abusive to another person. Good or bad, there is a ripple, and I think this world, our country, could use a lot more good ripples.

So, instead of promising to exercise more (which we should be doing anyway) or eat healthier (again, we should already be doing this), or whatever New Year's resolution you had planned to make this year, I encourage you to join me in doing a good deed for a stranger, or 10. Don't make big promises you know you will not keep. Just agree that in 2026 you will do more good, and if you live by that principle, you will find that you end up doing a lot more good for a lot more people than if you buy that new treadmill that becomes a clothes rack by February.

In 2025, I started Piscataquis Forward (it almost sounds like Pay it Forward) for the sole purpose of doing good. If you want to do good, join our cause. Help us help others. Help us do more good.



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Winter Wilderness: Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing in Piscataquis County

By John McNamara

Piscataquis County, Maine's second largest and least populated county, transforms into a winter wonderland that rivals any destination in the Northeast. With its vast forests, frozen lakes, and minimal light pollution, this remote corner of the Pine Tree State offers some of the most pristine and peaceful cross-country skiing and snowshoeing experiences imaginable. Here are the best adventures waiting for you in this snowy paradise.

Often called the "Grand Canyon of Maine," Gulf Hagas takes on an otherworldly beauty in winter. This rugged gorge along the West Branch of the Pleasant River features dramatic ice formations, frozen waterfalls, and snow-draped cliffs, creating a spectacular winter landscape. The roughly eight-mile loop becomes a challenging snowshoeing adventure when covered in snow, requiring proper winter gear and navigation experience.

The trail follows the rim of the gulf, offering stunning views of ice-covered cascades like Screw Auger Falls and Buttermilk Falls. The combination of evergreen forests, dramatic geology, and the sound of water rushing beneath ice creates an unforgettable wilderness experience. Due to its remote location and winter difficulty, you'll likely have this natural wonder largely to yourself.

Located on the eastern shore of Moosehead Lake, Lily Bay State Park offers more than 8 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails suitable for skiers of all skill levels. The park's trails wind through mixed forests of spruce, fir, and hardwoods, with occasional glimpses of massive Moosehead Lake through the trees.

The relatively gentle terrain makes this an excellent destination for families or those new to Nordic skiing. On clear days, you can see Mount Kineo rising from the frozen lake, creating picture-perfect views that capture the essence of Maine's North Woods. The park also maintains snowshoe-friendly trails, and the quieter paths away from the groomed ski trails offer opportunities to spot wildlife tracks and perhaps even see moose, deer, or foxes.

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument encompasses more than 87,000 acres of forests, rivers, and mountains in the shadow of Mount Katahdin. The monument offers exceptional opportunities for adventurous winter explorers, with miles of ungroomed trails perfect for backcountry skiing and snowshoeing.

The Loop Road, which is closed to vehicles in winter, becomes a premier Nordic skiing route spanning 16 miles through pristine wilderness. Skiers can access side trails leading to frozen waterfalls, overlooks with views of Katahdin, and remote ponds where silence is broken only by the wind through the trees. This is true wilderness skiing that requires self-sufficiency and winter-camping skills for those undertaking longer expeditions.

The monument's diverse terrain ranges from gentle valley floors to challenging ascents, accommodating everyone from casual snowshoers to experienced backcountry skiers seeking multi-day adventures.

Little Moose Public Reserved Land is a 22,000-acre state-owned parcel northeast of Greenville that offers an excellent network of trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The

terrain ranges from easy lakeside routes to more challenging mountain trails, offering options for visitors regardless of fitness level or experience.

The North and South peaks of Little Moose Mountain offer rewarding snowshoe climbs with panoramic views of the surrounding lakes and forests. On clear days, you can see Mount Katahdin to the northeast and the Longfellow Mountains to the west. The lower elevation trails follow old logging roads through mature forests, where the snow-muffled quiet creates a meditative atmosphere perfect for unwinding from daily stress.

For those seeking a shorter but rewarding adventure, Borestone Mountain provides one of the finest snowshoeing experiences in the county. The roughly four-mile round trip to the summit takes you through varied ecosystems, from hardwood forests to boreal spruce-fir zones near the top.

The summit rewards your effort with 360-degree views encompassing dozens of lakes, endless forests, and distant mountains. Two small ponds near the summit often freeze with crystal-clear ice, creating natural skating rinks surrounded by dramatic cliffs. The Audubon Sanctuary's visitor center at the base provides trail information and wildlife education, though winter visitors should be prepared for self-guided adventures.

Winter travel in Piscataquis County requires serious preparation. Temperatures regularly drop below zero, and snow depths can exceed several feet. Always check weather forecasts and carry emergency gear, including extra layers, fire-starting materials, and navigation tools. Cell phone service is unreliable or nonexistent in many areas, so don't depend on it for safety.

The town of Greenville serves as the primary base for exploring the region, offering lodging, restaurants, and outdoor gear shops. Local knowledge is invaluable—stop by area businesses for current trail conditions and recommendations.

