

# Machias Valley News Observer



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## Up, Up and Away

Meticulously researched and restored with copper roofing and authentic weathervane, the belvedere of Liberty Hall rises to its original position at the top of the building.

MVNO photo

## Holiday Tea Planned to Join Hospital Factions

Jones Outlines Proposed DECH Structural Changes

by Ruth Leubecker

As Down East Community Hospital struggles with compliance edicts, the community continues to wrestle with how to restore trust in its beleaguered institution.

State surveyors, who previously had said their visits were completed at the Machias hospital, have now said they will be returning. "These are process changes, and it's a large organization," said Catherine Cobb, director of the Division of Licensing and Regulation, in a brief statement last week. "We'll be going back to DECH."

"They'll be specifically looking at organizational structure," says Doug Jones, DECH CEO. "A governing body ought to have a plan, an annual strategic plan. Part of the proposed plan we think is exciting will be advisory councils, and these will meet twice a year with the board."

Other structural changes currently on the table include enlarging the board of corporators, and initiating a long-term care group, an emergency medical services council and four geographic groups. Each would bring concerns/issues before the

hospital board twice yearly.

Considered an authority on hospital governance, Jim Rice from Integrated Healthcare Strategies out of Minnesota, has made most of these suggestions, spearheading a plan to structurally reorganize DECH. "We told Jim we wanted an accountable, transparent structure," explained Jones, who said the blueprint for performance has been impressive enough that Michelle Hood, EMMC CEO, will be presenting aspects of it to her board.

"Assuming that things go well in our survey in December, we would move ahead with these plans," says Jones. "CMS has accepted our new plan of correction. The task forces we had in place have been eliminated, doing away with a lot of busy work, and each department now has a process for improvement. Dr. Stanley Gold and Joanne Flemming, an RN from Eastern Maine, are now in charge of our Emergency Department. These are all important steps in moving forward."

In a recent memo to employees, Jones has emphasized strengthening physician leadership and quality improvement efforts. He also, however, has felt

in some instances that the surveyors' reactions "have been out of proportion to the situation." While Jones feels the volume of deficiencies to be corrected is immense, he says "none of the things we agreed to are that difficult."

The Committee to Save Our Hospital, in an effort to unite with other community groups, has modified its early-morning breakfast meetings to set every other meeting at 12 noon. So far, neither hospital employees or the Friends of the Hospital have attended these weekly discussions. "We need trust," says Janet O'Neal, former hospital auxiliary president and longtime volunteer at DECH, "and we need the community to trust the hospital."

"I think Doug needs to move a little faster," says Dennis Sprowl, CSOH member. "He's been given a whole lot of good inside information and I don't know why things can't happen. I think a tea is planned to try and bring people together on common ground and maybe that will help."

The upcoming tea is a committee attempt to involve more See *Holiday Tea*, page 4. . . . .

## Partnership Brings Sculpture to UMM



The sculpture was installed on the UMM campus last Thursday.

MVNO photo

by Ruth Leubecker

Merging dollars and goals, local helping hands have brought a uniquely dramatic granite sculpture to the University of Maine at Machias.

"The Islands of Maine," created by Jhon Gogaberishvili, a sculptor from the Republic of Georgia, was installed on the campus lawn last week. To commemorate UMM's centennial celebration, the college, the Town of Machias and the Machias Bay Area Chamber of Commerce partnered to raise the

necessary funds to transport the artwork to College Hill.

Gogaberishvili graduated from the Tbilisi State Academy of Fine Arts in Georgia. He completed his post-graduate studies in two noted Russian studios devoted to sculpture. By personal invitation, his work has been exhibited at the Mosan Art Museum in South Korea and the Ankara International Stone Sculpture Symposium in Ankara, Turkey.

His artwork is in collections in Tbilisi, Warsaw, Poland

and Spain. The owners of private collections in over 14 countries have also purchased his sculpture.

Machias is one of only six sites in the state and the only Washington County location, to receive a sculpture from the 2009 Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium, held this past summer in Acadia National Park.

Crafted mainly from Jonesboro granite, the large-scale monument to Maine symbolizes the efforts of many who contributed to its placement. An August fundraising concert featuring the Passamaquoddy Bay Symphony Orchestra and donations from area residents and businesses have helped make this unique acquisition possible.

A formal dedication of "The Islands of Maine" is scheduled for the spring. ■



State Rep. David Burns, Kathleen Miller, June Ashmore and Joel Pratt.

Christine Laurel photo

## Community Non-Profit Calling all Volunteers!

by Christine Laurel

Washington County's first transitional home for women in recovery is a step closer to opening its doors with Recovery Support Network's (RSN) federally recognized status as a public charity under Sec. 501 (c) (3) of Title 26 of the U.S.C. With bona fide non-profit status, RSN is now in a position to pursue significant grants and attract individuals wishing to make tax-deductible donations – both necessary for the organization's goal to purchase a house they can transform into a temporary home for women in recovery from substance abuse.

But grants and donations are only part of the picture for this ambitious project, which Kathleen Miller, executive director of Maine Lighthouse Inc. – the agency from which RSN developed – describes as a "grassroots effort by a community to support women in the community." A large part of this grassroots effort comes from volunteers, which is why RSN's staff and board members were on hand to greet area residents interested in volunteering and learning more about the organization last Monday at Helen's Restaurant in Machias.

See *Volunteers*, page 4. . . . .

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