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# 10 MOST Intriguing

These Mainers dared to be different.



Les Otten,  
Dreamweaver

Bethel

INTERVIEW BY COLIN W. SARGENT

**W**e know him as the Man From Sunday River. How about The Man Who Saved Fenway Park. This year, Les Otten is also The Dreamer Who Is Quintupling the Balsams to Become an International Destination on the Order of Banff. We reached Otten at his home in Bethel by telephone:



The Balsams is etched into memory as a Shangri-La run by Steve Barba. You've dared to think bigger about this wilderness resort to put it on the map as a huge attraction. The scale is astonishing. Can you tell us about your original vision and how it was essential to dream differently than others might? The opportunity was once-in-a-lifetime. We've had the chance to envision a year-round destination resort from scratch, with no limitations on how you could imagine the project. We rethought everything: real-estate ownership, skiing, yoga, fat-tire biking, water sports, how it all comes together. Our model is more like a college campus than an Olympic Village, and it goes like



this. In a student union—in the 1960s sense of a student union—you slept in one place, in the hub. The other attractions, such as classes, athletic facilities, the library, were on the outside of the wagon wheel. We liked that. The thing that was cool about the original Balsams was that lake right outside your front door and the ability to have a hot-spring sauna at your back door. The Balsams had great food, ice-skating, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, but the route to making it universally known wasn't as available to Steve and Neil Tillotsen. Now you can see that we'll have world-class skiing available. It was exciting to envision what a 21st-century resort would look like. We're well on our way to at least get our permits. The launch is underway.

**W**ith the lodging we are contemplating in the first phase, that figure is \$143 million. That will leave us with three hotels, Hampshire House, Dix House, and the Gloriette House. The key component is the gondola. The gondola will take guests right up to the downhill skiing, right from the hotels. Most ski resorts were not designed as summer and winter. You'd have the parking lot, the base lodge, the lifts that get to the ski lodge, and then the skiing. If you're going to go paddlewheeling or skimobiling, etc., you'd have to get in your car. With us, everything we're doing is within walking distance. Hot spring spa. Walking distance. Gondola. Walking distance. Cooking school. Walking distance. Starting from scratch, we could design to let people walk from their bedroom. 'If I want to go to cooking school and you want to go cross-country skiing and our wives want to go four-wheel driving, there doesn't have to be a transportation plan.

I've known and loved The Balsams for a long time. I played golf when I was a member of Rotary, maybe 35 or 40 years ago. With The Balsams of the past, the food was always great, the cross-country ski great, the alpine skiing...ehhh. We will have guests who will come to the enjoy the spa and cooking school and the spring, ride the gondola just to go up to lunch, and they're *never going to ski*. They need not. We're the full component. We don't need to have hotel partners. We don't share in revenue—we are the revenue stream. If there's a dollar being spent, it's being spent with us.

**How much bigger can The Balsams possibly get?**  
We've got it up to 11,000 acres.

**When you think of The Balsams, you think of politics, because the first few votes of a presidential election are tallied there. You've ventured into politics before. Are there any politics in your future?**  
The politics of life. I have not ruled out being an astronaut, either. I have no present plans about politics.

**How about your romantic life? Do you have a significant other?**  
I'm out of the significant other category. I'm dating a wonderful aesthetician from Freeport right now.

**You're not afraid to diversify. Tell us about ventures of yours that some Mainers might not connect with you.**  
We're doing very well with our renewable energy business, wood-pellet boilers. Our wood-pellet furnace just made it through EPA testing with flying colors. Largest manufacturer in the U.S. of wood-pellet furnaces, made in Maine. We've been in the business eight years.

**In our indoor-golf business, we've had a breakthrough. Most ball spin golf systems are priced in the \$10,000 to \$50,000 range. Ours is going to hit the \$3,000 range. Dramatic decrease in price that**

**puts it in somebody's home. That's pretty cool.**  
Then there's the drumbeat at Sunday River. I got together with Joey Kramer from Aerosmith. He and I are presenting Joey Kramer's Rockin' & Roastin' Cafe & Restaurant," transforming a restaurant at the base of Sunday River and roasting coffee. It's going to be a fun venue. Think Battle of the Bands.

**When you see the Red Sox play, what one part of your part of being on the \$700M ownership team on December 21 of 2001 comes back to you?**  
Fenway Park. When I entered the fray in October of 2000, there was a plan to remodel Fenway Park, with a \$625M pricetag. The plan was to move the park cross the street. I couldn't understand why someone would want to tear down a ballpark like Fenway. It would have been an exacting model of it, the same dimensions of it. With a single thought, we launched the purchase of the Red Sox around Fenway Park. Six of the other seven bidding groups were going to move it across the street. Or to the waterfront. Or to Suffolk. I was the guy who said no. It wouldn't be there if I hadn't debunked the myth of it sinking in the Fens. I hired Leslie Roberts & Assoc., the prestigious engineering firm who had done the evaluations of the World Trade Center repairs needed when the bombs went off in the WTC years before 9/11.