Whether you're gliding along groomed trails at Lily Bay or breaking trail through the backcountry of Katahdin Woods and Waters, Piscataquis County delivers authentic Maine winter experiences. The combination of stunning scenery, abundant snow, and genuine wilderness makes it a destination worth the journey for any Nordic skiing or snowshoeing enthusiast.





THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROJECT

JOHN McNAMARA

Over the past year, I have had the pleasure of meeting dozens of historians across Piscataquis County. I call them historians, even if they might not be, because each of them has taken on the responsibility of ensuring that the past lives on in their town—that they collect everything they can that represents their town since the beginning. These historians are members of the various historical societies throughout Piscataquis County. Over the last twelve months, the historical societies from Guilford, Dover-Foxcroft, Parkman, Greenville, Milo, Monson, Abbot, Brownville, Newport, Shirley, and Dexter shared their story with me—with all of us, giving us all an opportunity to learn more about what they do and how they do it. Many of them have public museums, yet many struggle to increase membership each year.

I visited each and explored the different museums, enjoying a journey back in time. I was impressed by the amount of information, artifacts, and trinkets each historical society had collected over the decades. I became very aware of the important role these organizations play in their towns. One year ago, I wrote an article about the importance of these historical societies—how they are crucial for younger generations to learn about the struggles, rewards, and challenges their ancestors faced. It was important to me back then not only to know about the new part of the world I moved into, but also to bring light to these organizations and the work they do, and I am not done.

This coming year, I am hopeful that more historical societies will want to share their story with us and grant us access to their trove of artifacts from a bygone era. More importantly, I am hopeful that we can continue to impress upon everyone, old and young alike, just how important it is that these historical societies survive—and even thrive. And that brings me to another initiative that Piscataquis Forward is undertaking. But, for this next one to be successful, it will take a lot more than just me and the organizations doing the work. For this new initiative to work, we need younger generations to stand up and get involved.

Starting in 2026, and hopefully continuing for many years, I challenge high school students across Piscataquis County to collaborate with elderly folks in their communities and interview them through a program I am calling **Story Bridge**.

Story Bridge is a new initiative from **Piscataquis Forward** that aims to connect high school students with elderly community members to preserve the living history of our towns through recorded oral interviews. This intergenerational program pairs the energy and technical skills of youth with the irreplaceable memories and experiences of our senior citizens, creating a powerful partnership that benefits everyone involved.

Our elders hold decades of knowledge about how our towns have transformed—the businesses that once lined Main Street, the traditions that shaped community life, the challenges overcome, and the moments of triumph celebrated together. Without intentional preservation, these stories fade with each passing generation. The **Story Bridge** mission is to ensure that the voices of those who built and shaped our communities are captured in digital format and archived at our town's historical societies, where they become accessible resources for future generations.



For students, this program offers more than community service hours. They will develop interviewing skills, learn local history firsthand, and form meaningful relationships across generational divides. For seniors, this provides an opportunity to share their legacy and feel valued for their contributions. Together, these generations will create a richer, more complete historical record than any textbook could provide—one that captures the authentic voices, emotions, and perspectives that bring our town's stories to life.

To learn more about **Story Bridge**, and to get involved, visit the website at www.piscataquisforward.org/story-bridge.

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THE ABSTRACT LANDSCAPES OF MONSON ARTIST, ROBERTA JARVIS

By John McNamara

I spent almost 20 years completely immersed in the art world. I have loved the art world for a long time, but it was these two decades where I really got to see behind the curtain. Between running galleries on two coasts and hosting pop-up art events, staging public art spaces, and attending annual Open Studio tours of artists, my eyes have always been filled with color and creativity.

My favorite part of the art world is getting to know the artist and understanding why and how they create their work. Sure, I get a high-level view when an artist comes to my gallery or I see them at an open studio, but it's the one-on-one sessions between me and the artist in their space—their sanctuary—that I enjoy the most. While it has been a few years since I had such an opportunity, I recently had the good fortune of spending a morning with Monson artist Roberta Jarvis.

Originally from Massachusetts, Roberta and her musician husband now call what was once their winter house their full-time home. It started with them coming to Monson many years ago and owning an antique shop in downtown Monson. The quaint shop was the perfect place for Roberta to showcase her own art among the antiques and other collectibles they sold before closing and selling the building to the Libra Foundation. That building is now gone, replaced with a more sound structure that houses the Gascoine Pottery Studio & Gallery.

Sitting along Lake Hebron, their home offers a majestic view of the water from the kitchen. Sitting at her kitchen table, looking out, I was taken back to my childhood and my grandparents' house in Massachusetts, which also overlooked a pond and provided stunning views. From where we sat, the morning we met, it was clear where Roberta found some of her inspiration. The trees, the sky, the lake... a perfect combination for landscape painting, even if Roberta does not consider herself a landscape painter.

