



MICKY BEDELL | BDN

Eric Zelz (left) and his wife, Abigail, talk about their collaboration on a children's book celebrating food and history called "Pass The Pandowdy, Please: Chewing on History with Famous Folks and Their Fabulous Foods" at their home in Bangor.

## Tasty bites of history

New children's book explores figures and their favorite foods

BY SARAH WALKER CARON  
BDN STAFF

Sailors got scurvy (they should have eaten fruit!). Napoleon often needed to change clothes after his sloppy meals. And explorers set off in search of spices to enhance the flavors of their foods.

These are some of the food history tidbits included in a newly released children's book. "Pass the Pandowdy, Please," by Abigail Ewing Zelz and illustrated by Eric Zelz, was released by Tilbury House Publishers on Tuesday. The book looks at what famous folks throughout history ate.

From Cleopatra and her guests eating with their hands — and her red lipstick made from crushed beetles and ants — to Neil Armstrong's space food, the book is full of historic tidbits, food insights and interesting information about the people, eras and foods.

"Food is so ... cultural. I mean, that seems so obvious, but ... The DaVinci one I found



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Some of Eric Zelz's watercolor illustrations for a children's book done in collaboration with his wife, Abigail.

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really fascinating because it's not my background at all. So learning about manners and how they shared utensils. And in a lot of cultures they just ate with their hands, things you don't think about," Abigail Zelz said.

The Zelzes, who live in Bangor, have been married for 28 years and have a daughter, Charlotte, 19. Eric Zelz is a former graphics manager for the BDN. During a recent interview, they joked that, besides Charlotte, this is their first major

project together.

"It was great, of course, obviously, working as a team because you hear so many instances of authors providing their material to an illustrator ... they don't get to see each other's work until it's compiled, and we were able to bounce ideas off [each other]," Abigail Zelz said.

The idea came after they met with Jonathan Eaton, co-publisher, and his wife Mariellen, who works in sales and marketing for the publisher.

"We just kind of brainstormed around their conference table on what might be a fun book. When they realized that Abby is a historian, they thought that the combination of food and history might be a fun thing," Eric Zelz said.

"We all seemed to coalesce around that idea," Abigail Zelz agreed.

So off they set, with a parameter of how many people could be included — there are 16 — and a plan to include folks from different periods in history and cultures.

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## 'Calendar Girls' hits all the right notes

BY JUDY HARRISON  
BDN STAFF

What the members of the Knapely branch of the Women's Institute wanted in 1998 was to buy a settee for the visitors' lounge at the local hospital. What they wound up doing was raising enough money to buy the furniture and to fund a blood cancer research foundation.

THEATER  
REVIEW

The English organization also apparently started a nude calendar trend and sparked a film that grossed \$96 million worldwide. The movie was so successful that screenwriter Tim Firth turned it into a play.

"Calendar Girls" kicked off Penobscot Theater Company's 43rd season Saturday at the Bangor Opera House. It's a tale of women's friendships, their ability to love and support one another through life's ups and downs and how they help each other take risks by taking it all off.

PTC's production, directed by Angela Bonacasa, milks every laugh and sentimental moment from Firth's two-act script. She allows the local cast of nine women and three men to form a tight ensemble that hits every naked emotional note just right even if the British accents sometimes are uneven.

Julie Arnold Lisnet as Annie and Sharon Zolper as Chris have known each other for years and it shows in their performances. Both women create multi-layered characters who are believable and genuine. Despite a rift in the Second Act, the audience is sure these two will be fast friends forever.

Ruth, portrayed with a gentle nuance by Amy Roeder, is the character who truly comes into her own by posing for the calendar. With each scene change, Roeder peels layers off of Ruth, until theatergoers are applauding her inner strength.

Jasmine Ireland as the well-dressed Celia and Irene Dennis as the social climbing matron Marie are memorably hysterical. Both actresses rise above the script that presents the characters as stereotypes to reveal the real reasons each woman behaves as she does. Each woman gives a tour de force performance.

In smaller roles, Alison Cox, Margo Lukens, Carol Varney and

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## Meet the 'buttery, flaky crust' couple

BY EMILY BURNHAM  
BDN STAFF

After 57 years of marriage, Jack and Sonja Palmer are pretty used to each other's quirks, from John's predilection to mix up words in his sentences, to Sonja's patience being tried, sometimes, by her husband's comical personality.

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But after two full rounds of the wildly popular "buttery, flaky crust" commercial outtakes going viral there are many, many more people from all over the world who have been introduced to the good-natured, down-to-earth Bangor couple. Now, when they go out for breakfast at Dysart's — the beloved local eatery with locations in Hermon and Bangor, for whom they shot the commercial — they are often approached by fans.

"People say we're famous, and I

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MICKY BEDELL | BDN

Jack and Sonja Palmer sit down for breakfast at Dysart's Restaurant in Hermon on Monday morning, a habit they practice almost every day. The Maine couple, who have been married for 57 years, have enjoyed internet fame once again after a blooper from a commercial they shot over three years ago resurfaced and was featured on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert."

## Artist installs exhibit in shipping container

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE  
BDN STAFF

Last fall, University of Southern Maine graduate Justin Levesque of Portland spent nine days aboard an Eimskip container ship traveling from Portland to Reykjavik — all in the name of art.

"It was amazing. I loved it. I'm a little obsessed with ships. The smell of the sea and gasoline gives me flashbacks and makes me homesick," Levesque said.

The photographer captured the working man's view of marine trade through colorful and gritty images and podcast interviews. The results of his on-board residency, "ICE-LANDx207: Container," lands in Congress Square

Park on Sept. 27.

Fittingly, the photographer's dream project will be shown in a shipping container.

"You'll be able to walk through it," said Levesque, who became intrigued by the idea of chronicling the crew shortly after Eimskip, an Icelandic shipping company, opened its North Atlantic headquarters in Portland in 2013. "Iceland has shown up in my backyard and entered into the Maine economy through shipping. I wanted to know, 'What kind of effect does that have to our economic development?'"

Through his raw and nautical images aboard the MV Selfoss, viewers see below and above deck,

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— Larry King, CNN



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