

Machias Valley News Observer



COUNTY SEAT WEEKLY

ALL THE HOME NEWS

SERVING WASHINGTON COUNTY CITIZENS & BUSINESSES FOR MORE THAN 155 YEARS

Since 1852 • Vol. 157 • No. 10

MACHIAS, MAINE • WEDNESDAY • OCTOBER 28, 2009

\$1.00

Machiasport Fisherman Dies, Two Not Found

The crew of the *Bottom Basher* was lost during a tragic crisis at sea on Tuesday, Oct. 20 in the waters of Johnson Bay. The body of Darryl Cline of Machiasport was recovered on Wednesday near Shackford Head in Eastport, but the bodies of Joseph Jones of Trescott and Norman Johnson of Cutler remain missing.

Coast Guard crews from Eastport, Jonesport and the Cutter *Thunder Bay* teamed with the Maine Marine Patrol on waterside searches for the *Bottom*

Basher. HH-6- Jayhawk helicopter aircrews from Cape Cod partnered with the Canadian Defense Force helicopter crews on over-flight searches.

After meeting with the families of the fishermen, U.S. Coast-guard Capt. James McPherson and the Coast Guard chaplain, the search efforts shifted from rescue to recovery.

The local families, as well as the families of other local fishermen lost this year, need local support during this difficult time. ■

Paint and Putty Phase Picks Up Church

by Ruth Leubecker

Over a century of fundraisers and ministers later, the First Congregational Church of East Machias has entered a "painting and putty phase" that's cost \$50,000 so far.

"Our next big project will be the steeple," says Rev. Ed Randall, who leads the weekly congregation each Sunday in the house next door. "We'll send a flyer out in the spring which will be mailed locally."

Saving the steeple has been a recurrent project over many years, most notably four years ago when Gail Menzel from Pembroke joined forces with local artist Robb Cook to embark on "a very long-term cam-

paign" to "Save Our Steeple." In 1924 lightning struck the church, nearly demolishing the steeple, which has been an intermittent project ever since.

The historic church has suffered financially over many years, the current economic downturn adding to its debilitation, as with many other older buildings throughout Maine. Built in a different age when everything from labor to heating oil was not an issue, today such majestic buildings are destitute monuments to a proud past.

"What would it take to get people to come back?" asks Randall. "That's what the church needs, but I understand See *Church* on page 4.



DECH CEO Doug Jones and Hospice Director Barbara Barnett.

Hospice photo

Down East Community Hospital Donates \$5,000 to Down East Hospice

Mr. Doug Jones, CEO of Down East Community Hospital, recently met with Barbara Barnett, Director of Down East Hospice of Washington County, to present a \$5,000 Community Benefit donation.

Down East Community Hospital's Community Benefit Fund was established to reach beyond the hospital walls to ensure that the healthcare needs of the region are met and to enhance the quality of life for the entire community. Hospitals nationwide are being chal-

lenged by both federal and state governments to go beyond the free care they give in order to justify their charitable tax-exempt status, a concept that is embraced at DECH. Whether it is charitable care, subsidized programs, medical education or community health education, DECH strives to respond to the area's most pressing needs.

The hospital also partners with other organizations who are working to improve the health status and quality of See *Hospice*, page 26.

Local Rider Competes for World Title

by Ruth Leubecker

Horses have been a part of Kellie Ramsdell-Kilton's life ever since she can remember.

"We bought her her first pony at four," says her mother, Brenda Ramsdell, also a barrel racer, "and she started in shows at four. And she'd always ask for a new show shirt or a horse blanket for Christmas. Not your typical kid."