Following her brother to college, Roberta attended the Montserrat School of Visual Art, now known as Montserrat College of Art, where she studied art. She did not become an art teacher after college, but instead worked a few regular jobs, like many of us do in our lifetime, and she always made sure to leave time for her art. It was her passion, and she was not going to let work get in the way of her creativity.

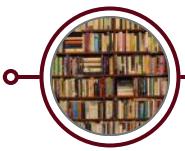
"I knew that I fell somewhere in the middle of being a crummy artist and a master artist, and once I figured that out, I realized that I could paint whatever I wanted."

Trust me when I say that Roberta is far from a 'crummy' artist. Her works are alive and stunning—beautiful layers of activity to stimulate every viewer's imagination.

When discussing why she did not think she would or could be a master artist, Roberta made it clear... she did not want to jump through all the hoops. That was a wise decision on her part. Jumping through hoops or focusing on the business side of art

(ROBERTA, continued on page 9)





THE LIBRARY SHELF

SHORT STORIES & CHAPTERS WRITTEN BY MAINE AUTHORS

Each month we will highlight a short story or serial written by a Maine author. If you are a Maine writer, or know of one who would like to be showcased here, reach out to us at john@genthnerhousepublishing.com

NECCO WAFERS, AMEN

By Dana Green

My baby brother stared up at me with those big brown eyes and his toe-head hair cut. He had a major development flustering about between his ears that caused him to choke out his words. I could read him like a book. At that very moment you've thought he either had a spider creeping inside his undershorts, or he found a dead relative under his bed.

"Dana ... Emm. I don't want to ... I mean I need to ..." stammered little brother, Glenn.

"Spit it out, little brother. Do you need to go pee?"

"No."

"Then, what is it?"

"Mom says, I need to be the next one up."

"Whataya mean?"

"I need to be your replacement for Fr. Rancourt."

"Oh. The next servant to the Lord of Higher Expectations."

"Yup. His new Saturday night and Sunday morning altar boy," said a tearful Glenn.

"Hold on. You do Saturday one week and then Sunday the next week. Got it?"

Wiping away tears with both hands, "Oh. That will be better. I think."

I sat my little brother down and explained that Kevin, the other altar server with five years under his robe belt, and I would tutor little brother "the ropes" of being a golden tray holder, bell ringer and smiling servant of the Lord. He seemed most grateful for the offer, but I was hesitant to ask the dreaded next question. He had that look in his glazed over eyes. What now, little brother?

"It's about the wafers," said Glenn.

"What about 'em?" I asked.

"What happens if one falls on my dish? You know ... when I'm holding it under their chins? Do I touch it? Put back in the person's mouth? Hand it to Father Rancourt? What do I do?"

"Hold on there. This is a delicate question."

"Sorry."

"Look you leave whatever falls on your golden dish. Fr. Rancourt will take care of it after the processional of Jesus patrons finish getting their Holy wafers deposited on their lizard tongues."

I could tell he had another thought. A "rookie" question most likely. "Anything else?"

"Emm. Did you practice getting your "wafer"—you know the "host"—from Fr. Rancourt on your tongue?"

"Why? In the name of God. Do you ask such a thing?"

"Well, I think my inexperienced tongue might miss it — and it will land on the tray of slimy horrors or God forbid it lands smack up on the floor," said a flustered Glenn.

"I will practice it with you. You will be a first-rate wafer taker when I'm done with you," I said.

The next day I bought a package of Necco wafers. I got little brother to open his mouth and stick out his nervous wiggling tongue. I place the wafer dead center of its landing spot and told him to close his eyes and say the Lord's Prayer. By the time he finished his prayer the wafer had melted, and he tasted the essence of the Holy Spirit of Oliver Chase.

Who was Oliver Chase you ask? Little brother, Glenn Allen, asked me that very same question. So, I offered up the following historical fiction tale to calm his anxious mind as I tucked him in bed.

#

"Glenn, my altar brother in training. I got a story to tell you. When you get nervous during Fr. Rancourt's pontificated church services remember this high faultin fable."

"Let me see— Oh, yeah, last summer my Smithsonian Magazine on the history of candy making had a lip smacking 'Jim Dandy' of a story. In 1847, twenty-six-year-old Oliver Chase placed on the pinkish tongue of his brother, Daniel, a corn syrup, sugar wafer. His younger brother, Daniel, got his first taste of a round candy that Oliver had been making in small batches in the family kitchen."

"Mmm. That tastes good," said Daniel.

"Yeah, everybody loves chocolate," said Oliver.

"What else you got?" he asked.

"So far, I got lemon, chocolate, licorice, orange, and pink."

"Geez. That is great. Can I try all of those?"

"Sure. Close your eyes. I will give you one wafer ... one at a time. Let 'em melt in your mouth. No chewing. Got it?"

"Yeah. Both eyes ... gotta 'em shut tight," said hungry Daniel.

"Daniel, tell me what they taste like? One at a time."

