

REPORTER

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Locally owned and independently operated.

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 7 PO Box 75, North Waterboro, ME 04061 • 247-1033 • www.waterbororeporter.com THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025

State Champs!



The Massabesic girls' wrestling team claimed the 2025 State Championship in Farmington on Feb. 18, and will compete at the New Englands on March 8 and 9 in Providence, Rhode Island. PHOTO BY JASON GENDRON PHOTOGRAPHY

**FROM THE MAINE
 DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE,
 CONSERVATION
 & FORESTRY:**

Commissioner urges USDA to expedite release of critical farm funding

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) Commissioner Amanda Beal has requested of newly appointed U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins that federal funds currently withheld be swiftly released, as delays are causing economic hardship for Maine farmers and agricultural service providers.

In a letter to Secretary Rollins, Commissioner Beal emphasized the urgent need to honor existing contracts and grant reimbursements that farmers, non-profits, and other agricultural entities have been relying upon. Beal noted that the continued delay of these funds

(Continued on page 3)

Lady Mustang wrestlers bring home State Championship

By MIKE DEANGELIS

A dominant Massabesic wrestling team sent six wrestlers to the podium, lifting them past host Mt. Blue to capture first place at the annual State of Maine Girls' Wrestling Championships held Tuesday, Feb. 18.

The lady Mustangs distributed the wealth evenly with two gold, two silver and two bronze medalists that brought the gang in green a whopping 127.5 points. Mt. Blue was next with 107 and Belfast had 83.5. Defending champion Noble was fourth with 74. More than 35 high schools participated.

Juniors Nevaeh Grunhuvd (132) and Sophie Grunhuvd (138) each took home the top prize. Nevaeh, wrestling as the #1 seed, pinned Madilyn Meadows from Noble to open her state title run. Delia Saft (#4) from Lincoln managed to score off Grunhuvd, but ultimately fell via fall, 7-3, a little

over two minutes into the bout. Nevaeh Grunhuvd closed out the tourney with a 13-2 win at 3:01 over Kylie Biter from Oxford Hills. Sophie Grunhuvd, also the #1 seed, got started with her championship run with a first period win over Kayla Wilson of Calais. She

(Continued on page 5)

Valentine's Bandit strikes in Waterboro

By JOANNE BARGIONI

Customers at the Partners Bank in Waterboro were treated to a pleasant surprise when they went to complete their banking business on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. In the front window, taped to the glass was a Happy Valentine's poster complete with a red heart from "Kevin."

The employees of the bank did not know who put the poster out there. When asked who Kevin was one of the tellers said "I don't know who Kevin is" but customers chimed in to say it could be the work of the Valentine's bandit and they were delighted to see it there.

Bank Manager, Bill Wood, stated that several customers throughout the day commented on the poster and said "It was very nice to keep up the tradition of community and love and the staff as well as customers loved it."

He had no idea why Partners Bank was chosen to have the Val-

entine's poster and he didn't know if other businesses in the area had one placed on their window but he said "It was really nice that the community thought of Partners Bank" and he "enjoyed participating and sharing the love that this represents."

Unfortunately due to the wind gusts after the storm on Saturday, the poster blew away but the warmth and good feelings represented by the heart poster still remain.

However the bandit struck again and placed a Valentine's poster on the window of the Associated Eye Care office adjacent to Partners Bank. Shirley Bigelow of Associated Eye Care stated that "all the staff thought the heart was very artistic and well done and very excited to receive the Valentine." But they all wanted to know who "Kevin" was and speculation grew in the office about the identity of Kevin. Bigelow said "the Valentine poster is still

(Continued on page 4)



Mysterious valentines were hanging outside of Partners Bank and Associated Eye Care on Feb. 14, presumably inspired by Portland's Valentine's Bandit.