**You create dreams for vacationers. Where do you go to get away?**  
Paris, London, and Holland. But it's not a matter of going on vacation. That's not tourism. I'm not generally a tourist. That's visiting family. I'm one of the lucky Jews. How many can say I have surviving relatives in London, Paris, and Holland? Also related to luck, I certainly appreciate the ability to be intriguing after all these years. 🦋

**See "Art On Ice," on page 51 for more on Les Otten and the remarkable Albert Otten art collection.**



Otten teams up with Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer, above, at their new Sunday River restaurant/café.



Susan Collins,  
U.S. Senator  
Caribou



INTERVIEW BY OLIVIA GUNN

**O**n September 17, Sen. Susan Collins cast her 6,000th consecutive vote in Washington—18 years without ever missing a roll call. While not all of the votes were easy, and at times crossed party lines, Collins votes her conscience.

**Do you miss Olympia? Can you give us an example of “How I wish she were here, right now.”**

I very much like working with Senator Angus King, but of course I miss Olympia. I miss her most when we’re in the midst of a vigorous debate in the Republican caucus, and I wish there was another strong, centrist woman who can speak up and underscore the point I make.

**Will you feel any of the fallout, good or bad, from House Speaker Boehner’s retirement?**

My concern about the Speaker’s retirement is that it will slow negotiations on the budget. This is a critical time of the year for those negotiations. To have such chaos in who is going to be the leader of the Republicans will make those negotiations go more slowly, and it’s absolutely critical that we reach an agreement to avoid shutting down the government or defaulting on the debt. I am also concerned because of the disruptive nature in the leadership elections and how it highlights what separates us rather than what unites us, and that’s not good for the country.

**What did you think of Rep. Kevin McCarthy stepping out of the race?**

I was extremely surprised. I had seen him just a few days before, and he was looking forward to serving and confident he would be elected. It certainly came as a huge surprise to all of us on the Senate side.

**What was it like to be the first Republican senator to be re-elected after supporting same-sex marriage?**

In Maine, same-sex marriage had been passed by referendum, and it had become increasingly accepted. It wasn’t as much of a factor in my race as you might think. I’d



gone to a wedding of dear friends of mine before my election and was actually a reader in their wedding. They’d been together for 23 years, and I saw the extraordinary happiness on both their faces and the support they’d received from friends and family. I was delighted to participate in that wedding.

**What is the most difficult vote you’ve ever made away from the party line? Can you take us closer to that decision?**

That would be to repeal Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. Five years later, in 2015, that looks like a no-brainer, an easy vote. But back in 2010 there was not at all a consensus for that. And indeed, when I was serving on the Armed Services Committee at the time, I was the only Republican on the committee to vote during the committee mark up and to speak in favor of repealing Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. There were members of the committee who

had served in the military, and they were very angry at me because of my vote. I felt that it was the right thing to do, but I was clearly a minority. I’m very proud to have introduced the bill with Joe Lieberman that finally became law and ended that discrimination. To me, we should be expressing our gratitude to people who are willing to serve in our military regardless of their sexual orientation, not trying to drum them out because they are gay or lesbian. But five years

“Senator Barbara Mikulsky has taught me so much about how to be an effective senator.”

ago, there was a lot of opposition. I had to work extremely hard to get the other eight votes that allowed us to overcome a filibuster and pass the law to repeal Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. At the time, for example, the Commandant of the Marine Corps testified very strongly against the repeal. There were military leaders for the repeal and leaders very much against it.

**Bath Iron Works—what shipbuilding program do you hope they’ll land next, and how can they do it?**

The next program I hope BIW will be successful bidding on is for a series of Coast Guard cutters. These would be essential for replacing the old, worn-out cutters in the fleet. The advantage of this work is that it would help fit very nicely into the work that BIW already does for the Navy, and it would help fill in some of the gaps between building naval ships and keep a more consistent



She got to the church on time, too. At ease with husband Thomas Daffron, whom she married in 2012, and at work, above, on a visit to the White House.

## PEOPLE

work flow, and that means avoiding layoffs and keeping jobs at BIW. That's my hope. To win those contracts is going to be a challenge. We will be competing against smaller yards that have been building cutters for the Coast Guard for years, and that's not a line of work BIW has been in. BIW employees and managers are going to have to work together in a cooperative spirit to make sure they can win that very important contract.

**Drawing on your Caribou experience, what missed opportunities have there been for Maine as a border state with Canada? How could we make more out of our geographic advantage?**

We could do much more to collaborate with Canada on energy production. In particular, off-shore wind energy where collaboration with Canadian firms might allow us to produce energy together that could serve both of our countries but particularly the electricity needs of the East Coast in the United States, where so much of our population lives.

We haven't collaborated very much with the Canadians on alternative energy, and I think that offers great promise. So far, it has been a missed opportunity. It's also an opportunity for us to secure power through Hydro-Quebec.