#

I told Glenn of how... Oliver had plans to add clove-purple, cinnamon-white, and lime-green to the mix for an eight-color pack. His rainbow of colors would be brown, yellow, pink, orange, white, black, green, and purple. Everybody would have favorites.

Glenn was getting the gist of things, so I continued.... "By Oliver's thirty-eighth birthday he still had one production problem to overcome. He could not make enough wafers. Making them one at a time in small cap-like shapes on baking sheets caused most of his candies to have non oval shapes and various thicknesses. He needed to solve the production problem before his brother's favorite candies could be sold in general stores.

Oliver invented a lozenge cutting machine to produce his "magic tasting wafers." His first name for his candy snacks was called "hub wafers." They were popular with the Union soldiers in 1861 to the end of the war in 1865. When Union soldiers got home after the war, the candy became a general store counter favorite. That was not the first time that happened. During World War II, the wafer candies were supplied to soldiers fighting in Europe. The soldiers would give the candies to children when a town or village became liberated by the Allied Forces from German control. After the war ended, the state side former soldiers seeked out the Necco wafers. Sales of the wafers hit an all-time high."

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(NECCO, continued on page 10)



THE SOUTHERN BELLE

LISA McNAMARA

What's New About a New Year?

A New Year is here, and for me, the arrival has come at a much faster pace than I would like. The celebration of a New Year makes me all too aware of time. So I always celebrate with a bit of trepidation. I become aware of the time that has passed and how much time is ahead. A new year brings a promise of good things, good changes, this is the year I will get in shape, I will eat healthy foods, basically I plan to give all my bad habits and become a better version of me (BTW my vices are drinking wine, online shopping, and sometimes dangerously doing both at the same time... that is no good). But a new year also brings a bit of dread: What if this is the year I get a terrible medical diagnosis, or worse, it happens to a loved one!?!? Or what if this is the year that "X" happens, something so terrible I have a fear of naming it!! And when am I going to remember to change the year when dating things? I have had this same thought process as long as I can remember. I usually settle into the year around mid-February, realizing it's a new year and I am still the same me. It's a new year, but nothing has really changed. We carry on just as we did the previous twelve months; all the excitement and dread were not necessary.

I have a theory about why time seems to pass so quickly as we get older. It's because, as adults, we constantly plan and anticipate the future. Whether it is scheduling an appointment, a work commitment, a holiday, or something we are dreading, we are always looking ahead... It's only January, and I've already mapped out the next six months of my life. It's the beginning of the year, and I am already halfway to 2027. I am living in the future and missing the here and now. No wonder I feel like I am on a bullet train, with my life flying past me. My sixteen-year-old son doesn't have a clue what's going to happen until the moment arises; what to wear? What to eat? What is he going to do? It always plays out spontaneously. He is very much living in the moment. He has a trust and belief that all will be well, and there is no need to think too far ahead and anticipate what "might happen".



So maybe I will make a new New Year's resolution and really become a better version of myself. I want to make a point to live in the moment, stop worrying about time, stop thinking about what's going to happen, and enjoy what is happening, and maybe time will slow down. There is a Bible verse that says you must live like a child to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I wonder if that verse is telling me, live like a child, to trust and have faith that all WILL be well!

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Winter Adventures at Mount Kineo: A Guide to Maine's Frozen Gem

By John McNamara

Rising 700 feet above the frozen expanse of Moosehead Lake, Mount Kineo stands as one of Maine's most distinctive winter destinations. This dramatic cliff of rhyolite, jutting into the state's largest lake, transforms into a crystalline wonderland when temperatures drop and snow blankets the trails. For those willing to embrace the challenges of winter hiking, Mount Kineo offers solitude, stunning views, and a truly memorable outdoor experience.

While Mount Kineo attracts steady foot traffic during summer months, winter visitors often find themselves exploring the mountain in near-complete solitude. The seasonal closure of the boat shuttle service naturally limits access, creating an exclusive atmosphere that appeals to adventurous souls seeking quiet communion with nature. The reward for this extra effort is substantial: panoramic views across Moosehead Lake's frozen surface, ice-draped cliffs catching the low winter sun, and the kind of pristine silence only found in deep winter.

The mountain's geological character becomes even more pronounced in winter. The massive rhyolite cliff face, one of the largest formations of its kind east of the Mississippi, develops spectacular ice formations. The trails that wind through mixed hardwood and conifer forests take on a magical quality, with snow-laden branches creating natural archways and the crunch of snow underfoot providing a rhythmic soundtrack to your ascent.

Accessing Mount Kineo in winter requires thoughtful planning. The peninsula location that makes the mountain so visually striking also creates logistical challenges when the boat shuttle stops running. Winter hikers have two primary options, each with distinct considerations.

The ice crossing is perhaps the most direct but demands serious safety awareness. When Moosehead Lake freezes solidly, typically by mid-January, crossing from Rockwood becomes possible. However, ice conditions must be verified locally before attempting this route. An ice thickness of at least four to five inches is generally considered safe for foot travel, but conditions vary across the lake. Local outfitters and the Moosehead Lake Region Chamber of Commerce can provide current ice reports. Never assume the ice is safe based solely on temperature or appearance.

