



NEW LIGHTING ILLUMINATES LORENA THOMBS' KITCHEN IN BATH RECENTLY. THE UPGRADED LIGHTS ARE PART OF A PACKAGE OF HOME REPAIRS MADE BY BATH HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORP. THAT HELP THOMBS, 72, STAY IN HER HOME.

# Home

Continued from Page C1

sured by reduced rates of falls, hospitalizations, 911 calls and house fires. Since October, the CAP program has completed 21 home improvement projects in the region at an average

cost in materials of \$1000 per job, covered by the Gorman foundation grant. The foundation recently announced additional funding for the next two years, and Keller said other grants and donations are also in the offing. The biggest challenge, Keller said, is getting the word out about CAP and persuading eligible seniors

to take advantage of the program. "This is all driven by the homeowner; they have to initiate the call," she said. "But this is a population of people who don't necessarily want to ask for help." For more information about the CAP program, contact the Bath Housing Development Authority at 443-3116.

# Rights

Continued from Page C1

Today, Pathfinder International supports access to contraception and safe abortion, maternal and infant health, adolescent health, prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, and advocacy and educational outreach in more than 20 countries, with a particularly strong presence in India, sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. The organization now receives the bulk of its funding through the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID, a program of the U.S. Department of State. Judy Kahrl serves on the board.

## A feminist's path

The early exposure to her father's idealism and the controversial goals of Pathfinder nurtured Kahrl's independent spirit. "I was never what anyone would call a radical feminist," she said. "But I always had an interest in the issues that affect women and felt that women's perspectives should be examined and considered."

A graduate of Radcliffe College, she married in 1954 and moved with her husband to Ohio, where he taught English at Ohio State University. Their first child — one of four — was born in 1959, and she became active in La Leche League, a then-new organization aimed at promoting breastfeeding as the safest, cheapest, most nutritious and most natural way to feed a baby. At the time, she noted, prepackaged infant formulas were being heavily marketed to women in higher socioeconomic groups. Breastfeeding was represented as old-fashioned and declasse.

In 1963, she read Betty Friedan's groundbreaking book "The Feminine Mystique," which challenged American women to seek fulfillment beyond the traditional roles of homemakers, wives and mothers.

"I didn't understand why she was [angry] off, frankly," Kahrl said. "I was loving my family life." But over time, "it became clear to me that women were being squeezed out of leadership roles, that they were hitting the glass ceiling — long before anyone was actually calling it the glass ceiling."

At Ohio State, Kahrl completed a master's degree in cinema and photography and a Ph.D. in adult education. She worked as a personal counselor for a while. After her husband died suddenly in 1989, she was hired as a consultant to a boys-only private school as it went co-ed and diversified its student body. A second marriage ended in divorce, and Kahrl relocated in the late 1990s to a saltwater farm on the lower reaches of the Kennebec River, where she and her first husband had planned to retire together.

## The mission comes home

Proposals surface regularly in Maine and other states to require a "cooling-off period" of several days before a woman can terminate an unwanted pregnancy, to ban second-trimester abortions, to require parental consent for minors to obtain birth control or an abortion, to require that abortion clinics conform to hospital standards



JULIA KAHRL (FROM LEFT), ELIZA TOWNSEND, CEO OF THE MAINE WOMEN'S POLICY CENTER, AND OAMSHRI AMARASINGHAM, ADVOCACY DIRECTOR AT ACLU MAINE, DISCUSSED THE IMPORTANCE OF FILLING VACANT JUDICIAL SEATS WITH APPOINTEES WHO UPHOLD PRINCIPLES OF REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE RECENTLY AT THE CURTIS MEMORIAL LIBRARY IN BRUNSWICK.

and to require abortion providers to have admitting privileges at a local hospital. These and other measures "for the so-called protection of women and girls," Kahrl argues, are medically unnecessary, prohibitively expensive and really aimed at eroding the constitutionally protected right to abortion and women's ability to determine their own reproductive and economic choices.

"Whenever any subordinate group gains power, the dominant group pushes back," she said. "We see this backlash happening now against the black community, and we see it happening against women."

In recent years, "I had been feeling anxious about the ongoing efforts [in this country] to restrict access to abortion and birth control," Kahrl said.

Then, in 2013, she visited a Pathfinder project in Mozambique. "I met with a group of grandmothers who were going around in their communities talking about birth control," Kahrl said. "And the light came on." When she got back to Maine, she sent a blast email to a group of age-appropriate women in her social and professional sphere, and Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights was born.

To date, GRR! members in their trademark yellow T-shirts have demonstrated as a group at the State House, met individually with lawmakers and sent thank you notes to those who have voted to protect access to abortion and contraception. They conduct panel discussions, including one earlier this week at the public library in Brunswick examining the backlog of unfilled judicial seats at every level in

the nation, including on the U.S. Supreme Court. They partner with other groups such as the Maine Women's Fund, the Maine Family Planning Association, the Maine People's Alliance and the Maine Civil Liberties Union to build strength and awareness around the issues they champion.

GRR!'s emergence comes at an important time, said former Rep. Sherry Huber, 78, of Falmouth, who served the Maine Legislature from 1976 through 1982. Huber, who ran twice, unsuccessfully, for governor in the 1980s, describes herself as a "progressive Republican." Her late husband, David Huber, also a Republican, served in the House and the Senate and was the primary legislative force behind the creation of subsidized family planning services here in 1971.