**You're famous for attending every vote. Is there a perfect-attendance plaque on the wall in Caribou? Have you ever skipped out of anything? Did you ever cut a class in college, and if so, which one?**

My parents were pretty strict about missing school. They always stressed the importance of it, and unless you had a fever, you most likely went to school in my family. In college, I went to class because I found that if you went to class, you didn't have to do all of the reading. I'm but sure it was out of the best motivation rather than a practical realization. I will confess that I have left early, sneaked out of the endless social events that we have here in Washington. They go on for hour after hour after hour. Many of them are interesting, some of them are glamorous, occasionally they are fun, but mostly they are just too long.

**Who are your inspirations today?**

I very much look up to Pope Francis, and I was so thrilled to be a part of the official escort committee when he addressed the joint session of Congress during his trip to Washington. His face radiates joy. He is so welcom-

*(Continued on page 86)*

Chris Poulos  
Rising Star  
Portland

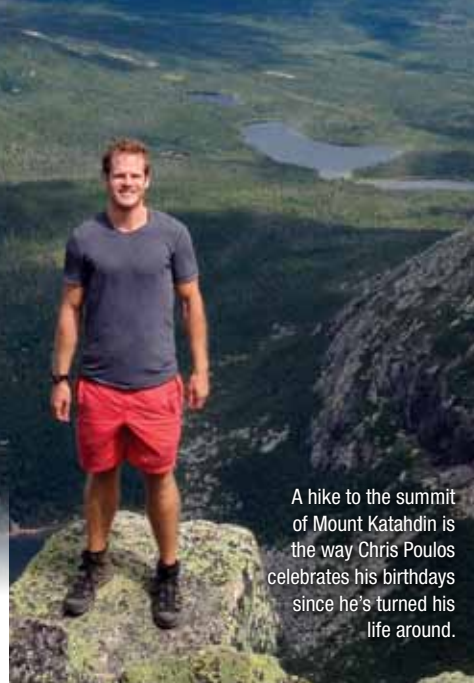
BY JEANEE DUDLEY

With his dazzling grin and preppy, almost Kennedy-like, demeanor, you'd think Christopher Poulos was a role model. And he is—after a stunning turnaround. Today, he is a third-year law student at the University of Southern Maine, an advocate for criminal sentencing reform, and a proponent of treating substance use disorder as a public health issue instead of a moral failure. He works in Maine and in Washington, D.C., with fellow advocates and policy makers to challenge and remedy the war on drugs, accomplishments that would have seemed all but impossible in 2007 when Poulos began a three-year sentence in federal prison for felony drug charges.

Triumphantly, his criminal record has taken a back seat to his accomplishments in the last eight years—a possibility he believes should be open to all people dealing with substance use disorder.

"My past does not define who I am as a human being," he explains. "What I have done and what has been done to me is part of my path but not who I am. That's why I'm able to walk into these places and work with the people I work with. I reject being defined as a junkie, a felon, or a former addict; I'm a human being, I'm a person in long-term recovery, and I'm just staying on this path."

His work in Maine and D.C. aims to help others in recovery stay on their paths. Beyond staggering incarceration rates for people dealing with substance use, Poulos remarks that there is a severe dearth of support services both for people in the prison system and those who have been released.



A hike to the summit of Mount Katahdin is the way Chris Poulos celebrates his birthdays since he's turned his life around.

"When someone goes into a correctional facility, the idea is to correct the behavior that led them there," says Poulos. "There is a significant lack of services in most places when you're incarcerated and when you get out. This leads to people who give up hope and return to the behaviors that led them there." While a lack of support both within the prison system and outside it is a primary detractor to successful recovery, Poulos says there is more to the issue.

"The collateral consequences are often more severe, such as not being able to rent an apartment, not getting a job, or, in some states, being unable to access public assistance with a criminal record. A lot of the work I do is to remove these barriers. It makes sense for everybody."

While barriers still exist, Poulos has some words of advice for people in recovery. "If you want to go to college, apply," he says. "If you want to work in government, go for it and let them say no if they want to. For me, it's been a matter of not believing anyone who tells me I can't do something or that I can't go somewhere because of where I've been. Instead of believing that, I work to the best of my ability and show them how it can be done. Small, definite, concrete steps on a daily basis has been the key—I didn't wake up and come out of alcohol and drug use or federal prison to the position I'm in now. It's been years of small steps every single day."