The alternative land route involves hiking from Rockwood around the shoreline, adding several miles to your journey. While longer, this approach eliminates ice-safety concerns and offers its own scenic rewards along the lake's edge. Many winter visitors consider the extended approach part of the adventure rather than an inconvenience.

Mount Kineo offers several trail options, with the Indian Trail and Bridle Trail being the most popular. In winter, trail conditions can vary dramatically depending on recent weather, snowfall amounts, and how many hikers have packed down the route.

The Indian Trail, the most direct route to the summit, becomes significantly more challenging in winter. Its steep sections can develop icy conditions requiring microspikes or crampons for safe passage. The trail gains elevation quickly through mixed forest, and the rhyolite outcroppings that provide natural steps in summer can become treacherous when iced over.



The Bridle Trail offers a gentler grade and may be preferable for those carrying heavy winter packs or less experienced in technical winter hiking. This longer route winds more gradually through the forest, though it still requires proper traction devices and winter hiking experience.

Snow depth varies considerably throughout the season. Early winter may offer packed snow suitable for microspikes alone, while mid-season conditions often call for snowshoes. Late winter can present a challenging mix of crusty snow, ice, and occasional bare patches.

Winter ascents of Mount Kineo demand proper equipment and clothing. The exposed summit, while offering magnificent views, can be brutally cold when the wind sweeps across the frozen lake. Layered clothing systems are essential, including a warm base layer, insulating mid-layers, and a windproof outer shell.

Traction devices are non-negotiable. Microspikes work well on packed snow and ice, while snowshoes become necessary in deeper, unconsolidated snow. Many experienced winter hikers carry both, switching as conditions dictate. Trekking poles provide valuable stability on descents and when crossing uncertain terrain.

Given winter's abbreviated daylight, a headlamp is essential even for day hikes. What seems like ample time in the morning can quickly evaporate if you encounter unexpected trail conditions or want to linger at the summit. Pack extra food and water, remembering that hydration systems can freeze. Insulated bottles or keeping water close to your body heat prevent this problem.

Reaching Mount Kineo's summit in winter delivers a uniquely powerful experience. The observation tower, if accessible, provides 360-degree views across the frozen lake toward distant mountains. On clear days, visibility extends for miles, with the white expanse of Moosehead Lake creating a stunning contrast against evergreen forests and blue sky.

The summit's exposure means breaks should be brief unless you're prepared for extended cold exposure. Many hikers find a sheltered spot just below the summit to enjoy lunch and warm drinks before making the final push to the top for photographs and views.

Winter hiking at Mount Kineo isn't for everyone, and that's precisely what makes it special. The extra planning, gear requirements, and physical demands filter out casual visitors, rewarding those who make the effort with an experience of rare beauty and solitude. For winter outdoor enthusiasts seeking adventure beyond the ordinary, Mount Kineo stands ready to deliver.

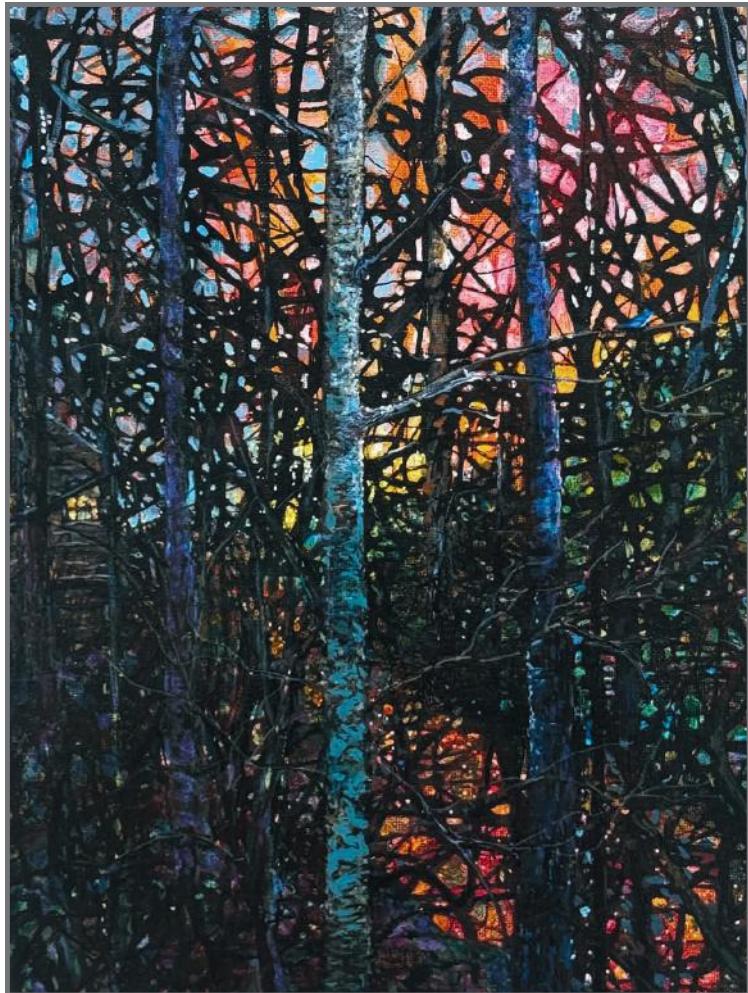
(ROBERTA, continued from page 5)

