



The Morgan Bay Zendo in Surry.

ABIGAIL CURTIS | BDN

## Faiths

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ing how you got wet," he said.

Studying under Nowick was like that. Guilford kept working with the teacher until Nowick's 1985 retirement. Guilford also met another student, Susan, who lived in another cabin on the property. The two got married in the zendo, its uncluttered, spacious wooden interior proving to be an auspicious place to start a life together, and while they no longer live in the cabins, they didn't move very far away and remain in Surry.

Nowadays, fewer people come to the zendo for Buddhist practices including Sunday sitting meditation from April to early December or, in the warmer months, Tuesday evening tea, chanting, walking meditation and a talk in the Kwan Um School of Zen tradition. On New Year's Day, those numbers swell, Susan Guilford said. As many as 60 people come and begin the year in the zendo. There's something special about meditating in the company of others, she said.

"I think it's a grounding kind of experience," she said just after a recent Sunday morning meditation had concluded. "It's tapping into something that's deeper than myself. It's doing something in community."

Since Nowick retired, the zendo has not had a formal teacher, which has affected the numbers of people who walk down the tranquil path through the woods to get there. Still, those who remain are striving to take care of it. A recent capital campaign raised \$25,000 to repair the structure's foundation and replace its weathered entryway. The zendo sponsors and arranges retreats with teachers from various traditions that take place from May to December. Also, seekers and travelers are still welcome to stay in

the cabins, one of which is available to rent on Airbnb.com during the warmer months.

Susan and Charles Guilford have practiced at the zendo for many years, and it is important to them that it remains viable.

"I don't know what the future is," Susan Guilford said. "I do know it's a place that's worth preserving. When there isn't a teacher, it's like maintaining a possibility."

Her husband agrees. "It's been a deep part of my life for the last 40 years," Charles Guilford said. "It should be used. People should know it's there. It's an extraordinary place."

Over in Industry, the ashram was founded in 1988 by its guru, also named Bhagavan, but who formerly was known as Mark Lescault and who had a healing practice in Farmington. The guru, or spiritual teacher in the Hindi tradition, was searching for land all over the East Coast and found what he was looking for in Franklin County.

"He pretty much stumbled upon this pristine plot of property. He felt drawn to it," Bhagavan Das Lescault said. "It fit the requirements for a hermitage."

As the guru built the first buildings on the land, he also attracted students, including Bhagavan Das Lescault. In the late 1990s, the 19-year-old was studying at the University of Maine at Farmington, and his mother introduced him to the healer.

"She knew I was searching for a deeper meaning and said, 'You should meet this guy.' I did. We hit it off. We became very good friends," Bhagavan Das Lescault said. "He was very sincere and true. I started to visit with him, talk to him about the state of the world."

The college student struggled with what he wanted to do with his life, and when he began learning about yogic

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SUSAN GUILFORD



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Susan Guilford (left) of Surry strikes the bell that marks the beginning and end of a 25-minute meditation sitting period on Dec. 6 at the Morgan Bay Zendo in Surry. Sitting next to her is Peter Goebel of Lamoine, who was on his third visit to the zendo.

philosophy, it resonated. He left school and joined the ashram, where his life is now firmly rooted. There, he raises his children, practices yoga, meditates, builds and supports the guru.

"An ashram is very disciplined. People who live in ashrams are disciples," Bhagavan Das Lescault said.

In the early morning, the adult disciples head to the straw-bale yoga building for morning practice. After the grownups leave, the children come in and do their own yoga practice. Then the youngsters are homeschooled together at the ashram.

"The unique thing about the children is that most of them were born into the community with home births," he said. "This is the only thing they've known."

Although some in the

Farmington area don't know what to make of the ashram community, it is "very open" to the public, Bhagavan Das Lescault said. Grandparents come to visit their grandchildren, and some members work outside the ashram, like him.

An upcoming Winter Solstice Yoga Festival, held 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20, will feature a yoga intensive, vegetarian food, children's events, a tour of the grounds and a 5,000 year old traditional Yogi fire ceremony.

"We highly encourage people to come find out about it," he said. "In Farmington, there's tons of rumors about us. There's just a fear, a stigma. We want our neighbors to know who we are. It's not like we sit in the woods and don't want people to come. It's very interactive."

## Kids eat more vegetables when salad bar is in lunch line

BY KATHRYN DOYLE  
REUTERS

Kids in middle schools eat more fruits and vegetables when the salad bar is in the lunch line than when it's outside the line, according to a new study.

"We were surprised, not that there was a difference in amounts of fruits and vegetables that students took and consumed, but by the size of the difference that placement had on students' choices," said lead author Marc A. Adams of Arizona State University.

The researchers compared the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables taken, consumed and wasted by 533 Phoenix area middle-school students. Half of the students went to schools with salad bars in the serving line before the point of purchase and half went to schools where the salad bar was elsewhere in the cafeteria, after the point of purchase.

The students went through the lunch line and selected their items as usual, and when they were done getting food the researchers weighed the fruit or vegeta-

ble items on their trays.

After lunch, the research staff collected student trays to measure fruit and vegetable waste.

More than 98 percent of students at schools with salad bars in the lunch line self-served some fruit or vegetables, compared to 23 percent of kids in other schools.

Those with salad bars in the line also consumed more than four times more fruit and vegetables than other students, and threw more fruit and vegetable items away, the research team reported in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.