Those baby steps have left big footprints. Poulos says he is seeing progress locally and nationwide in the way the justice system and government perceive and treat substance

*(Continued on page 86)*



Nancie Atwell

Educator

Edgecomb

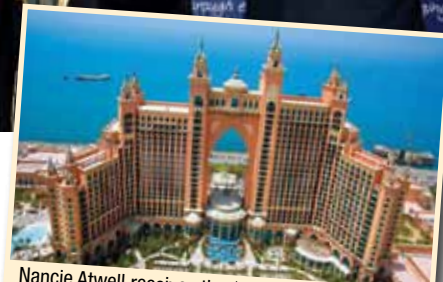
BY JEANEE DUDLEY

**W**ell-behaved teachers rarely make history. In 2015, Nancie Atwell was awarded the first Global Teacher Prize of \$1M for her outstanding dedication to research-based teaching. Her Center for Teaching and Learning, a K-8 independent demonstration school she founded in Edgecomb in 1990, emphasizes teaching students to be critical thinkers and teaching instructors to establish methods and curricula that encourage effective learning.

Atwell and her colleagues at the Center rail against Common Core standards. "In the last few years, the Common Core has really taken control of what happens in schools—especially, from my perspective, in writing and reading instruction," she says. "The Common Core has set us back de-

CADES in terms of what people learn about authentic, purposeful literacy. I was a high school student in the 1960s, when all you ever wrote were five-page essays. We're back there again, with kids reading one book the whole class, parsing and discussing every sentence—most kids might read four whole class novels a year."

Atwell's students read as many as 50 books



Nancie Atwell receives the \$1M Global Teacher Prize at Atlantis The Palm Hotel in Dubai from former president Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and Sunny Varkey of the Varkey Foundation.

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## PEOPLE

per year. “My students read deeply and widely across many genres. They become avid, habitual, critical readers. The whole emphasis on kids and teachers being engaged in what they’re doing has been lost to this set of standards, with no research basis. As someone who reads and conducts literacy research, this is especially upsetting because it’s contradicted everything that good teachers know about how to help kids become literate in the richest sense of the word.”

Atwell came under criticism in March for remarks she made to CNN, advising people who want to teach to seek an alternate course. “I’ll say the same thing again,” she says. “There is an alternative audience for methods that invite kids to engage as real writers and readers.” Her best-selling book, *In The Middle* (Heinemann, 1989) explores research-based educational methods and has sold more than 5 million copies.

“To new teachers, I say look for public schools where administrators are enlightened and will support teacher autonomy and research-based methods,” she says.

“Maine is a great place to be an innovator. It seems to invite it.”

“Or seek out independent school experiences. Although we’re on the fringe geographically here in Maine, the work I’m doing has had broad mainstream acceptance.”

Atwell has chosen to apply her winnings from the Global Teacher Prize directly to her school. “We’re not doing anything extravagant—we’re a nonprofit operating in the red for all time,” she says. “The Varkey Foundation [which awarded the prize] is writing checks directly to the Center for Teaching and Learning, which we are using to replace our boilers and some old carpet and to fund tuition assistance.”

The award ensures the continued operation of the Center for the next 10 years—an institution that will stay in Maine. “My husband and I moved here from Buffalo in 1975, and it has been wonderful,” she says. “Maine is a great place to be an innovator—it seems to invite it.”



Glenn Cummings  
USM President  
Portland

BY JEANEE DUDLEY

What a horror show. Students and faculty were demonstrating. USM seemed to be self-destructing. Then Glenn Cummings was appointed president, and in short weeks a complete reversal has taken place amid an atmosphere of eerie calm. Next stop, unbridled optimism. Who is this guy, and is he for real?

“My brother and I were the first in our family to get four-year degrees,” Cummings says. “But my grandmother got her two-year degree in teaching at the Maine Normal School in Gorham, which is now the University of Southern Maine campus.”

Cummings was inspired to follow a similar path. In the course of his career, he has served on the Maine Joint Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs, as an assistant professor of educational leadership at the University of Southern Maine, as president and executive director of the Good Will-Hinckley organization, and as deputy assistant secretary within the U.S. Department of Education under President Obama. He also served eight years in the Maine legislature, including two as Speaker of the House, before he term-limited out in 2008. A consummate academic, he has a BA from Ohio Wesleyan, an MA from Brown, a masters in public administration from Harvard’s Kennedy School, and a doctorate in education from the University of Pennsylvania.

Cummings stepped into his role as USM president in July. This followed a year of significant budget cuts resulting in faculty layoffs and program cancellations—an unenviable starting point for new leadership. According to the *Press Herald*, Cummings arrived to a

13 percent enrollment slump, or a \$2.5 million shortfall. But just before Labor Day, enrollment was down just seven percent.

“In terms of strategy, first you have to acknowledge those last few years as being difficult and acknowledge that pain,” Cummings says. “Then you can look at where you are today and position yourself for the future you want. We set high goals for ourselves because I think our assets are extremely strong. The City of Portland is certainly an asset, but not our central asset—that’s our people, particularly faculty, who create the experience for the students.”

The end game—part of an integral five-year plan for the university—is to create an environment where students feel welcome, known, and appreciated by all their faculty and the staff. Cummings is also working to improve retention and increase alumni giving.

