



The *Weathervane*

Spring

A Quarterly for and from West Gardiner

2023

Thank you for your service: U.S. Army Veteran David Spaulding by Deb Couture



David said he had no particular reason for joining the US Army, but it felt right at that point in his life. He had just finished his second year of college when he joined in August of 1995. He was immediately sent to Ft Sill, OK. for basic training and then on to Ft. Gordon, GA. His Military Occupational Specialty was Communications and his jobs were mainly in Communications Security. In the spring of 1996, he deployed to Germany. Upon arrival, he was sent to Bosnia to meet his unit. He spent the remainder of 1996 in Bosnia.

At the end of his first 4 years, David wanted a change in occupation. He completed training in Aircraft Electronics at Ft. Sill and then moved on to Ft. Lewis, Washington to work with a Medivac unit. His most memorable event occurred when he was stationed at Ft. Lewis. He rode a ship to Thailand and participated in COBRA GOLD. COBRA GOLD is an annual Thailand - U.S. exercise that also includes over 25 additional nations in 2 week planning and field exercises in Thailand that center on security and humanitarian drills.

David transferred to the active/fulltime Maine Army National Guard in 2002. During his time with the Guard, he completed two tours in Iraq. David retired as a Staff Sergeant (SSG) in 2015.

If given the opportunity, he would enlist all over again. He has always encouraged students to think about the military, especially if they are not sure what they want to do after high school. He would advocate for active duty first to enable them to see the world outside of Maine.



The newest truck in the fleet: A 2023 Pierce 1250 GPM Pumper truck that was "pushed into service" on April 21, 2023. The tradition of pushing a new fire truck into a firehouse has been around for over a century. It started when fire departments still used horse-drawn equipment and couldn't back the apparatus into the bays. Instead of using horses, firefighters would push the apparatus into the apparatus bay with their feet.

West Gardiner Fire Department Celebrates 75 Years of Service

by Deb Couture

The West Gardiner Fire Department began its service to West Gardiner residents and surrounding towns in 1948. This year they celebrate 75 years of outstanding service to the community. As part of the celebration, they will have the 2nd Annual Chicken Barbecue on July 29, 2023 at the Fire Station. It will be held from 4 to 7 PM.



The West Gardiner Fire Department poses in front of the new Pumper. Front Row (l.to r.): Jason De Merchant, Kevin Perkins, Mike Dovinsky Back Row (l.to r.): Dennis VanLeeuan, Cliff Daigle, Nick St. Armand, Rick Dupont, Brad Kallock, Vicki Dill, Nick Whitmore, Jamie Dow, Mike Gross, Tom McLaughlin, Don Langley, Scott Taylor, Tim Small, Matt Mank



Blue heron on the stream

Sketching on the Cobb

Join local artist, El Costell, on the Cobbossee stream for a bit of sketching/painting instruction. Bring your own supplies and meet with your canoe or kayak at the boat launch on the Collins Mills Road, Wednesday afternoons@ 4pm in June. Weather permitting



From the Front Porch

Hawks and Doves

by Mike Wing

The wildlife in West Gardiner is alive with raptors. Bald eagles, osprey and turkey vultures swoop along Cold Stream, hunting and nesting and owning the sky. The eagles recovered from DDT in Maine with over 700 nesting pairs now recorded. Ten species of hawks inhabit our state. Turkey Vultures are cool aviators up in the thermals, local version of condors. Even the hoot owl that we hear at dusk is a raptor, though a lesser once since it is mostly nocturnal.

We were visited by a red-tailed hawk the other day. It had been showing up on a nearby roost and at our feeder. The dove never had a chance. The raptor drove its meal into the front door and onto the porch, leaving a scattering of feathers, then flew off into the pines with the victim. Everyone's gotta eat.

We love doves, soft and social, sharing the smaller seeds under the feeder. We like red-tailed hawks, fierce and defiant in their lofty realm. They share the environment, and at times nature is unkind to the weak. We support the wild song-birds with seed and suet, but raptors are independent carnivores and refuse a handout. Imagine a chickadee sitting on one hand eating sunflower seeds from your palm, and a hawk on the other hand eating your index finger.