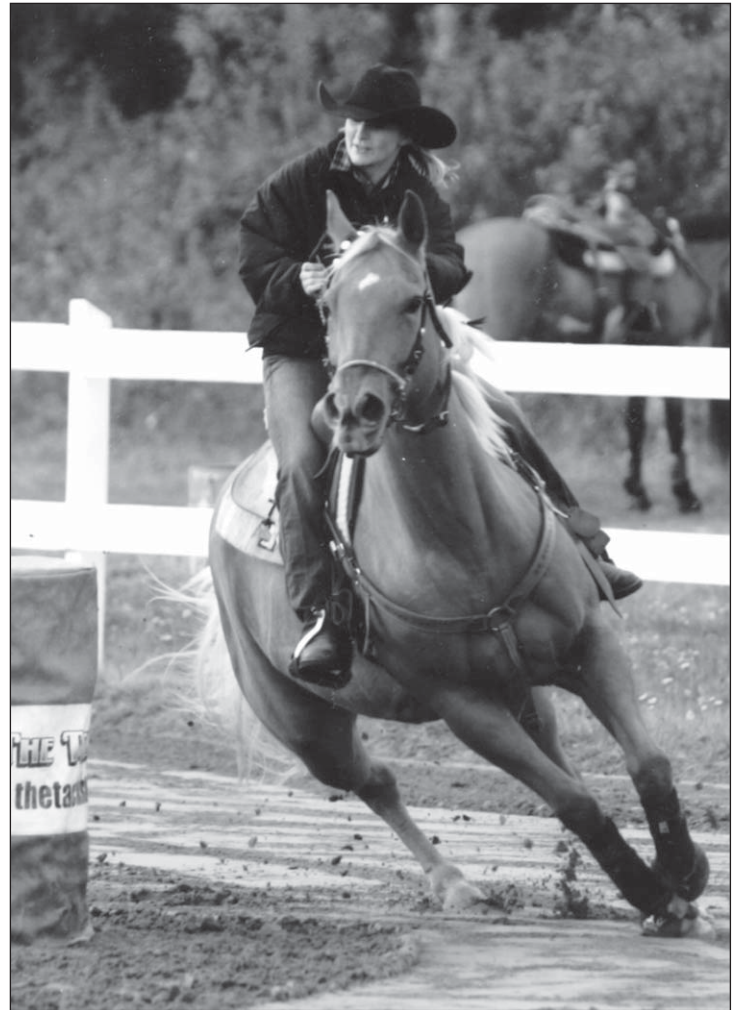
Beginning in preliminary shows, Kellie qualified for worlds and nationals in 2004. In 2007 she won the second division Maine Barrel Association Barrel Class, and the second division Pole-Bending Class.

In the Maine Barrel Racing Association, Ramsdell has also captured the Reserve Champion in the first division. She races mostly in Maine, from Pembroke to Cornish, but will soon be competing in the nationals in Virginia. Looking to the future, she says, "I'd like to be consistently good in trying to qualify for the worlds."

She attended Meredith Manor Equestrian Center, attaining her masters in riding and training from the West Virginia school. However, homesickness has kept her close to home, even though another location with a longer season would be beneficial.

Next week she'll compete in a world competition in Augusta, Georgia. She and her mother are a team, traveling together in a living quarters horse trailer, complete with shower, two beds, furnace, air conditioning and television - "our home away from home," they claim.

Both agree that family members not on the road contribute much to the venture. "My dad is my motivator, and he's the first one to remind me of how much I like to win, how



Kellie puts her horse through the paces.

Ramsdell family photo

competitive I am," says Ramsdell, who lives in Roque Bluffs with her husband, Adam, who is a lobster fisherman/ranch hand, and daughter Kisten, 7.

Kisten, who attends Elm Street Elementary and has her own horse and also rides, may start shows on her own next year, according to her mother and grandmother. "Without family support, we just couldn't do what we do," says Ramsdell. "Kisten sometimes goes along with us now, especially

if a fair is part of the show. We end up traveling a lot because everything is really in southern Maine."

"The fastest time sets everything, and the rest is just how the cards fall," explains Ramsdell. "Meaning, the National Barrel Horse Association has four divisions, and the first is the fastest time. Second place is a half-second off the fastest, third one second off, and fourth is two seconds off."

See *Local Rider*, page 4.

Students Attempt to Save UMM's Theater Program

by Lacie Pottle

As of this year due to budget cuts, there is currently no theater program at the University of Maine Machias. Students Crystal Czaja, Vandi Farren and Eric McDaniel have stepped forward to re-ignite a dormant campus group, *The UMM Thespis Players*. They draw their name from a man of ancient Greece, Thespis, who is legendary for having discovered the art of acting itself. "Now that the Theater program has been cut, we thought it necessary to re-establish this group for future student generations to enjoy the art, fellowship, and camaraderie that the stage brings," Czaja said.

Together they have invested a great deal of time and personal expense into a production of the musical *Into the Woods*, a comedic mash-up of multiple fairy tales. The group has previously been known for their series of

one act plays. This is massive undertaking. Vandi explained, "We are putting on this production of a musical, completely student run to hopefully show the board that investing in the theater is not a waste. That we deserve as much funding as any other fine arts department".

There are multiple-talented students now involved in this production who all share the same love of the stage. They also share a belief that not having a theater program available to students makes the university two dimensional. And if the music program were ever to be cut, they would just be known as a science school. UMM is a Liberal Arts College where the students are willing to fight to keep the Fine Arts alive.

They continue to have the support and guidance of Art Hill, previous director of the Theater See *UMM's Theater*, page 4.



Don't forget to change your clocks!

Index

Arts & Ent	8 - 9
Church Services	21
Classifieds	27
Community	16, 17
Coming Events	20, 21
Help Wanted	25, 26
Legals	24
Letters to Editor	6, 12
Obituaries	24
Op Ed	7
Real Estate	13, 27
Sports	22, 23
Town Notices	24, 25