Cummings also has community and professional support goals for the future of the university. The school’s strong and growing community engagement program places students in professional settings in Portland. “We want experiences for students in the real world to be contributing to resolving our region’s problems and challenges. At same time, students are able to learn skills like problem solving, communication and executive function—things that are essential and hard to teach in the classroom.

“The new administration team understands USM, understands Maine, and has deep respect for our faculty and staff,” he says. “I think that sets context for future success for students and the university. The pragmatic aspect to this is that if we are conservative about expenditures and bold about increasing support and commitment to students and student success, then our university will begin to thrive again.”





Pam Erickson  
Leader  
Freeport

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

**T**wice a year, a new crop of 10th-grade girls arrives at the “little yellow farmhouse” at Wolfe’s Neck Farm in Freeport, to attend a rigorous residential school semester focused on Science and Leadership at **Coastal Studies For Girls**.

“I dreamed of a semester school for girls for many years,” says Pam Erickson, founder and executive director. Semester schools, which include such programs as Chewonki in Wiscasset and the Mountain School in Vermont, are just what the name implies, a single, high-intensity high school semester. All but CSG are coed, and most are designed for juniors and seniors. “We opened in February 2010 and have been running this transformational one-of-a-kind school for 12 semesters now. It’s the only semester school for girls in the entire United States.

“For us, the decision to work with 10th graders was very intentional—I wanted to have an impact...while they’re still young...and open to the possibilities of what they can become.”

How do 10th-graders learn leadership skills? “Positive role models 24 hours a day for four months,” says Erickson, who studied biology and envi-

ronmental education at the University of Wisconsin, where she’s from, and has a masters in education from UNH. “We begin the semester with a 10-day ‘Communication Moratorium’ where there is no technology and no contact in or out of school. The girls are issued a pair of muck boots on their first day.” About those cell phones... “They can only be used for music or as cameras.”

This sounds like quite a shock to the teenage system, but she explains that it enables the girls to “settle into themselves, their community, and their environment.” Every day, regardless of weather or season, begins with a “Solo” on the shore of Casco Bay. “We walk in silence down a

“The girls are issued a pair of muck boots on their first day.”

gravel road through a farm with fields of cows, to sit and set our intention for the day. We’re out all the time on field trips. We’re an academically rigorous school, and while we focus on marine science and leadership, the girls also take English; history of the Maine coast; French or Spanish; and algebra, geometry or pre-calculus. We end each day with a closing circle, citing successes and challenges from the day. And the leadership skills, as we build a ‘toolbag’ for them to take with them, sit underneath all of the hands-on science.”

A new partnership with the College of the Atlantic benefits CSG alumnae who may later apply to COA. “A CSG student who is accepted to COA is eligible for \$10,000 a year in scholarship money. We have four CSG alumnae in the freshman class right now—two from Maine and two from out of state—these are the first students putting this affiliation to use. It’s exciting.”

Pam’s guiding principle: helping girls “reach for their goals and make a positive difference in the world.” 🌊





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## PEOPLE



**Mark Eves**  
**Speaker of the House**  
-North Berwick

INTERVIEW BY OLIVIA GUNN

Once the word was out, it seemed headline after headline followed. “Speaker of the House Files Civil Suit Against Governor...” “Eves Accuses LePage of Blackmail...” “The Good Will-Hinckley Fight Deepens...” On and on until Governor LePage, Speaker Mark Eves, and charter schools were household topics state-wide. While he admits the distraction of the lawsuit takes up a lot of energy, Eves remains convinced the legislature did a lot of bipartisan work avoiding a government shutdown and passing a middle-class tax cut. He says that, unfortunately due to the lawsuit, a lot of what was accomplished in the House and Senate has gone unnoticed.

**How is the lawsuit against Governor LePage going?**  
Right now, we’re waiting for the Governor to respond to the lawsuit. We made a decision at the end of July to move forward with a federal lawsuit based on the decision that, really, this can’t happen again. The Governor clearly abused his power and the office of the Governor to retaliate against a political opponent. So right now, we’re just in a holding pattern waiting for the governor to respond.

**You’re the first person since 1975 to sue a sitting Maine governor as an individual...**  
My wife and I did an awful lot of thinking about whether we should move forward or not. But we came to the conclusion

COURTESY PHOTO

that somebody has to stand up to the Governor and say, 'Enough is enough.' He clearly, through his own admission, used taxpayer dollars to retaliate against a political opponent. We have a citizen's legislature. I need to provide for my family outside of the legislature—it doesn't pay the bills. I've got three kids at home. If the Governor can do this to a political opponent, he can do this to anybody who disagrees with him. We aren't just doing this on behalf of my family, but on behalf of every Maine business or individual in Maine, so they don't have to live with the fear of the Governor's retaliation. It is very important that the Governor is held accountable.