The doves have reason to mourn, to pray sort of. The hawk has reason to prey as well, Like us humans, our environment gives us hawks and doves and room to co-exist.



West Gardiner Rod & Gun Club News by Kim Greenleaf

The West Gardiner Rod & Gun club recently presented an ATV safety course for 18 students. Anyone interested in taking the class should check the Inland Fish and Game website www.maine.gov.ifw/programs-resources/educational-programs.

The West Gardiner Rod & Gun hosted 3 food drives. Overall, 24 boxes of food and \$575 in cash was collected and turned over to the town office.

Summer outdoor youth archery will begin on Tuesday nights the end of the May. Cost is \$10 per session. Call or text Mike Broadbent at 207-607-9115 for more information.



West Gardiner Rod & Gun Club
Summer Indoor and Outdoor
Craft Fair & Flea Market
297 Collins Mills Rd West Gardiner, ME 04345
Sunday June 25th from 9am to 3pm



Stone Broke Bread & Books - Summer events

June 15th: a poetry reading with local Jean Feldeisen, 5pm-7pm

July 13th: a reading with Maine's poet Kate Kearns, 5pm-7pm

July 20th: a reading with local poets Claire Millikin & Katherine Hagopian Berry, 5pm-7pm

Aug 17th: *Homeschool Newspaper Meeting*, 2pm-4pm - calling all middle school homeschoolers, come start your own community newspaper for the "school year"! Design, print, & facilitator assistance.

First meeting is to start organizing.



June 6- MSAD#11 Budget Meeting 6pm at the High School

June 8- Public Hearing on Moratorium Ordinance Extensions

June 13- School Budget vote 8-8 at the Fire Station

Unexpected Home Renovations- by Gary Crocker

One of Mert Hickey's employees, Wendall H., was also a minor league football player. So, it should come as no surprise that he and his boy would be glued to the tv in Chelsea for the Super Bowl game. While neither Mert nor I were present, I have it on good authority that what took place is absolutely true and now local legend.

Wendall and his boy enjoyed the first half, but weren't fans of half-time shenanigans, so they grabbed a football, turned on the outside lights, and went out in the driveway to toss a few passes before the second half kickoff. Before settling back into their recliners, Wendall tossed the football off to the side of the room.

Between the third and fourth quarters, Wendall climbed out of his recliner and headed for the bathroom. His boy yelled he should watch a re-play and Wendall glanced over his shoulder and stepped on the football, almost falling over backward. He over-corrected and drove through the opening, lurching entirely out of control. He grabbed the top of the medicine cabinet above the toilet. At 6'3" and 245 pounds, he ripped the cabinet off the wall, cradling the exploded cabinet on contact with the floor. As Wendall attempted to regain his footing, he stepped on the scattered medicines, lotions and potions and grabbed the shower curtain, landing in the tub.

At this point, his son raced to rescue his father in the bathroom. Wendall yelled and screamed throughout the ordeal. Not a pretty sight or sound.

Once on his feet, free of curtain and tub, he spied the guilty football. In a fit of rage, he gave it a mighty kick and it sailed across the living room and crashed through a newly install picture window!

At that point, Wendall settled back into his recliner and said, "There. Now we can watch the rest of the game. Oh— since the window is shattered, throw another log on the fire!"

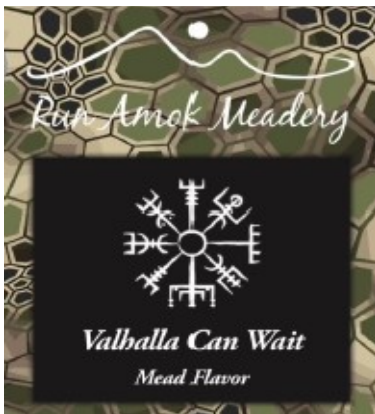
West Gardiner Garden Club

Annual Plant Sale: June 3, 2023 at the Auxiliary Hall

The Plant Sale begins at 9 AM and ends when all the plants are gone. Donated plants may be dropped off on Friday, June 2, 2023 after 4 PM. Please come and shop for plants to help raise money for scholarships for graduating West Gardiner seniors. For more information on the plant sale and future West Gardiner Garden Club meeting dates and places, please check out the website at <https://www.westgardinergardenclub.com>



Run Amok Mead will be doing a Mead release timed for the 4th of July in support of Operation Reboot Outdoors— a 501(c)3 non profit whose mission is "to help our veteran/law enforcement brothers/sisters to reset their internal compass to true north by providing the opportunity to reconnect with the outdoors." Their Facebook page is Operation Reboot Outdoors. The name of the mead is Valhalla Can Wait— a nod toward the fact that 22 veterans a day commit suicide.



West Gardiner Historical Society (WGHS) by Debra Couture

The WGHS anticipates that the Selectboard will be going out to bid for a contract to begin building the new WGHS building in the next few months. The WGHS is working on the Mission Statement and designing a collections management policy for any donations that would be received in the future. Our next meeting will be June 21, 2023 at 5:30 PM at the Auxiliary Hall. We hope that you will join us.

Let's Eat!

Senior lunch dates Fridays 6/16, 7/21, 8/18, 9/15, and 10/20

You must call to reserve your seat the week before either Jane Mooers 582-1309 or Tammy Hickey 724-3648.

Update on Comprehensive Plan Committee By Susan Emmet

This large group held its fifth meeting on May 2. We learned that as of May 1, 325 surveys had been filled out (including paper copies) and inputted. Those who included narrative comments were most helpful. We hope to have a Power Point presentation ready for our June meeting. Shauna Burke, Vicki Dill, Teresa Weichmann and Rawn Torrington volunteered to craft a Vision Statement.

Sub-Committee A (Population/Demographics/Economy) met and discussed a variety of issues including the 2010/2020 censuses, changes in age groups (especially work-age), housing, schools and employment. This group needs data from the survey to guide its work. Sub-Committee B (Water/Natural Resources, Agricultural/Forest Services) focused on sources of pollution for PFAs through sludge application, as well as salt contamination. The group has many questions about sub-surface maps, where to get them, septic systems, aquifers and water testing. Sub-Committee C (Existing/Future Land Use) has located some USGS maps of West Gardiner and can provide links to the website if needed. Sub-Committee G (Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan) held an initial meeting and will report on its work soon.

If you have any questions, please contact the Town Office and they will direct you to the proper people. Know this is a huge undertaking with many moving parts.

Graduation Conversation by Cassidy Clark



Morgan: Hey, Cassidy! Graduation is creeping up on us, and I was wondering if you wanted to have a chat about our high school experiences.

Cassidy: Hi Morgan! Absolutely, let's debrief.

Morgan: What has been your favorite part about high school?

Cassidy: My favorite part about high school has been all the friendships I've made. I know that most of the friends I have now will be with me through college. Even though I will be far away during college I am confident we will continue to support and love each other.

Cassidy: High school is hard. Have you learned any lessons along the way?

Morgan: In my opinion, the most important idea to remember is that your entire high school experience is temporary. This can be both comforting, and inspiring at times. If you're having a hard time, the struggle will pass. Personally, I put a lot of pressure on myself to earn high grades. Motivation is a good thing, but balance is also a significant factor to a less stressful lifestyle. It took me a while to learn this, but there are more important things than test scores. Simultaneously, this notion of impermanence is what pushes me to seize every opportunity in order to have a positive experience. It's

a short four years- have fun!

Morgan: What was your favorite high school memory?

Cassidy: Personally, my favorite memory from high school was my senior night game for field hockey. My team and I worked so hard and played the best we ever have. Even though my team did not win, we all accomplished so much. Being the goalie allowed me to see just how hard each person was trying. In my opinion, I believe it is one of the best games I have ever played. Some of the saves I made in this game allowed me to receive the Maine Field Hockey Association All-State Award.

Morgan: That's an impressive accomplishment! What advice would you share to incoming students?

Cassidy: My advice to all students is don't take everything so seriously. You can always make things fun. Every assignment, every study hall, every 80 minute period has something positive in it. High school goes by fast so enjoy every minute of it!

Cassidy: What would your high school advice be?

Morgan: My advice to incoming high school students is to put yourself out there! Join clubs and teams that interest you. The best way to make friends is through shared interests. High school is a lot more fun when there is somebody by your side to experience it with!

Cassidy: Now that college is approaching, we get the chance to do it all over again! Speaking of college, what are your plans for this fall?

Morgan: I plan to attend the University of Maine at Farmington to major in Psychology and minor in Creative Writing.

Morgan: What are your plans for the school year?

Cassidy: This fall I plan to attend the University of Maine at Machias to major In Marine Sciences.

Morgan: It was great talking with you and I can't wait to see what you accomplish!

Cassidy: I agree! I know you will do great things next year!

Morgan & Cassidy: See you next summer!

Helen Thompson School Update by Kady Gould

The busy month of May has filled our school calendar with testing, special events and field trips. For our spring testing kick off, we held a pep rally to build excitement and growth mindsets! Students in grades K-5 have had their spring music concerts and we are proud of their performances. Earlier this month we hosted a PTA-sponsored schoolwide play, *The Reluctant Dragon*, by the Theater at Monmouth. Additionally, our PTA has funded classroom visits from Chewonki this spring. Presentations will teach students about animal adaptations, owls of Maine, vernal pools, reptiles, biomimicry, tide pools and biomes! Our 5th graders traveled to Jamie's Pond to release trout they raised in partnership with Cami Wilbert from Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed. All of these learning opportunities show just how special our school community is, and how committed we are to providing enrichment to our students!

In partnership with our PTA, we are busy planning for the 70th annual Peter Pan Fair. We will have bounce houses, games, food and desserts, raffle drawings, BIG trucks and equipment, Mrs. Goggin's plant sale and more. We will also present the opening of our newest project, the HTS Story Walk, during the Peter Pan Fair. We are very excited to bring the fair back this year and hope that everyone plans to join us for the fun, food and festivities on Saturday, June 3rd from 10:00-2:00! Of course, none of this would be possible without the dedication of our amazing teachers and staff members. We celebrated Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week earlier in May. A highlight was a trip around the world provided by our PTA, which featured daily delicious treats from around the world and prizes for our hardworking staff members. We are fortunate to feel appreciation from our community year round. To all who share words of thanks and acts of kindness to our staff, THANK YOU for supporting our work with students.

In the spirit of growing and learning, Mrs. Gould

What's Up at the Gardiner Public Library by Judy Jamison



At April's Town Meeting, West Gardiner's residents voted to continue their long-standing support of the Gardiner Public Library (GPL). This entitles WG residents to a FREE library card and access to the library's programs and services. But what exactly does that entail? I had the chance to chat with librarian Dawn Thistle, and our own Ginni Nichols, children's librarian, to get an update on all that is happening and available at GPL.

Of course, when one thinks library, one thinks books, and the library does provide books for all ages - print, audio, and e-books. Patrons can also borrow DVDs and CDs. Magazines and newspapers can be enjoyed in the R.P. Hazzard Reading Room. Various digital platforms, however, greatly expand the collections available to GPL members. Minerva allows people to search for, request and renew items not only from GPL's in-house collection, but from libraries around the state. CloudLibrary and Hoopla allow folks to access eBooks and eAudiobooks, as well as stream movies, music, etc., to TVs, laptops, and other devices. Gardiner Digital Archives, the DigitalMaine Library, and Comics Plus are other platforms offering members access to local and state material.

Books, music, and movies aren't the only items available for checkout. Other items, including pole saws and pruners, and a metal detector, can be borrowed, too.

The library offers free WIFI and computer access; equipment for digitizing photos, tapes, etc., and for small fees, printing, copying, and fax sending and receiving.

Also popular are the passes to attractions around the state. Members can borrow passes to State parks and to Woodbury Pond Park in Litchfield, and to museums including the Farnsworth and the Children's Museums in Portland and Bangor. Passes for the Botanical Gardens and Railway Village in Boothbay are also available.

During the school year, the library hosts a teen program Thursdays after school in the Young Adult room. A Maine Libraries Grant allowed for the purchase of equipment and materials to support this program.

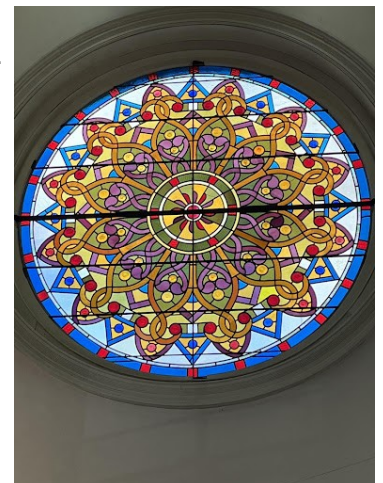
The Burgess Moore III Children's Room, a light and airy space upstairs, with dragon kites suspended from the ceiling and graced with a magnificent stained-glass window, is a hub of activity! Story Hour is offered Tuesdays at 10 AM. The children's Summer Reading Program, sponsored by Bangor Savings Bank, begins right after school lets out. The reading challenge will run from 6/20-8/18, and children will be able to chart their progress - with prizes at the end. This year's program will also include special events, such as Lindsay Puppets (life-sized puppets!) on 7/14 @ 1:00PM, LC Bates Museum with a presentation on ponds on 7/19, Kindness Music on 8/2, Art Guy on 8/11, Mr. Drew and His Animals Too (reptiles!) on 8/16. There will also be movies, and free USDA summer lunches provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

For those interested in local history and/or genealogy, the Cynthia O. Bean Community Archives Room is a treasure trove of material, and Dawn is a knowledgeable and expert guide happy to help with research!

The library currently also hosts three Book Clubs, a Board Games night, the Small Craft Advisory on Thursday mornings, 10-noon, and a Career advisor on Wednesday afternoons, 10-2.

Gardiner Public Library is one of the oldest libraries in the state, an architectural gem designed by local architect Henry Richards. The welcoming, helpful staff work hard to make this treasure a community hub offering a wide range of services. Stop by soon!

For more info, visit GPL's website: <https://gardinerpubliclibrary.org/> or call 582-3312.



Electrical Safety

around swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas

For many of us, water activities equal fun. But it's important to be aware of electrical hazards while enjoying the water. Know how to be safe around swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas.

- If you are putting in a new pool, hot tub, or spa, be sure the wiring is performed by an electrician experienced in the special safety requirements for these types of installations.
- Outdoor receptacles must have covers that keep them dry even when appliances are plugged into them.
- Ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are special devices designed to protect against electric shock and electrocution. They are required for most pool, spa, or hot tub equipment. They may be in the form of an outlet or a circuit breaker. Test the GFCIs monthly according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Electrical appliances, equipment, and cords should be kept at least 6 feet away from the water. When possible, use battery operated appliances and equipment, such as televisions, radios, and stereos.
- Avoid handling electrical devices when you are wet.
- Make sure that any overhead lines maintain the proper distance over a pool and other structures, such as a diving board. If unsure, contact a qualified electrician or your local utility company to make sure power lines are a safe distance away.
- Do not swim during a thunderstorm.
- Have a qualified electrician periodically inspect and—where necessary—replace or upgrade the electrical devices or equipment that keep your pool, spa, or hot tub electrically safe.
- Have a qualified electrician show you how to turn off all power in case of an emergency.

KNOW THE RISKS!

Electrocution is death by an electrical shock. Be aware when skin is wet or when surrounding surfaces, such as the grass or pool deck, are wet. Wet skin or wet surfaces can greatly increase the chance of electrocution when electricity is present.

There are several signs of electrical shock. Swimmers may feel a tingling sensation. They may experience muscle cramps. They may not be able to move. They may feel as if something is holding them in place.

If you think someone in the water is being shocked, turn off all power, but do not attempt to go in the water. Use a fiberglass or other kind of rescue hook that doesn't conduct electricity to help the swimmer. Have someone call **9-1-1**.

If you think you are being shocked while in the water move away from the source of the shock. Get out of the water.

FACT

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has reports of 14 deaths related to electrocutions in swimming pools from 2003 to 2014. Hot tubs and spas may present the same hazard as swimming pools.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

Grilling Safety

There's nothing like outdoor grilling. It's one of the most popular ways to cook food. But, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can be very hot, causing burn injuries. Follow these simple tips and you will be on the way to safe grilling.

SAFETY TIPS

- » Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- » The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- » Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- » Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- » Never leave your grill unattended.
- » Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

CHARCOAL GRILLS

- » There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- » If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- » Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- » There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- » When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

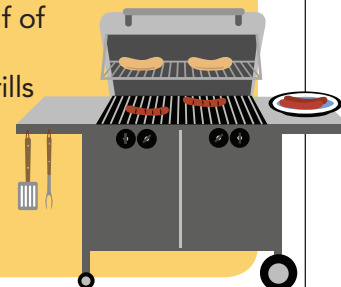
PROPANE Grills

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department. **If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department.** Do not move the grill.

If the flame **goes out**, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least **5 minutes** before re-lighting it.

FACTS

- ! July is the peak month for grill fires.
- ! Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.



**NATIONAL FIRE
PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**
The leading information and knowledge resource
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Before the Storage Units by El Costell

Recently there was much voiced opinions on the newly built storage units. Unfortunately, there is not much to be done once the buildings have been erected, and in my opinion they did quite a nice job, this doesn't mean I prefer them to the natural landscape of West Gardiner but as they say, what's done is done. The gouache on paper painting reminds us of the beautiful landscape that once occupied the land before the construction. It is imperative that as residents we attend town meetings to cast our votes and add our input into how to preserve the landscape which surrounds us.

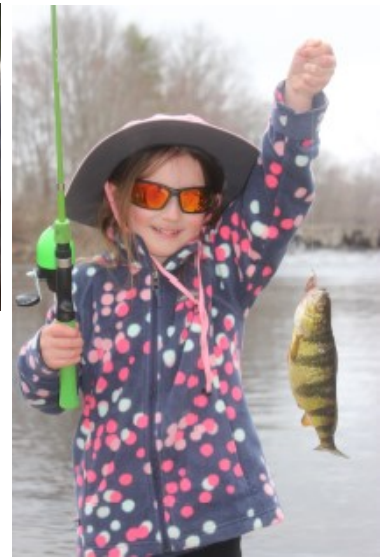
Before the Storage Units gouache & ink by El Costell



Harriet lives near Cob-bossee Lake and enjoys grazing in the pasture with her family.



If you're listening and hear a knocking you may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the largest North American woodpecker, the Pileated woodpecker spotted on the shores of the Cobbossee Stream.



Charlie Krebs, 5, holds up one of her first catch & releases of the early 2023 season



News from the Tucker Farm 1237 Hallowell Litchfield Road

Pam & Jim Savage welcomed all to their annual opening weekend held on May 20 & 21. There was plenty of fun with the prize wheel, jams, jellies and other canned goods. A few new additions to their 2023 lineup will be mustards, bbq sauces and vanilla extract (regular and alcohol free).



WEST GARDINER NEWSLETTER

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The Weathervane is a non-profit quarterly informational newsletter intended to be unbiased, non-denominational, non-partisan, accurate, and enjoyable.

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