making is what usually takes the joy out of painting. Many artists I have met over the years have told me the same thing, but they took the leap and jumped through the hoops. Not Roberta. Instead, she adhered to her beliefs and her dedication to her art, opting to forgo the business side of the art world and focus solely on painting.

Of course, she tried it—the business side. She had to try it so she could be certain that she was not interested in that side of the art world. She wanted to paint—to create amazing works of art, which she has done. She watched so many of her artist friends try to balance art making and art selling (the business side of the job), and while some succeeded, most still struggle with that balancing act today. For those friends, they are still trying to find peace in art making, unlike Roberta, who found it decades ago.

Coming to this realization does not mean that Roberta turned away from the business side of art making. Every so often, she dipped back into that world, almost checking to see if she had made the right decision all along. She had. She discovered that she did not need a gallery, social media, or even a website to sell her art. Her art sold itself. Roberta would take a piece of art to a show or a gallery, and if they liked it, great; they would take it and most likely sell it. If they did not like it or her art, she moved on. She did not create what the gallery wanted—that is not how she creates art.

(JARVIS, continued on page 11)



PISCATAQUIS
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THE WRITER'S CORNER

INTERVIEWS WITH MAINE AUTHORS

Each month we will highlight a Maine author. If you are a Maine author, or know of one who would like to be showcased here, reach out to us at john@genthnerhousepublishing.com.

A CONVERSATION WITH DANA GREEN

When did you first know that you wanted to write, and when did you discover that you were good at it? I always enjoyed writing my speeches and talks that I created for medical meetings and patient education sessions during my medical career. I wrote short stories for myself for several years. Once I retired I expanded my writing to historical fiction, humor, crime-mysteries and thrillers with a twist of Maine humor.

If you could sit down with one other writer, living or dead, who would you choose, and what would you ask them? Ernest Hemingway. I would like to talk to him about how he did his first draft and then how long it took him to go back and do his editing. I am talking about his short story writing, not his newspaper writing. I have several war time questions for him and few on fishing!

How would you describe your writing style/genre? I am a historical fiction and mystery writer at heart. I am entertained by my stories as I create them. I find joy, humor, and mystery during drafting of a short story. Notetaking during research phase and transcribing of my thoughts usually results in a rough idea of where the story is headed. My stories always surprise me. They have twists and turns that were unexpected. That is the fun of writing.

What was your first published work? Tell us a little about it. A western short story in *Frontier Tales: The Anderson Gang*. It is a 7,000 word old time 1860's era western with lots of bad guy. I created two unlikely brothers who survived a family tragedy to become U.S. Marshals. They track down the killers in traditional old time manner on horseback. Lots of gunfights and saloon action.

Have you ever taken a trip to research a story? Tell us about it. I have been out west to Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado and other midwestern regions. During our trips I recorded the environment (landscape, ranches, plants, mountains and dialect of the folks living there). It all helps when the time comes to write, I rode horses to get a feel for the rides and the ground cover. I even stayed for a week at a John Wayne ranch in Utah where several of his westerns were filmed. I rode on the same ground that he made his movies with Director John Ford (Ford is a native Mainer).

How long on average does it take you to write a book? I am a short story writer. I have currently compiled two books of short stories based on twin San Franciscan Monks who run a detective agency. I have a book of memoirs completed. A book of westerns is being finished. I have over 100 short stories in my bank of stash and growing every week.

What was the most valuable piece of advice you've had from an editor? Don't limit yourself. Expand your ideas.

Why did you choose to write in your particular field or genre? If you write more than one, how do you balance them? I usually have three to four stories being drafted, edited and researched at any given week. I mixes things up and keeps it interesting.

Are you a full-time or part-time writer? How does that affect your writing? I am retired. I fish. I cook. I write. I read. I watch a lot of mysteries and western movies.

What advice do you wish you'd had before releasing your first story? Be patient. Start writing two to three hours a day. Limit your writing time. Let the first draft sit for a week or two and then read it out loud and make changes.

If you could choose three authors to invite for a dinner party, who would they be, and why? Robert Parker, Kurt Vonnegut, Mark Twain. They would be great fun to talk shop with.

What are you working on now, and what's coming out next? Tell us about it! I just finished a 16,000 word first draft of a western, working on three mysteries, a historical fiction piece on a Maine Civil War General (it was just completed by request), finished a piece for a cancer newsletter about my therapy dog, working on a fantasy Christmas story and a fiction murder mystery based in Greenville, Maine. Never a dull moment.