"Based on our results, if schools have the space available, we recommend that schools place salad bars inside of the lunch line in the path of students before they pay," Adams told Reuters Health by email. "Once students exit the serving line, most will not seek out additional opportunities to take fruits and vegetables because it might mean breaking away from friends or navigating busy cafeterias with short lunch periods; only highly motivated students will seek out salad bars."

## Husson seeks survey participants

BANGOR — Researchers at Husson University are trying to understand the vegetable consumption of local populations in Maine.

Consumption of cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower or cabbage, may reduce the risk of various types of cancer. Here is a website for a survey asking questions about your consumption of cruciferous vegetables: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ccvq4>

Participation is completely voluntary and anonymous, and researchers Yanyan Li, Ph.D., assistant professor of nutrition, and Sarah L. Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of social pharmacy, are offering a \$5 "thank you" gift card.

## Midweek market at Bangor Grange

BANGOR — The Ohio Street Winter Farmers Market will be open 2-6 p.m. every other Wednesday, at Bangor Grange Hall, 1192 Ohio St.

The following vendors are expected to participate:

- Farnetta Farm: beef, lamb, chicken and eggs.
- Island Farm Bakery: soups, baked beans, dips, pizza and oven-ready meals.
- Leaves and Blooms Greenhouse: yeast breads, plants and wreaths.
- Rollins Orchards: apples, cider, vegetables, milk and dairy products and eggs.
- The Wholegrain Bake Shop: gluten-free baked goods.
- Downeast Beads: handmade jewelry and beading supplies.

For information, call 973-3976.

## Somerset Extension Homemakers events

Extension Homemakers, partners with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, extend adult education into home and community in the areas of food safety, nutrition and health, gardening, cultural and creative arts, financial planning and going green. Individual groups have community service projects for veterans and families in need, donate to food cupboards and shelters and fundraise for various charities.

The Maine state project is "Blast from the Past" and Somerset County has the 1920s decade.

Somerset County Extension Homemakers schedule fundraising and fun activities to benefit the theme "Volunteering."

The next one is the Christmas party, 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 16, Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, Clinton. It is open to the public.

For information, contact the Somerset County Extension office at 474-9622 or 800-287-1495, TDD 800-287-8957 or [extension.umaine.edu](mailto:extension.umaine.edu).

## Farmers market changes location

BELFAST — The Belfast Farmers' Market has headed indoors on Fridays to Aubuchon Hardware on Route 1. The market will run 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in the greenhouse attached to the store.

Items available will include vegetables, meats, baked goods, cheeses, dairy, farm crafts, prepared foods, maple syrup, honey, jams and jellies, and seafood.

## Herbs

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no place to start. The FDA tells you you have to do it. They don't tell you how to do it. ... I think herbal tinctures ought to be regulated as herbal tinctures. It's wrong to lump us with dietary supplements. Vats of white powder are different than the liquid herbal extracts sitting on our shelves."

Despite the push to comply with the standards, Avena Botanicals received a strongly worded warning letter from the FDA a year ago. The letter stated the company made therapeutic claims about several of its products that establish them as new drugs. One example given by the agency was Avena's description that Willow Bark Liquid Extract "has a long history of use for easing pain and inflammation and reducing fever and headache."

"We found serious violations of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (the Act) and its implementing regulations," the district director of the New England District Office wrote in the warning letter. "Failure to promptly correct these violations may result in en-

forcement action, without further notice, including, without limitation, seizure and/or injunction."

**In addition to paying for the \$300,000 new building, Avena Botanicals will need to come up with easily \$100,000 per year to comply with the federal regulations**

Since then, Soule has changed the descriptions of her products to what she can legally say: that her remedies support women's health or a person's immune system, for example. She also has had to hire a quality control consultant and has just hired a full-time quality control employee. It's a lot. And when it came to the herbal compounds, she just decided to stop until she felt more confident about the company's ability to comply with the required testing.

In addition to paying for the \$300,000 new building, Avena Botanicals will need to come up with easily \$100,000 per year to comply with the federal regulations — a lot for her company. To get there, Soule said they would need to increase sales



VASILY FEDOSENKO | REUTERS

Echinacea is widely used by herbalists. The FDA is enforcing regulations about such remedies.

between 35 and 50 percent. They've also done several Kickstarter fundraising campaigns to purchase equipment that will help them with efficiency.

Soule said her company has never done any marketing, instead relying on word of mouth to let customers know about the products. She said she's looking forward to changing that to find new customers and to tell the company's story. And she doesn't want to just

give up and close up shop.

"This is a beautiful gem tucked into midcoast Maine," she said. "In the new year, we will have another FDA inspection. Our prayer is that we will come through it as best as possible."

Herbalists everywhere are spooked by the regulatory crackdown. Jovial King of Urban Moonshine in Burlington, Vermont, which faced many of the same issues as Avena Bo-

tanicals, decided to outsource production to a larger, certified organic manufacturer out of state, according to a November article in *Seven Days*, a Vermont newspaper.

Soule said she is hoping her compliance efforts, as expensive and exhaustive as they've been, will allow her to help other herbalists know what they should do and let her keep doing what she loves — making herbal remedies from the herbs she

grows on her Rockport farm.

"I want to make sure the next generation of herbalists has a little bit of an easier time than I've had," she said. "I want the next generation to be successful at helping people. I want people to have smaller scale, hand-crafted herbal remedies. We stop to say thank you to the plants we harvest. There's a lot of joy and love, laughter and care, far beyond what is required of us."