

# Machias Valley News Observer



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Don Sprangers and William Otto load incubation trays with eggs.  
Ruth Leubecker photo

## Eggs Set Next Phase of Premier Project

Area Scientists Accept First Eyed Eggs in Salmon Strain

by Ruth Leubecker

Stepping toward tackling the shaky future of Atlantic salmon, a small contingent of men accepted 20,000 salmon eyed eggs at the East Machias Aquatic Research Center last week.

"This is the first run of the East Machias strain of the endangered Atlantic salmon eggs," explained Jacob van de Sande. "These sea-run eggs are an East Machias strain because their parents came from the East Machias River."

Hatchery manager and

education outreach coordinator van de Sande was joined by Alan Kane, Downeast Salmon Federation board president, Gerry Zegers and William Otto, DSF board members, and Don Sprangers, Washington Academy environmental educator, in accepting the eggs last week at the East Machias Aquatic Research Center.

The eyed eggs, spawned in October 2009, will be released in the East Machias River in May. On Thursday they arrived in East Machias from the Craig

See *Eggs*, page 4.

## Sheriff's Office Simplifies Radio Codes

In keeping with national mandates, the Washington County Sheriff's Department has changed its internal radio communications system from 10-Code to plain language.

"The Department of Homeland Security requested this. It's an effort to have us all operating on the same page," said Sheriff Donnie Smith. "As far as we're concerned, I think because we're a border county with Canada, it's important for us. And I also think it's smarter for us to have this (everyday language) with Regional Communications and the Department of Health and Human Services."

The ten codes system, often referred to as ten signals, historically had elements of secrecy when 10-48, 10-33, 10-79, for instance, were spoken via dis-

patch and it was believed that non-law enforcement listeners would not understand the communications. Eventually, however, everyone who listened to a scanner knew the codes and secrecy became a moot point.

Now the antiquated ten codes system is 72 years old, code meanings have come to mean different things for different agencies, and the law enforcement climate since September 11 has become more uneasy. Homeland Security has introduced a national process to bring all jurisdictions into a streamlined communications system stressing plain language.

Washington County dropped the ten codes and began plain language on January 1, 2010. ■

## Voter Response Ensures Entree to Ballot

Legislator Claims Deception Will Hurt Unknowing Mainers

by Ruth Leubecker

With 71,000 certified signatures still intact and viable after a court struggle, LD 1495 will definitely be on the June ballot.

"Voters need to understand that to put an extra burden on businesses when they're going out of business is ridiculous," says Sen. David Trahan. "We should be helping them until the economy turns around – not making it more difficult for them to stay in business."

Trahan, for two years a senator from Waldoboro, previously served eight years in the House. He has grave concerns over the ramifications of this bill that purports to offer tax relief. "People are being deceived, and there are two main deceptions," he explains. "First, 95% of Maine families are going to see a tax increase, while \$5.8 million will be gained by government. The second thing is indexing on income tax brackets. All of the so-called tax cuts will eventually become a tax increase by 2013. They didn't tell both sides. Thousands of small businesses will have to collect taxes for the first time."

These small businesses collecting taxes for the first time will include neighborhood variety stores, repair shops and tanning salons, among many others already having a tough time keeping their doors open. Casting another aspect on the subject, according to a radio address

by Sen. Kevin Raye, the Maine Revenue Service remains uncertain exactly when a tax is a tax under LD 1495.

"For instance, if you have your furnace serviced, you're billed for labor and parts and taxed. But if the same service is done and the same parts are installed and the contractor bills you for 'furnace maintenance' without itemizing the bill, then there's no tax. How fair is that?"

Many other examples complicate the law for consumers as well as business owners. Regular golf is not taxed. Mini golf is. Candy bars are taxed, but if a candy product contains flour or requires refrigeration, then it's not. And the list goes on, frequently defying rational argument, especially for straightforward Mainers. This, according to Raye, is because a cookie-cutter standard has been applied by using a national formula to establish taxing criteria.

"The supporters of LD 1495 passed this through too quickly," says Trahan, spokesman for Still Fed Up With Taxes. "When they try to shove bills through hours after they've been printed, that's not good – and they're often untrue."

On June 8, 2010, Maine voters will decide whether historic tax reform passed by legislators in 2009 should happen or not. Called the "Maine miracle" by *The Wall Street Journal*, the

controversial bill not only has critics on both sides of the aisle, but Maine's largest daily newspapers have declined interviews to clarify major points. This is interpreted as a not-so-subtle non-event that the lobbying effort is strongly alive and well.

Al DiMillo, retired CPA and former chief tax officer for Bath Iron Works, has written a three-page analysis on the bill and is traveling Maine explaining its ramifications to community groups. "It's a bad bill that will hurt most taxpayers," says DiMillo. "Proponents of LD 1495 argue that the top 10% of taxpayers will get only \$17.8 million of the \$53.9 million net tax savings and that their percentage decrease in tax at 1.7% is less than the average of all taxpayers of 2.7%. What they don't tell you is that within this group of 66,561 taxpayers there are 4,456 taxpayers in the top 1% earning over \$333,388 that will get a tax cut of 10.8%, and that all the other 62,105 taxpayers will have a net increase of \$10 million."

Based on 2007 data, the most recent available, Maine's income tax is the 17th highest in the nation based on its percentage of personal income. The state's sales tax collected was ranked 21st of all states and 15th highest out of the 43 states with both an income and sales tax. ■



## And All That Jazz

Music students from all over Washington County attended the all-day festival in Eastport on Nov. 21st, which culminated in a fantastic early evening concert at Shead High School. The High School Concert Band (including Machias Memorial High School students Mariana Murphy and Bridgette Koch) and the Middle School Jazz Band performed to a packed-house audience of family and friends. The Machias students from the Rose M. Gaffney School photographed that attended the Middle School Jazz Band Festival were: Back Row L to R: Abigail Hopkins, Magenta Johnson, Kaitlin Rau (SAD 37), Nicholas Robicheau, Aaron Mattox, Alex Renshaw, Patrick Massaad. Front Standing Row L to R: Alex Willey, Rebecca Whitney, Emily Lobley, Ciara Schoppee, Lauren Raye. Seated L to R: Kate Whitney, Logan Thompson.

Photo by Bonnie Atkinson

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