**How did you learn that the governor scuttled your appointment at Good Will-Hinckley?**

I heard about it during a legislative session after the board had made a decision unanimously to hire me. First, I thought it was unfortunate because I was looking forward to working with the Governor. I know how much he cares about Good Will-Hinckley. I don't think anybody ever imagined that he would follow through on his threat to withhold money from the school... When the board ultimately decided to rescind their decision, that was a bit shocking—that the Governor could have the influence to dictate the outcome of a private employment matter.

**What is your position on charter schools today?**

My opposition to charter schools has primarily been around the funding mechanism in which public school systems have really struggled with how to make ends meet when a kid goes to a charter school. It's really a funding piece, which we were able to address this last legislative session where charter schools have their own allocation now so you don't have the tension between the public school district and the charter school. For me the siphoning off of public dollars from our local school districts was really the objection to charter schools. [As for why I applied] for the position as president of Good Will-Hinckley, I knew a bit about what they've done over their history for more than 100 years. For the past 15 years, I've worked with at-risk kids, I've made a conscious decision to work with kids who live in poverty, who have not had the start the rest of us had. It was a natural transition as I was ending my term in the legislature. I'll be turned out next year. This

*(Continued on page 87)*

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Amber Wilson  
Wish Fulfiller  
-Kennebunk

8

BY JEANEE DUDLEY

Everybody has dreams—but residents of Atria Kennebunk Senior Living have help fulfilling them. Amber Wilson is the community's Engage Life Director, heading a program that helps senior residents achieve lifelong goals.

"When people join our community, we have them fill out our Atria Resident Discover survey," says Wilson. "One of the questions is, 'What is something you've al-



"What is something you've always wanted to do, learn, or try?"

ways wanted to do, learn, or try?' Some of our residents say they've done everything, which is fine, but we want to offer our residents the opportunity to do something that

makes them feel important."

Some of these bucket-list items are tame, such as learning embroidery or having a family gathering at Atria's Kennebunk facility. Others are wilder. In August, 91-year-old resident Joyce Pompeo took her first flying lesson at the Sanford Seacoast Regional Airport. Accompanied by two friends from Atria [Joyce's sister wouldn't go up with her!], Joyce took the controls of the small

Katsuaki Suzuki  
Restaurateur  
-Portland

9

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

"I moved to Maine a year ago from New York," says Katsuaki (Kei) Suzuki, standing in the sun-washed dining room of **Ramen Suzukiya**, his restaurant on Congress Street. When asked if he worked in Manhattan restaurants, he twinkles.

"Actually, no. Cooking was my hobby. I worked in television for almost 40 years in New York. I cooked on the weekends to relax.

"I was the New York bureau senior executive producer for a Japanese TV channel. My territory covered the Arctic to the North Atlantic to Central America; it was a lot of travel. We also broadcast baseball games to Japan. We'd be in Yankee Stadium with 20 cameramen." He laughs. "So I thought running a restaurant would be easier.

"It took longer than I thought to get this open. This space was a retail store before we arrived. My son Cory and I did a lot of the work ourselves."

The snazzy, stylish, yet homey restaurant is all polished wood and sleek, clean lines. "I found a guy in Raymond to build these



Exactly where you want to be on a blustery day: Kei Suzuki's one-time hobby has blossomed into a charming East End restaurant. Rich chicken soup and fresh, house-made noodles form the base of his delicious ramen bowls.

tables." Two enormous planks with rough bark edges form a dramatic communal table in the center of the dining room. The chairs are antique wooden folding chairs from South Paris. He considers them: "I like to see people meeting strangers and talking to each other. I'm amazed how many people have come in who can speak Japanese."

Suzuki removed the wooden ceiling tiles, took them home, scrubbed them, and painted them white. "Here and there, I painted Japanese characters. He points to the ceiling, where the strokes jump off evocatively. "They mean things like *ours* and *friend*."

Ramen Suzukiya's menu is concise—four ramen bowls and three rice bowls. The noo-

dles are all made with a mix of whole wheat, all-purpose, and bread flours—all King Arthur. The stainless ramen machine is hand-cranked. "Most big places have electric ramen makers. This is very manual."

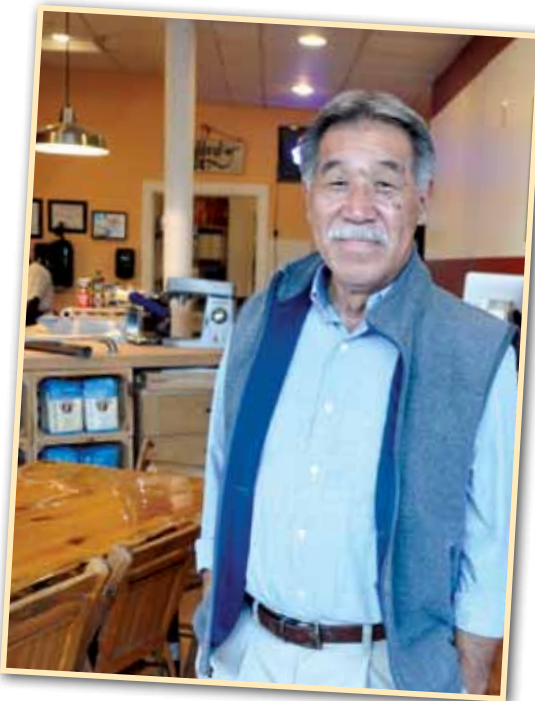
The staff is energetic and happy to learn. A young man works in the spotless back room; another measures out nests of freshly cut noodles into individual plastic bags. "Ramen needs to rest in the refrigerator a few days, so we make it every day to keep ahead." Behind the counter, Susan Zackaria, a 15-year Portlander originally from Darfur, slices scallions. "My chef," says Suzuki, introducing her. Although all the recipes are his, his role is as host during restaurant hours.