(NECCO, continued from page 6)

"Big Brother, you're a long-winded farmer if I ever heard one!" said Glenn with a new confidence.

"Yeah, you are right. I got grandpa's genes"

"Jeans? You mean overalls, big brother," said Glenn.

"Okay, Glenn Allen. Time to get you and your Superman pj's in dreamland. Tomorrow, after supper we start bell ringing lessons."

"Cool. Do I get sheet music training?"

"Okie Dokie wise guy. Go to sleep. Oh and – don't you dream about that old tongue flapping Ms. Jenkins. She tends to drool on the plate and you gotta clean it up!" *The End*

Epilogue

In 1850, Oliver Chase's lozenge business transitioned into the first candy factory in Boston. It became possible after he created a machine to pulverize sugar. With the help of his two brothers, Daniel and Silas, the three of them founded Chase and Company. It became known as New England Confectionery Company (NECCO).

Younger candy loving brother Daniel created a printed heart shaped candy. It would become known as Sweethearts Conversation Hearts.

Oliver Chase retired from the candy business in 1888, and he died in 1902. Legend has it, brothers, Daniel and Silas placed a chocolate wafer on Oliver's tongue and a roll of Necco wafers in each of his hands in his burial casket. He had a sweet tooth to the very end.

Now, after decades as an artist, Roberta has amassed a collection of work, and her home is a gallery in its own right. I enjoyed the private tour during our interview. I got to enjoy the art from her perspective—through her eyes, and it was beautiful. Throughout my art career, I have always enjoyed looking at art while listening to the artist discuss their method, state of mind, or life experiences that inspired the work I was studying. Sure, art is often left to the viewer to interpret, but hearing the artist speak is like the words—the journey—are part of the artwork itself, which is so beautiful.

An extensive collection of Roberta's work now hangs in the Gallery Store in Monson, where art lovers and buyers can view the vibrant colors and diverse styles of Roberta's work. Before the Gallery Store, Monson Arts hosted a show for Roberta, where she sold some of her work to the leaders of the Libra Foundation. This very organization helped revitalize Monson and make it the arts destination it is today.

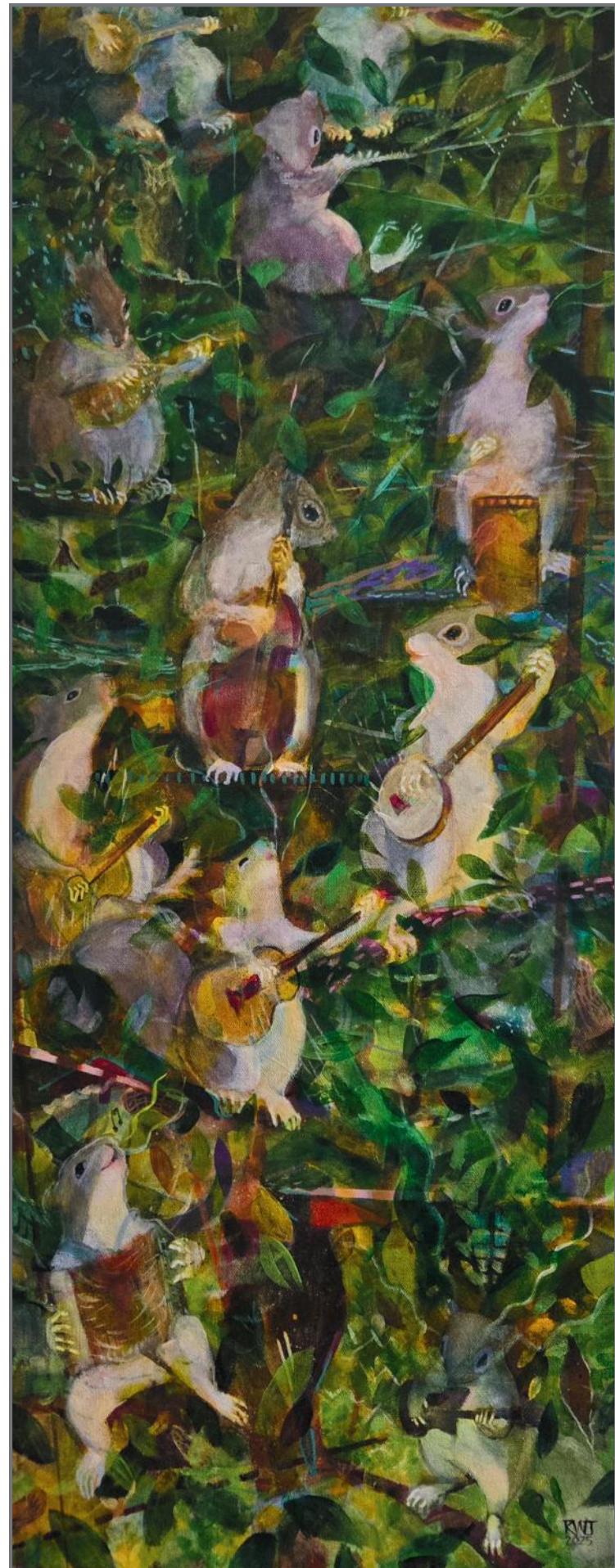
However, before her work was displayed at the Gallery Store, Roberta had already sold some of her pieces to Jerry Weist, a science fiction and comic art expert, author, collector, and artist, as well as his wife. That sale marked the beginning of a long working relationship, during which Roberta gained extensive exposure to the business side of the art world. She thoroughly enjoyed that experience and learned a great deal from Jerry, but ultimately Roberta just wanted to paint, as many artists do.