PHOTOS BY JOANNE BARGIONI

Sen. King Scorns 'thoughtful' cuts at VA, impacting veterans' benefits

Senator questions nominee and warns of dangers in AI decision making for veteran claims

WASHINGTON, D.C.— On Feb. 19, U.S. Senator Angus King (I-ME) scorned the recent firing of one thousands employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) across throughout the country as having a detrimental impact on veterans and their ability to access their earned benefits. In a hearing of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC), King also questioned the Honorable Paul Lawrence Ph.D., nominee to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, on his support for these cuts and how he will work within the department to ensure that veterans are not victims of the VA's quest to "reduce inefficiencies" – and rely solely on new technology

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NEW EVERY THURSDAY!

LOCAL news, events and faces from your LOCAL community.



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COMING EVENTS

The Alfred-Waterboro-Lyman Republican Committees will be having a **SPECIAL PRESIDENTS' DAY CELEBRATION** for their monthly meeting on Feb. 20, at the Alfred Town Hall at 6:30 p.m. Doors will open at 6:15 p.m. Republicans, join us for cake and a presidential trivia game. The winner of the game will win a presidential coin. There will also be a short presentation on Article II of the Constitution besides the other regular business of our committees.

PAINT PARTY Shapleigh PTC is having a fundraising Paint Party on Feb. 22 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Shapleigh Memorial School, 467 Shapleigh Corner Road. The cost is \$35 each but

\$10 of the fee goes to Shapleigh Memorial Parent Teacher Committee. Contact Randy Pinette at 502-9507 for more information. All ages are welcome. To sign up go to square.link/u/9gAim-Vjg.

JOIN THE "BUY NOTHING NEW 2025 CHALLENGE" GROUP, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Hollis Center Library, Hollis. The theme of this meeting

is "Overcoming Temptations". What is your reason for wanting to spend less or wanting to be more creative with what you already own? Call 929-6817 for more information.

ACTON CHILI AND CHOWDER CROCKFEST Saturday, March 1 from 5 to 8 p.m. If you have a spectacular recipe for chili or chowder the Acton Public Library invites you to join them for their an-

nual cook-off challenge. Registration forms can be found at www.acton.lib.me.us. If you'd like to eat and vote on the chili and chowder from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. the cost is \$10 per person or \$40 per immediate family. The event will be held at Barn Lights, 189 Hooper Road in Acton. FMI call 636-2781.

HADDOCK SUPPER BUFFET Saturday, Feb. 22, at 5 p.m. at Living Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested donation: \$10 Adult, \$5 Child, \$20 Family. Offering takeout for those not wanting to come inside for seating.

JOIN THE "BUY NOTHING NEW 2025" CHALLENGE, Wednesday, Feb. 26, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., at the Hollis Center Library, Hollis. The theme for the coming meeting is "When you really, really need something." Pretend you lost your snow shovel or your winter boots. Must you rush to L.L. Beans or Walmart? Could you "make do" somehow? Can you master yourself and think creatively and find substitutes. Call 929-6817 for more information.

PUBLIC BEAN SUPPER on Saturday, March 1 at St. Thomas School cafeteria on

69 North Avenue in Sanford from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Serving beans, cole slaw, chop suey, ham, hot dogs, bread, dessert and beverages. Proceeds to benefit the school. Cost is \$10 per person or \$6 for children under 12. FMI contact Ray at 651-6636.

MONTHLY BINGO NIGHT at the Newfield Town Hall on Friday, March 1, presented by the Newfield Recreation Department. The Town Hall is located at 23 South Effingham Road. Doors open at 5 p.m. The games will start at 6 p.m. All are welcome. Bring a baked good to be served by donation. All funds will go to the Rec. department. Bingo cards will be \$1 each and you can purchase as many as you want. The funds from the cards will be used to purchase next month's prizes. The more cards sold the bigger the prize.

THE FIRST 40 DAYS: A VIBRANT CONVERSATION WITH SHENNA BELLOWES AND BILL NEMITZ President Donald Trump has approved dozens of new policies, executive orders, decrees, and funding reductions for many domestic and international programs. Maine's Secretary of State, Shenna Bellows, and award-winning Maine journalist, Bill Nemitz, will address many of these issues at a public forum on Sunday, March 2 at 2 p.m. at the Buxton Center Elementary School, 912 Long Plains Road, Buxton. All are welcome. Donations gratefully accepted. Sponsored by the Hollis Buxton Democratic Committee

Community CALENDAR

Email non-profit event listings to: news@waterbororeporter.com

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\$25

7PM-9PM
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Feb. 28
March 14
March 28
April 11
April 25

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LIMERICK WOMEN'S CLUB MEETING The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) of Limerick will be hosting its March meeting on Tuesday, March 4 at 7 p.m. at the Free Baptist Church, 2 School St., Limerick. This month's presentation will be on the Hannah P Hayes Trust. New members to the Women's Club are always welcome.

PUBLIC HADDOCK DINNERS Fridays from March 7 through April 11 (4:30 to 6:30 p.m.) at the St. Thomas School Cafeteria, 69 North Avenue in Sanford. Price is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children under 12. Bring canned goods or other nonperishable items for chance at 50/50 raffle. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, FMI call Ray at 651-6636.

FREE COMMUNITY DINNER at the Goodwins Mills Advent Christian Church, 503 Goodwins Mills, Route 35 Dayton, March 8 from 4:30-6 p.m. Menu is corned beef, ham, mashed potatoes, carrots and cabbage, rolls, brownies and beverages. All are welcome!

BEAN SUPPER March 8 from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Buxton Centre Baptist Church, Long Plains Road, Route 22 Buxton. Homemade kidney and pea beans, American chop suey, hot dogs, coleslaw, rolls and desserts. \$10 per person. Takeout orders are also available if you call the church ahead at 929-3011 and leave a message with your name and phone number and your order.

MAKE-IT AND TAKE-IT SHAMROCK CRAFT Join Miss Shiela in the Children's Room at Springvale Public Library, 443 Main Street on March 12 from 2 to 5 p.m. All materials provided. This event is suitable for ages 5-12 years.

For more details, you may call the Springvale Public Library at 324-4624.

SANFORD GARDEN FAIR The Sanford Beautification Committee is hosting its first annual Sanford Garden Fair with workshops, plants, and garden products. The Fair will be held on March 29 from 10 AM to 6 PM at the Sanford Memorial Gym, 678 Main St. Admission is five dollars, and children 12 and under are free.

ONGOING EVENTS

MONTHLY COFFEE HOUR FOR OLDER ADULTS with Massabesic Adult and Community Education. Every third Tuesday of the month, 1 to 2 p.m. at Massabesic Lions Club, 813 Main Street, Waterboro.

FOOD DRIVE Members of the Bar Mills Community Church are holding a food drive for the month of February to benefit the Buxton Community Cupboard, collecting non-perishable food items. The items can be dropped off at the Bar Mills Community Church on 13 Hermit Thrush Drive in Buxton across from the town hall. There will be a box in front of the church to put the items in.

WATERBORO COMMUNITY PANTRY 26 Townhouse Road, East Waterboro. Open the first Tuesday of month from 4 to 7 p.m. all other Tuesdays from 1 to 4 p.m. Donations can be dropped Saturdays 2 to 4 p.m. or put non perishable in drop box on the porch. FMI 247-7789.

THE CORNER CUPBOARD which offers personal care, paper, cleaning, household, and baby items to anyone in need, is open the 3rd Saturday of each month at the Sanford UU Church, 5 Lebanon St., Sanford, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Please bring your own bag.

BEAN SUPPER Massabesic Lions monthly dine-in or take-out the 2nd Saturday of the month, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Lions Regional Medical Center, 813 Main St. Waterboro. Adults \$10. Children 5 to 12 are \$7, kids 4 and under are free. Kidney and Pea Beans, Chop Suey, Ham, Hot Dogs, Coleslaw, "Our homemade" biscuits and a variety of desserts.

The Acton-Shapleigh Lion's Club **MONTHLY PANCAKE BREAKFAST** the first Saturday of every month. \$7 includes pancakes (plain or blueberry), scrambled eggs, sausages, toast, orange juice, beans, and coffee, tea, and milk. The breakfast will be served from 8 to 9:30 a.m. at the Acton Town Hall, 35 H Road.

TODDLER STORY TIME at Kezar Falls Circulating Library, 2 Federal Road, Kezar Falls, Wednesdays at 11 a.m. What to expect: A story with a short activity and a bit of music time. Geared toward ages 1-3 but all ages and abilities welcome. Open Tue. 2:30-7 p.m., Wed. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Thu. 2:30-5 p.m. and Sat. 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

ADULT COED VOLLEYBALL every Wednesday night at the Line School in Limerick from 7 p.m.-9 p.m. Questions? contact Dan McAllister at 247-8857.

NEWFIELD MUSIC JAMBOREE Town Hall, So. Effingham Road, 1st Saturday of the month Nov-April. Winter hours are 1 to 3:30 p.m. Free, open to public. FMI call 468-1491.

CRIBBAGE CLUB Wednesdays, from 6-7:30pm at the Lyman Community Library. All ages, all skill levels. FMI: 207-499-7114.

SANFORD TOPS The Sanford Chapter 0113 meets every Wednesday night at 5:45pm at the New Beginnings Church (bottom floor), 181 Grammar Road, Sanford. For more info call Linda Rose at 206-6234.

BUXTON TOPS The Buxton Chapter (0175) of the non-profit group Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) Support Group meets every Thursday morning at 8:45am for weigh-in and meeting at Buxton Center Baptist Church (back door entrance), 938 Long Plains

Rd., Buxton. FMI call Christy at 329-1020.

TOPS SANFORD 0207 at the Willard School 668 Main St. Weigh in from 9-9:45 a.m. on Fridays with the meeting to follow. For more info call Valerie Fecteau at 324-4808 or Judie Berry at 247-5211.

LIMERICK TOPS The Limerick Chapter 208 meets every Thursday at 4 p.m. at St Matthew Catholic Church at 19 Dora Lane (off Route 11) Limerick. Call Kathy Harriman at 727-3729 with questions.

FARM FUNDING

(Continued from page 1)

could have significant economic consequences for Maine's agricultural sector, which operates on tight margins and depends on timely financial support to sustain operations.

"As you prioritize your work in the coming days, I write to emphasize the importance of honoring contracts and reimbursement grant funds already encumbered for farms and our agricultural sector," Commissioner Beal stated in her letter. "In many cases, funds already spent exceed the ability of operators to absorb costs if not reimbursed. It doesn't take long for an unpaid bill to have drastic economic impacts on businesses, especially farms, which often operate under very tight margins."

Beal highlighted a recent report from the Portland Press Herald detailing the financial uncertainty Maine farmers face due to the withholding of federal funds. She also pointed to specific delays in payments through the USDA's Resilient Food System Initiative, citing \$105,000 in unpaid invoices submitted on February 4 that have yet to be processed.

"These requests represent expenses Maine farmers have

already incurred believing they would be reimbursed because they have a binding contract with the USDA through the State of Maine," Beal explained. "Withholding these funds is causing harm to farmers."

Beyond individual farm operators, Beal expressed concerns about tens of millions of dollars being withheld from non-profits and service providers that play essential roles in supporting Maine's agricultural economy. She urged the USDA to expedite the review and release of committed funds to prevent further disruptions in the sector.

"As someone who is also passionate about agriculture and cares very much for every farm in our state, I ask that you expedite the review of funds that are already committed to farmers and the entities that support them and uphold the obligations as outlined in those contracts," Beal concluded.

Commissioner Beal's appeal underscores the critical role of federal funding in sustaining Maine's agricultural economy. The DACF will continue working with farmers, service providers, and federal partners to advocate for the timely release of necessary financial resources.

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BUSINESS NEWS



Chamber Welcomes Great East Alpacas & Llamas

The Sanford/Springvale Chamber paid a visit to Great East Alpaca to cut the ribbon as new chamber members recently. Pam and David Hall raise Alpaca's and Llama's in Acton, run a farm store with clothing products such as hats, gloves, socks and much more made from Alpaca wool, and also offer farm visits to see their wonderful animals. They are located at 699 Foxes Ridge Road Acton and open Tuesday through Sunday 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Attending the ribbon cutting ceremony are, from left, Rick Stanley (Chamber President), Caren Martineau (Chamber Ambassador), Stephanie Wilkins (Altrusa International of Sanford Springvale), Owners Pam & David Hall, Sean Dumont (Edward Jones Investments), and Kelly Goodwin (Lighthouse Credit Union).
COURTESY PHOTO

READ ONLINE @
www.waterbororeporter.com

**TOWN OF SHAPLEIGH
Public Hearing Notice**

The Select Board will hold a public hearing **February 25, 2025 at 5:00pm** to hear comment and answer questions on the final wording of the following two proposed ordinances to be voted on at the Annual Town Meeting:

- **Recall of Elected Officials Ordinance**
- **Consumer Fireworks Ordinance**

**TOWN OF SHAPLEIGH
ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

Absentee Ballots for the March 7, 2025 Municipal Election are available in the Town Clerk's office.

Requests for a mailed ballot can be made by telephone or ballots may also be picked up at the Clerk's office by the voter or immediate family member. Deadline to request an absentee ballot is

Thursday, February 27, 2025

UNLESS SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES EXIST

**THE POLLS WILL BE OPEN
FRIDAY, MARCH 7TH
8:00AM - 8:00PM**

VOTE: FRIDAY, MARCH 7th
BILL MAGEARY
SHAPLEIGH SELECTMAN
- EXPERIENCED -
9 Yrs. Budget Committee & 9 Yrs. Selectman

VALENTINES

(Continued from page 1)

up in their office and hanging by the front desk."

Every Valentine's Day, according to Wikipedia, since 1979 the people of Portland awoke to red Valentines stuck to storefront windows or heart banners on parking garages, churches, etc. These Valentine's wishes were left by an unknown person until his death in April 2023 when the bandit was revealed to be 67-year-old Kevin Fahrman of Falmouth.

In 2023 Fahrman's family began the Kevin Fahrman Foundation and encouraged people to "become a Kevin" by carrying on the tradition started by Fahrman each Valentine's Day. People can visit the website www.beakevin.com to download and print paper hearts to hang up to keep his memory alive.

Send your news to:

news@waterbororeporter.com



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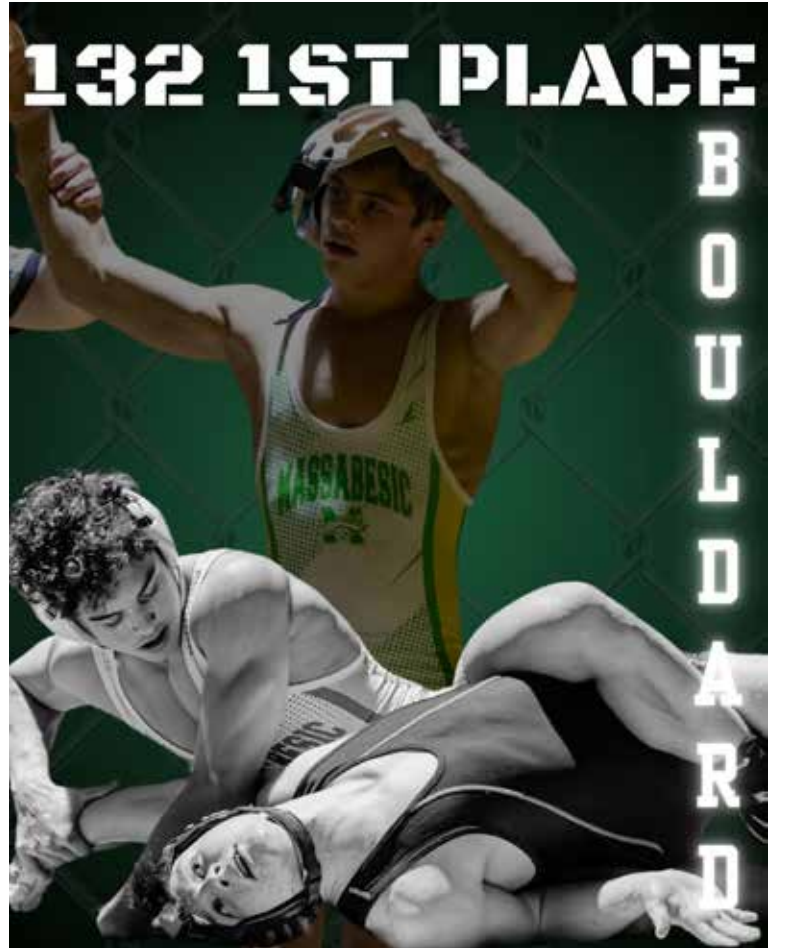
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SPORTS

WRESTLING



Massabesic's Evan Boulard is Class A State Champion (see related story on Page 5). COURTESY IMAGE.

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**TOWN OF LYMAN PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

11 SOUTH WATERBORO ROAD, LYMAN MAINE 04002
207-247-0648 www.lyman-me.gov

The **PLANNING BOARD** will hold a **PUBLIC HEARING** on **Wednesday, March 5, 2025**, at 5:30 PM at Lyman Town Hall, 11 South Waterboro Road.

This **Public Hearing** is to allow public comment regarding the application of **Eric Harper** for a proposed 9-lot subdivision on Old Kennebunk Road on Tax Map 3 Lot 87-3 and a portion of Lot 87-2. Copies of the application and plans can be viewed on the town website or in the Code Office during regular business hours.

Kelly J. Demers, Chairman

TOWN OF LYMAN

11 SOUTH WATERBORO ROAD, LYMAN, ME 04002
207-247-0648 www.lyman-me.gov

NOMINATION PAPERS for the June 10, 2025 Municipal Election will be available starting **March 3, 2025** for the following positions:

- 1 Select Board/ Overseer of the Poor, 3-year term
- 2 Budget Committee member, 3-year term
- 1 RSU #57 School Board of Directors, 3-year term

Papers are available at the Town Clerk's Office during regular office hours. Nomination papers are due by 4:00pm April 10, 2025.

For more information, contact the Clerk's office at 207-247-0650 or Townclerk@tyman-me.gov

— By MIKE DEANGELIS
Sports Editor

SPORTS

WRESTLING

Mustangs third at States

Boulard State Champ

Evan Boulard won his second consecutive Class A State Championship, and Massabesic got podium trips from four additional wrestlers to help lift them to a third-place finish at the annual Class A State Wrestling Championships held Saturday, Feb. 15 in Lewiston.

Noble finished first with 181 points with Marshwood a distant second at 107. Massabesic had 105.5, Camden Hills was next at 92.5 and Sanford tied Mt. Blue for fifth with 85. Bonny Eagle finished 10th with 51 points.