## PEOPLE

Cessna mid-air, fulfilling a lifelong dream.

"Every request is different," Amber says. "One of us always wanted to travel to China. Of course we'd love to be able to get everyone a vacation experience, but budget-wise, that's not practical. So we worked with our culinary director, who provided the cuisine. I supplied the music and decorations." Other residents' accomplishments include a helicopter ride for resident Carolynne MacDonald, 80, and a virtual tour of Nova Scotia for another.

"I was raised by my wonderful grandfather," says Amber, 29, "and he could do absolutely anything, so I am totally at home here." She has her own bucket list, too. At the top: parasailing at the pyramids of Giza. "I've always loved ancient Egyptian history and I've always wanted to go parasailing," she says. 🦋



"We're working toward having as many things from Maine as possible. My son's been farming. He took the year off to work with me, but now he'll raise our vegetables."

Suzuki commutes to the restaurant from Naples, which seems odd for such a city person. "When I moved, I didn't know Maine, so I signed a lease in Naples. But I like it out there. I had a wall of TVs in my old office. Now I never even watch TV. I hit a deer last week driving, though. It was so sad. I called the police and the first thing the officer said when he got there was, 'Do you want to keep it?' I had no idea what he meant!" 🦋



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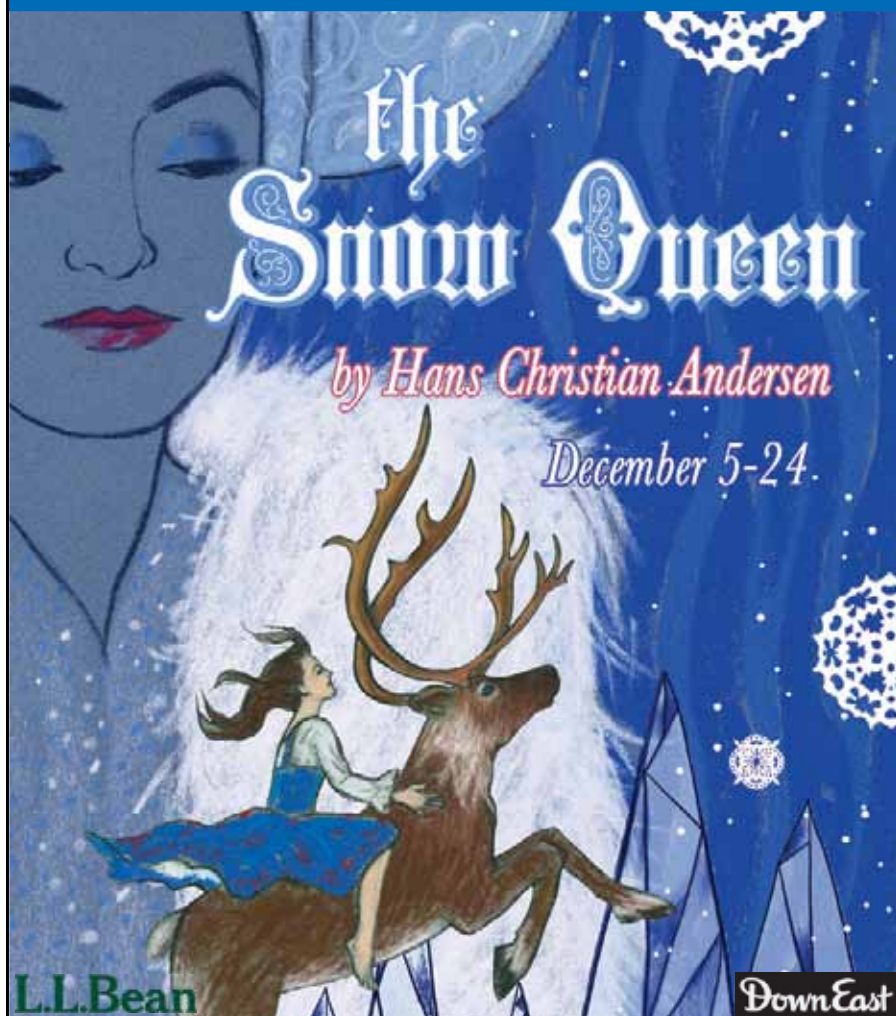
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## PEOPLE



Tanja Alexia Hollander  
Photographer

-Auburn

BY CLAIRE Z. CRAMER

Portlanders can't help but take it personally when they discover *Are You Really My Friend?*, Tanja Hollander's photography exhibit, the basis for a startling show at the Portland Museum of Art in 2012. In 2017, the sprawling Mass MoCA museum in North Adams, Massachusetts, will mount the entire installation—626 of these 'friends'—an interactive digital and analog mix of images, video, sound, and data.