"The right wing has never given up since Roe v. Wade was passed," Huber said. She said it would be all too easy for women to lose the hard-won freedoms established over the past 50 years.

"If men were able to get pregnant and bear children, there would be no issue [over their right to contraception and abortion]," she said. "I marvel that there are people who argue that women shouldn't have that right."

"People don't expect to see a bunch of grandmothers in yellow T-shirts show up at a demonstration or a rally, talking about these issues," Kahrl said, "but it seems to have an impact. I guess everyone knows you don't mess around with grandmothers."

For information, visit grandmothersforreproductiverights.org.

# Boomers

Continued from Page C1

ticipates willingly, and if you complete the process within six months.

**Parental Caregiving** — This badge is one of the most challenging, yet many boomer women earn it simply by being a daughter to aging parents. Qualifying tasks include anything that helps your parents live independently, such as coordinating doctor visits, medications and a getting a lifeline device. This badge, shaped like angel wings, is automatically awarded if an elderly parent lives with you and/or memory impairment is an issue.

**Estate Planning** — This is one of the ultimate tests of adulthood. Minimum requirements for this badge include having a will, a trust (if appropriate), written medical directives and power of attorney and beneficiary designations. Bonus points if you've discussed all this with your adult children. Extra bonus points if you've made your final wishes known.

**Yes, I'm a Feminist** — Any woman who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s should automatically qualify for this badge. To do so, you believe in equal economic, political, cultural, personal and social rights for women, including equal opportunities in education and employment. You also think it's a mistake to tell girls they can be anything they want when they grow up — not because they can't, but because it would never occur

to them that they couldn't.

**Comfortable in My Own Skin** — While you may wish your skin were less wrinkled, you like the person who is inside it. You wear what you like, color your hair or not, get Botox or not, and feel free to express yourself without worrying what other people think. Your sense of self worth doesn't depend on the approval of others. Come to think of it, you don't need no stinkin' badge to prove it, either.

**I Can Laugh at Myself** — There's a saying, "Blessed are we who can laugh at ourselves, for we shall never cease to be amused." This badge is yours if you've reached the point where you not only laugh at your own all-too-human fumbles and foibles, but you also share them with friends because you know they'll laugh with you — not at you.

**Parenting Adult Children** — Your adult children have left the nest and live independently. You are the antithesis of a helicopter parent in that you're not overly involved in your children's lives, and offer advice only if you're asked for it. If they are married, you don't criticize their spouse, and the words, "When are you going to give me a grandchild?" have never passed your lips. You don't strive to be your child's best friend (nor are they yours), and you don't bitch to them about their father, ever.

**Sandwich Generation** — Automatically awarded if you still have underage children living at home *and* you are caring for an elderly par-

ent. Holders of this badge are entitled to "me" time, a mani/pedi, a friend to lend an empathetic ear and/or adult beverages whenever needed.

**DIY Survival** — You have completed a do-it-yourself home-improvement project with your spouse — and lived to tell the tale, and are still speaking to each other. You may also earn this badge if, mid-project, you and your spouse agree to hire a professional to complete the job to keep your marriage intact, demonstrating wisdom and maturity regardless of who was right.

**Walk Away** — This badge acknowledges your ability to remove yourself from other people's nonsense because you no longer feel compelled to solve problems that aren't yours. Whenever someone tries to suck you into their drama, you simply say, "Not my circus, not my monkeys" and walk away.

**I Don't Give a Damn** — This is the supreme badge of honor at midlife. It's awarded at that point when you realize just how short life is, and you refuse to squander your precious time with people you don't like, doing things you don't really want to do. To be awarded this badge, you must first earn the "Saying No," "Comfortable in My Own Skin" and "Walk Away" badges, demonstrating that you can set boundaries, love yourself, and not give a damn about what other people think of the choices you make about your own life.

Read more from Roxanne Jones at boomerhaiku.bangordailynews.com/.

# Haskell

Continued from Page C1

stewarding our little bit of the planet. And it pleases me to invest my time, energy and creativity in this lovely home I now share with Douglas. We were married last September.

This spring, we decided to replace the funky old wall that holds the asparagus bed on the hillside. It was built about 40 years ago, we suspect, of discarded railroad ties from the track that runs behind the house. On a hot day, the

acrid smell of creosote was still present, even though the timbers were rotten and crumbling and starting to slide down toward the road.

We looked into having the wall torn out and replaced by a professional, but it was too pricey for our modest budget. So instead, Douglas ordered up a bunch of new landscape timbers and some hardware. We watched a six-minute video from "This Old House" on building a timber wall. And last weekend, the two of us hitched up our jeans, pulled that old wall apart and built the

new one. Just like that.

It wasn't quite that simple, of course — it took a lot of grunting and sweating, digging and lifting, measuring and adjusting. The new wall is a huge improvement, but if you look closely you can see it is, shockingly, not precisely perfect. It was a tough, dirty job, but a very satisfying one, and a solid, collaborative contribution to the future of this handsome property and to our future together.

Read more of Meg Haskell at livingitforward.bangordailynews.com/.

# Where in the Woods?

## Trail Identification Contest!

**BDN**  
**Aislinn Sarnacki**  
Bangor Daily News reporter for Outdoors

**Online, visit:**  
[actoutwithaislinn.bangordailynews.com](http://actoutwithaislinn.bangordailynews.com)

Guess where Aislinn took her latest hike, submit your guess by 7am, Tuesday, for a chance to win an LLBean Gift Card!

**Good luck!**

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