As we wrapped up the tour of her home and private art gallery, I was struck by how grounded Roberta is, both as a person and as an artist. She paints what she wants, what she feels, what she sees around her. She does not paint to meet a quota set by some gallery hoping to profit from Roberta's labor. Instead, she paints for herself—remains true to herself. And that, as I have learned, is her secret—her key to selling.

Her brother created a Facebook page for Roberta once, but given how complicated Facebook can be, she never got into it—never populated it. She never set up a website, either. Instead, this lovely, talented artist sits in her studio, painting what she enjoys. She takes progress photos of her work so she can see how she evolves as a painter each time, and also how her artwork evolves. Each piece has so many layers. She walked me through one piece that she was working on in her glass-enclosed studio. It is a large, abstract landscape, and listening to Roberta talk about each layer was like listening to a wonderful audiobook while watching the almost-finished piece before me.

And, while I cannot confirm that Roberta will give you the fantastic private tour that I received, the single best way to experience art is through the artist. So, in the meantime, make a trip to the Monson Gallery Store and ask to see Roberta's collection. If you are lucky enough, you might get to see Donald, Roberta's larger-than-life painting of a squirrel. For nature lovers, Roberta's abstract landscapes offer a beautiful interpretation of the wonder and wildlife of central and northern Maine.

The Monson Gallery Store
8 Greenville Road, Monson, ME 04464





LOCAL EVENTS

THINGS TO DO IN THE MAINE HIGHLANDS

Each month we will highlight a Maine artist or art gallery. If you are a Maine artist or art gallery, or know of one who would like to be showcased here, reach out to us at john@genthnerhousepublishing.com

WILDERNESS SLED DOG RACE

WEBERNESS 32
February 7, 2026

Join us for an Iconic 60-mile and 35-mile races, a 4-mile four-dog sprint, plus our 1-dog skijor races in the scenic Moosehead Lake region. Take the challenge and run on some of the most beautiful trails in the Northeast, or come out to cheer on the mushers!

Learn more at www.100milewildernessrace.org

PISCATAQUIS RADAR RUN

FISCAL ACQUISITION
February 28, 2026

Get ready for the thrill of the speed trap! We are back for our 5th Annual Radar Run on February 28th, and it's going to be our biggest year yet. Whether you're looking to set a new personal best or just want to see what your machine can do, this is the place to be. Join us at the Charles A. Chase Jr. Memorial Field in Dover-Foxcroft, starting at 7AM.

Learn more at www.centralmaineracingfoundation.com

MAINE MAPLE SUNDAY

MAINE MATE LUNCH
March 21-22, 2026

Maine maple producers will be hosting the 43rd annual Maine Maple Sunday weekend. Spring is a great time to get out and enjoy the great State of Maine and everything that it has to offer, including Maine Maple Syrup. Most sugarhouses offer maple syrup samples and demonstrations on how pure Maine maple syrup is made.

Learn more at www.mainemapleproducers.com

MOOSEHEAD MARATHON

MOOSEHEAD
April 26, 2026

Run through the heart of Maine's wilderness and discover what you're truly made of. Moosehead Marathon and Half awaits you on April 26, 2026. Join us for a race through one of Maine's most picturesque regions—the heart of Greenville, along the stunning shores of Moosehead Lake. Whether you're racing the full marathon or the half, this event will take you on a memorable journey through scenic landscapes and charming local landmarks.

Learn more at www.mooseheadmarathon.com

PISCATAQUIS FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays in June - August, 2026

Whether you live in Piscataquis County or are traveling through, you will want to stop at the Piscataquis Farmers Market in Guilford. With upwards of 40 farmers and artisan vendors offering fresh fruit and veggies, meats, cheeses and so much more. Enjoy this outdoor market along the Piscataquis River. Learn more at: www.piscataquismarket.com

Piscataquis RIVER. Learn more at: www.piscataquisforward.org/farmers-market

RIVERFEST

RIVERFEST
July 25, 2026

Join us for a day filled with live music, craft vendors, fun activities for the kids, an expanded beer garden, a community run, fireworks, and so much more. It all kicks off with the annual town parade. Come for the fun, stay for the friendships. Learn more and sign up at:

