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Celebration of fiber arts

Maine college hosts artistic classes at Searsport campground



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Amy Felske (right) gives pointers to Cynthia Fournier of Montreal during a class on creating an element doll on the first day of the Fiber College of Maine at the Searsport Shores Ocean Park and Campground.

BY SHELBY MARTIN
BDN STAFF

A scarf dancing with fluid figures of hand-painted bison. A delicately crafted needle-felted seahorse sculpted carefully from wool. A rug designed and meticulously hooked by hand.

These are only a few of the items artists at the Fiber College of Maine can create.

These artists and many others are teaching 50 different classes offered at the annual festival aimed at celebrating fiber arts in all forms. Fiber artists, crafters and students are gathering in Searsport for classes in spinning, rug hooking, knitting, quilt making and wood carving, among many others. This year the Fiber College takes place from Wednesday, Sept. 9, to Sunday, Sept. 13, and was expected to draw more than 250 students for classes taught by artists from Maine and beyond.

The event is hosted at Searsport Shores Ocean Campground, a business that has been in Fiber College founder Astrig Tanguay's family for 22 years and has hosted the event for nine of them.

The campground boasts 125 campsites but also has organic gardens, angora goats and Navajo-Churro sheep. It's a place for families to stay and enjoy the quarter-mile beachfront property in the summer, but come September people flock to the campground for a different kind of repose: learning about fiber arts.

It all began when Tanguay went to the World Ecotourism Summit in 2002 as a representative of her family's 40-acre campground on Penobscot Bay and learned the United States lacks in culturally based tourism. At the time the campground also was lacking in visitors during one of Maine's most beautiful seasons: autumn.

"We had the whole month of September where we weren't getting any guests," Tanguay said. "It all started with the idea of creating an event that would celebrate



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Pam outdusis Cunningham, a Penobscot master basket maker, shows students how to start a basket during a class at the Searsport Shores Ocean Park/Campground on the first day of the Fiber College of Maine.

Maine traditions when we're looking beautiful and don't have a whole lot of visitors at the campground."

A trip to Florida later on led her to develop her ideas for an event of her own. She visited a festival hosted by the Florida Gourd Society in Tampa, which specialized in classes about decorating with and creating art out of gourds. The format of the college and support of those hosting it led to her own resolve to create a gathering dedicated to celebrating fiber arts.

Tanguay thought the campground would start small with the event, so she put out a call for teaching applications. She figured an offering of 20 classes would provide a well-rounded function.

She never thought she would receive 40 applications and accept all of them.

"They were all so good we had no idea how to say no," she said.

What began in 2002 as a simple idea has blossomed into the largest fiber arts education gathering on the East Coast.

In addition to classes, vendors give demonstrations, bonfires light up the beach in

the evening, there are nightly gatherings of music and dance and plenty of booths sell food and merchandise.

Two of the instructors this year are artists who came to their craft later in life and find fulfillment in creating pieces that hold artistic merit.

Katharine Cobey of Cushing and Sally Savage of Searsport will teach classes at the five-day event. Cobey, once a writer and poet, came upon her craft of sculptural knitting at a challenging point in her life.

"In '76 I got injured. I damaged my spine, and my ability to walk went out the window. I was getting sick of reading and writing, so I started to knit again," Cobey said. She revisited the craft she had learned at a young age and found herself becoming more and more involved with it. "At some point I found I was going to have to make a choice between writing and doing what I was."

So she chose to keep knitting.

"I decided I would only do it if I could knit anything I wanted," Cobey said. "I was

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Event to celebrate sustainable living

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

PORTLAND — It's not easy being green, a famous frog once said.

In Maine's rural pockets and urban enclaves, living sustainably takes practice, extra vigilance and knowhow. But as the second annual Portland Greenfest demonstrates this weekend, eco-awareness can strengthen community and spark festivity.

On Saturday, Sept. 12, scores of organizations, businesses, musicians and artists will fan out over Monument Square for the daylong jamboree of living footloose and carbon free.

Although the average Portlander is environmentally hip, new developments in composting, electric cars, water pollution and fuel alternatives are always emerging. The festival unites exhibitors, food trucks, vendors and workshops.

"We created this because there was no one place where people could go to learn about all of these things at once," said Jeff Edelstein, director of Great-

er Portland Sustainability Council, the Portland-based nonprofit running the fest.

Protecting local waterways, heating your home with solar, wood pellet demos, backyard beekeeping and tips on ways to power your car and home with recycled cooking oil are all part of the free event.