Sophomore Boulard, wrestling as the #1 seed in the 132 lb. weight division, began his title defense with a pin over Matty Smith from Brunswick. Next, Boulard had a semi-finals rematch with Marshwood's Rogan Boisvert, who he beat 19-3 at Regionals the week before. Same foes. Similar result with Boulard winning 17-2 this time and the Mustang closed things out with 7-0 decision over Chase Frost from Bonny Eagle. Frost was fourth the week prior at Regionals. Massabesic's Remington Grunhuvd was runner-up in the 106 lb. division as was Patrick Jones who wrestled at 126. Nicholas Chenard (138) and Alex Har-

riman (144) both finished fourth. The Scots had a pair of third place finishes from Zack Nelson (138) and Magnus Doucette (215). Boulard is 59-2 in the 2024-2025 campaign with both losses coming out of state. He managed to avenge one of the losses soon after. Boulard, a sophomore, has Class A State Championships in each of his first two high school seasons.

Spartans fifth

Sanford's Canton Hill was runner-up wrestling at 215 and the Spartans sent four more athletes to the podium to help propel them to a fifth-place finish at the Class A State Championships. Senior James Chaplick, a classmate and co-captain along with Hill, brought home a silver competing at 144 and the Spartans had three fourth-place winners in Ricky Callis (175), Isaiah Phillips (126) and Alden Treadwell (285).

INDOOR TRACK Dunne wins 800 at Class A States

Harrison Dunne, a senior at Bonny Eagle High School, won the 800-meter run at the annual Class A State Track Championships held Presidents Day, Feb. 17 at USM. The win helped lift the Scots to a seventh-place finish in the team competition, which was won by Scarborough. Lewiston



Sanford's Canton Hill got his 150th career win at the Regionals on Feb. 8.
PHOTO BY JASON GENDRON

was second and Marshwood was third. Dunne, who was fourth last week at Regionals, posted a 2:00.24, just edging Falmouth's Christopher Jaynes' 2:00.89. Jaynes was also runner-up the week prior. Baxter Merriam from Scarborough was third at both events. Dunne chipped in as a member of the 4X800 relay unit that came in third. Peyton Lee brought the Scots a silver in the 400. Drew Gervais was fourth in the 200 and the sophomore was the youngest of the eight athletes (25 runners qualified for prelims) to run in the 55-meter dash. He was seventh, but just .30 from first in a tight field.

BOYS' ICE HOCKEY Trailblazers win fourth straight

The Trailblazers, a co-op team from Windham/Westbrook/Bonny Eagle made it four straight wins thanks to a 6-0 shutout over Marshwood/Traip/Sanford/Noble on Monday, Feb. 17. Sawyer Perkins was perfect in net as the Trailblazers scored six times for the second consecutive game. They beat Lake Region 6-4 on Feb. 15. The four game win streak began with consecutive shutouts over Biddeford and Gorham. The Trailblazers held the sixth spot in the 13-team Class A 'One Region' with one regular season game remaining.



Noble's Hanna Perro was named the Outstanding Wrestler of the 2025 Girls State Championship and is also the State Champion in the 100 lb. division.
COURTESY PHOTO

GIRLS' WRESTLING

(Continued from page 1)

quickly (:53) dispatched Amaya Smith from Oliver Ames High and Sophie Grunhuvd finished off her title win by topping Erskine's Maxine Spencer at 3:12. Savannah Thyng (120) and Olivia Goodrich (152) both brought home second-place hardware and Massabesic's Aesa Brock (145) and Sydney Cyr (165) each finished third.

All six of the lady Mustangs will compete at the New England Championships on March 8 & 9 in Providence, Rhode Island.

Noble had two gold medalists: Hanna Perro at 100 lbs. and Delaney Frost at 120 lbs. Perro was also named Outstanding Wrestler for the tournament.

Noble and Mt. Blue, like Massabesic, each had two gold medalists. No school had more than three medalists except the Mustangs who had six. The Grunhuvd's join Abby Glidden (2022) as individual female state champions.



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Thank you for reading!

Obituaries

Ernest Ray Kiley

Ernest Ray Kiley, age 68, passed away peacefully at his home in Brownfield on Feb. 10, 2025.

He was born in Saco on April 3, 1956, a son of Alice (Loring) Kiley.