"I'll be working on this until it opens," says Hollander by phone from New York, where she is meeting more of her 626 friends, a study of distance and intimacy. "I've met about 450 so far." Her life is now consumed by the obsession to travel to meet the rest. "The farthest I've been is Greece. I have a friend in Athens, but he had a friend on Hydra, so I was able to go there, too."

Hollander's website contains this strange entry: "I hear a knock, and there is a young fellow on my doorstep. He introduces himself, and I stare at him blankly. Then he says he has an Airbnb reservation for the next three days. I correct him. 'No, it's for next Thursday.'"

"We both take out our phones to check, and sure enough, I screwed up. I saw the reservation come in that morning but assumed it was for next Thursday, while I was gone. [I talk a bunch about trust in this project. Mostly I talk about blind faith and humanity while traveling. I haven't had to make a split-second decision about trust—in my own house.] I tell him that he is welcome to stay as long as he doesn't mind that I'm also here, working until I leave on Saturday morning. He agrees that it's better than a sleeping bag on the floor of his new office."

When asked if this really happened, Hollander says, "Silas? Yes. He's still there." ■

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## PEOPLE

**Senator Collins** (continued from page 30)

ing and inclusive. He is my favorite Pope since Pope John XXIII swept into the Vatican decades ago. In politics, there were a number of senators who took me under their wing when I first arrived. Sen. John Chafee of Rhode Island, who has since died, is certainly one. Judd Gregg and Joe Lieberman were real mentors to me. I've always loved Papa Bush, as I call him, for his courage and integrity and for being an excellent president and an even better person. If I had to pick someone in the current senate, it would probably be Senator Barbara Mikulski. She is the senior woman in the Senate and has served longer than any woman in history. She has taught me so much about how to be an effective senator. From the very first days I was in the Senate, she taught me the appropriations process. To this day, because she is the senior Democrat and I'm the Senior Republican woman, we work together on a host of issues. She is probably the person who I learn the most from today. 🐦

**Christopher Poulos** (continued from page 30)

use. Maine is adopting Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion—known as the LEAD Program—which has seen success in Seattle, Santa Fe, and Albany. Instead of arresting and charging identified substance users, the LEAD Program connects them with substance-use disorder treatment resources and community support. The result in Seattle has been a 60-percent drop in recidivism.

Poulos is also involved with Young People in Recovery, a non-profit that offers workshops, seminars, one-on-one, and group counseling for recovering youth. The organization is a national network that also

Chris Poulos suits up and curtails a camping trip to head to a Drug Control Policy meeting in Washington.



connects people with housing, education, and employment opportunities. "It's hard to stay sober with no home, job, or education," says Poulos. "Young People in Recovery seeks to remedy that." 🐦



Mark Eves (continued from page 35)

aligned perfectly with what I've been doing the past 15 years.

Has the lawsuit compromised your effectiveness in Augusta? Are you treated differently?

Absolutely not. In fact, there has been a real recognition by both Republicans and Independents and Democrats in the legislature that the Governor crossed a line. If anything, it has strengthened the relationship within the legislature and our ability to work together. I think it's further isolated the Governor and his ability to be effective for our state.

Tell us about your education, from California to Kentucky to Maine. What family therapy techniques do you think should be used in the Maine legislative family right now?

I was born in California and was about three months old when we moved to Oregon for about five years before we moved to Tucson until I was 11. Then we moved to Louisville, Kentucky. I went to the University of Louisville and graduate school at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Then my parents retired to Maine, [so] after graduate school my wife and I decided to move to Maine to be closer to family and also because of what we knew of Maine—all of the recreational activities, great public schools, small communities. It sounded like a place we wanted to be. We moved here and have fallen in love with it. We've had three kids in the last 14 years.

My background training in marriage and family therapy has been an asset working with the legislature. It's a systemic approach where you look at the impact of not just individual behavior and decisions between two individuals but how that impacts a larger group. Working with committees or the legislative caucus, or with coalitions, it has really helped me bring a set of skills to the legislature that has been really effective.

What does the future hold?

I plan to stay focused on my job as Speaker until my term is up next year. I keep an open mind and never close doors. I've loved the time I've been able to serve in the legislature; if there weren't term limits, I would continue to do this. It really does energize me, and I feel very good about the work we've been able to do to address some of the major issues. So, I don't know. Stay tuned. ■

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