Last year 5,000 people came out for Portland Greenfest. Edelstein expects more at its second iteration.

"It was a fantastic first year. Feedback was great. People learned a lot about environmental stability and ways to be more green in their homes and businesses and schools," he said.

This year is "bigger and better," with food trucks Fish 'n' Ships, Locally Sourced, Love Kuppakes and Maine-ly Meatballs chosen for their use of local ingredients and recyclable plates and utensils. All waste will be collected by urban composters Garbage to Garden and We Compost It!

Music by local musicians, from folk to African fusion, will fill the air as artists lead work-



COURTESY OF JOSHUA GATES

Portland Greenfest is a celebration of sustainability in the state, with an emphasis on urban environmental issues.

shops for kids in upcycled art. Hard-to-recycle materials, such as rope fragments and old sails, will magically become mini masterpieces.

"It's a celebration of the amazing activities going on around our region," Edelstein said.

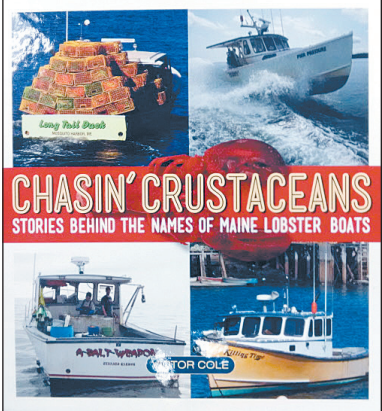
An afternoon series in the Portland Public Library focuses on food and agriculture. The film "Growing Local" by Maine Farm-land Trust screens twice, at 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Between shows, there will be a discussion about Maine's agriculture movement, examining ways to increase food security. A discus-

sion on sustainable seafood from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute caps the program at 3:30 p.m.

With the Common Ground Country Fair in Unity coming up at the end of the month, is Portland Greenfest a precursor?

"We totally support the Common Ground Fair, but it takes a lot of driving to get there," Edelstein said. "This is close to home [for southern Maine] and is sustainable in that way."

Portland Greenfest is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at Monument Square in Portland. The event is free. For more information, visit portlandgreenfest.org.



What's in a boat name?

New book explores lobstering stories

BY SARAH WALKER CARON
BDN STAFF

You've probably glanced at a boat name once or twice, almost absentmindedly. From simple one-word names to those inspired by actual people, the often boldly emblazoned names identify boats, a requirement for federally documented vessels. But what inspires those names? That's what lobsterman Victor Cole decided to find out.

In his new book, "Chasin' Crustaceans," which was released by Down East Books in July, Cole shares the stories behind the names of Maine lobster boats. There's the story of "Brother Pidge," named for a lobsterwoman's brother who lost his life while saving his father in a boating accident. There's also "At Last," named for the Etta James song that was special to a fisherman and his new wife.

Named after one of the boats featured in the book, Cole said "Chasin' Crustaceans" was something he had wanted to write for years.

"I had the idea to do this book for over 10 years. Every year I said I've got to do it, I've got to do it," said Cole, who has been a lobsterman for 12 years and was in the marine patrol before that.

Cole was fascinated with where boat names came from.

"I was always taken with the names of boats, and I would ask [boat owners] why and the names behind them. It's just a fascination with the names," Cole said. "It takes a lot to name a boat. Some people will work months and months to try to come up with a name. Some people will have contests."

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Camden film festival returns on Sept. 17

BY SHELBY MARTIN
BDN STAFF

The film begins with a unique view, the camera pointed toward the sky from underwater, surrounded by sunlight filtering through a blue-green expanse. The slow, rasping sound of a diver inhaling oxygen fills the speakers, and the picture seems to flow with the movement of water.

It's the beginning of a story about what scallop diver James Sewell experiences every day at work.

"Diving for Scallops," a film by Portland residents Christoph Gelfand and Caroline Losneck, chronicles the trade of Sewell, one of only 30 scallop divers left in Maine. The film will be screened next weekend as part of the 11th Camden International Film Festival.

CIFF, scheduled for Sept. 17-20 at venues in Camden, Rockport and Rockland, will include screenings of more than 60 features and short films, such as that of Gelfand and Losneck, with filmmakers attending nearly every showing.

Passes for the festival can be purchased online, and individual tickets for screenings can be purchased at the screening venues for \$10 each. In addition to the feature screenings, collections of short films will be screened each morning of the festival free of charge.

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