Ernest Ray Kiley

Ernest attended Massachusetts Schools while he grew up in the Limerick and Waterboro area.

He will always be remembered for the enjoyment he had hunting and fishing; however, it was his love of family and friends that was most important to him.

Over the years, Ernest was employed as a mechanic and worked in the construction field. In more recent years, he was self-employed doing mostly property management roles.

He is predeceased by his mother

er Alice; and sisters Josephine Lashua and Mary Reed.

Ernest is survived by his beloved wife Susan (Hanscome) Kiley; children Samantha Kiley of Lovell, Jeremy Kiley of Fryeburg, and Tabitha Blood and her husband Merton of Lovell; siblings William Kiley, Estelle Mooney, Patricia Hussey, Betty Graffam, Robert Kiley, and George Kiley; several grandchildren; and many dear friends and extended family.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, Feb. 23 from 1 to 2 p.m. at the Poitras, Neal & York Funeral Home, 71 Maple Street, Cornish, followed by a service at 2 p.m. at the funeral home. Online condolences can be submitted at www.mainefuneral.com.

A celebration of life will follow at the Waterboro Lions Club, 813D Main Street, Waterboro.

The Kiley family would like to give a Special thanks to the Hospice of Southern Maine team of caregivers & New England Cancer Center team.

VA BENEFITS

(Continued from page 1)

– across the federal government.

“On the layoffs, here is the problem. You have testified, and the press release has been, that this is done in a thoughtful way with reviews. I am a great advocate of Ronald Reagan’s admonition ‘trust but verify.’ I would like to see some data that verifies that that took place. It is hard for me to believe that 1000 people were laid off in a matter of weeks with the kind of thoughtful process that you are defining,” Senator King said. “...The next administration should explore how reviews would be accelerated with clearance from OMB to target significant cost savings from revising disability rating awards.’ That is a change of benefits. For future claimants, and listen to this, ‘while preserving them fully or partially for existing claimants.’”

Senator King continued, “Partially is a pregnant term. That means you are talking about potentially reducing benefits for people who are getting them now... the phrase ‘preserving benefits fully or partially for existing claimants’ is not very reassuring to the veterans of this country.”

Senator King then questioned the nominee on his support for AI in reviewing veterans claims, noting that AI is a tool, but cannot be used as a medical decision maker when lives are at stake.

“One is a suggestion for the VA to increase automation. ‘The best way to provide benefits more faster and more accurately is by

using technology to perform most of the work.’ We are already learning in the private sector through insurance companies that giving AI the decision about making these kind of decisions does not work well. Do you think increased use of technology and artificial intelligence in claims processing is a good idea?” King asked.

Dr. Lawrence responded, “Thank you for the question, Senator. If you noticed it said most of the work. The way the claim comes about is that there is a lot of work where you gather information and it is called development. That’s what takes so long, getting the veterans’ information in front of someone to make a decision. Technology can be used to gather the information faster. So, a government employee and a claims adjudicator can make the decision.”

King asked again, “You are testifying that you are not talking about AI making the decision but simply automating the collection of data?”

“It is called development. That is correct. The decision should be made by an individual, a V.A. employee as required by law. But also to bring judgment into things. I think technology is great but it is not the end all be all,” Dr. Lawrence concluded.

Representing one of the states with the highest rates of military families and veterans per capita, Senator King has been a staunch advocate for America’s servicemembers and veterans. Last year, he led the bipartisan Military Spouse Employment Act — pieces of which passed into law in the

FY2024 NDAA — which allows military spouses to have a remote work career with any federal agency and helps them to maintain consistent employment should they move with their spouse. He also introduced the Improving Access to Prenatal Care for Military Families Act to expand military family care to cover critical health care during pregnancies. Most recently, he joined the bipartisan Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act to improve financial security for military families by ensuring life insurance packages for servicemembers and veterans adjust for increases in cost of living and inflation.

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