

Belfast's resurgence is a model to follow

BY WILLIAM HYLAND
SPECIAL TO THE BDN

For the greater part of the 20th century, there was a saying around Waldo County: "If you want to go to hell fast, go to Belfast."

Since then, however, the city has changed. It has become the love child of MBNA and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. It has drawn a mix of business owners, back-to-earth farmers and blue collar workers. There also has been a 4.6 percent population jump since 2000.

Today, it is that diversity — in combination with a robust commercial scene — that makes Belfast the most desirable place to settle as this decade begins to wane.

Gone are the days of chicken processors, sardine plants and empty storefronts. Here in 2016, a new city has emerged in the heart of the midcoast. This one includes a dynamic shipyard on the waterfront, dozens of new businesses downtown and, yes, the local charm that keeps Bostonians and Floridians pouring into town.

You can start by passing Bay Wrap and Chase's Daily, now landmarks in Belfast's restaurant scene. These holes in the wall can add zest to anyone's choice of cuisine, whether it is a handmade veggie wrap sandwich or a whole wheat date muffin.

And if you look off to your left, you'll see City Drawers and Man on Main, newly established fine clothing stores, both of which are owned by the same group.

Farther down you'll pass through the intersection of High Street and Main Street, the geographical and commercial center of the downtown area. Here is where some of Belfast's mainstays still call home, whether that's the 104-year-old, three-screen Colonial Theatre or Colburn Shoe Store, the oldest of its kind in the country, established all the way back in 1832.

Colby Horne, the heir to the historic shoe store, said its success "would not have been possible in any other community," citing the efforts made by locals to maintain the downtown sector of the city and keep out "big-box retailers."

The appeal to downtown storefronts is not limited to centuries-old business, as Belfast has seen numerous additions to its mom and pop locations over recent years.

Just last week the Bagel Cafe expanded to Belfast and opened a location next to Darby's Restaurant. Other storefronts, once vacant, are now filled with specialty wine shops such as Vinolio or artsy home decor stores such as The Meadow, Quench and Epoch.

On the same street is Trustworthy Hardware and The Green Store, longtime spots for locals to shop. And if you're in the mood for Italian cuisine, Delvino's Grill and Pasta House is just across the street. But of course, who can forget Rolie's Bar and Grille, a classic stop for nearby residents and travelers alike to share a drink.

Despite pressures inside



COURTESY OF WILLIAM HYLAND

The view of Belfast's bay from the town's walking path.

and out, there is no Wal-Mart supercenter or national big-box retail chain. Instead, the city looks toward the future by maintaining its heritage.

As Main Street descends to the waterfront, the old Belfast and new Belfast truly collide.

Enter Front Street Shipyard, a collaboration of boating expertise and insight that rivals some of the country's best yards. From small commercial vessels to luxurious yachts, the company has become one of Maine's most successful enterprises.

In 2014, Front Street Shipyard refitted Asolare, a 154-foot wooden ketch. In 2015, the yard did the same to a 90-foot Palmer Johnson

motor yacht. Needless to say, the yard has reshaped the Belfast waterfront, literally and metaphorically, attracting clients and tourists from all over the country, who, of course, end up spending money at the aforementioned local businesses.

"During the past five years since we started Front Street Shipyard, we've witnessed a sharp increase annually in the number of visitors to Belfast by both land and water," J.B. Turner, president and general manager of the shipyard, said. "The Belfast waterfront and downtown businesses are, in turn, thriving thanks to renewed interest in our growing city."

Megan Pinette, who has

been a local historian and president of the Belfast Museum since 2000, has also noticed a large change in the city's landscape in the past decade and a half.

"I've seen an increase in visitors to the museum and a greater interest in the history of Belfast — especially from Belfast residents," Pinette said. "The efforts made by the downtown merchants in recent years to beautify Main and High streets with plantings and public art works makes a visit here more pleasant — a far cry from the old days in which it was not uncommon to find chicken feathers and parts littering the streets."

A waterfront walkway also would have been a far cry decades ago. However,

in late 2013, Belfast began implementing a harbor walking path to span the length of the bay, from Steamboat Landing to the Armistice Footbridge. The path goes directly through Front Street, and the company has allowed pedestrians to pass by its working boatyard.

Thirty years ago, the harbor walk would have passed by chicken processors, a run-down public boat launch and a sardine plant. Now, the harbor walk goes through two city parks and arguably the region's best boatyard.

Shortly after Front Street opened, former Belfast Area High School teacher and longtime maritime enthusiast Steve Hutchings predicted the city would experience an economic boom. Five years later, Hutchings is right.

No longer is Belfast the punchline in an old Maine joke. In 2016, Belfast is booming, but not at the expense of its citizens or its identity. Instead, this change has brought out the best in its people, attracting Shriners and musicians alike, all while keeping its heritage close to heart.

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Kasich must step forward as Trump alternative at convention

BY GORDON HUMPHREY
THE WASHINGTON POST

Some who oppose Donald Trump nevertheless note that he won the Republican primaries and, therefore, that next week will be his convention in Cleveland. Delegates should formalize his nomination and move on, they suggest.

They are mistaken. It is not Trump's convention, not yet, anyway. Delegates are not rubber stamps; they are delegated authority to use their independent judgment. And the Republican National Convention isn't a meeting of the Supreme Soviet, under orders to obey party bosses. It is, instead, the highest governing body of the Republican Party, and both the Republican National Committee and the state parties are its creatures, not the other way around.

This week's decision by a federal court in Virginia to strike down as unconstitutional provisions of that state's law binding convention delegates underscores the fact that such laws have never been enforced in any state, because they violate delegates' First Amendment rights. Likewise, state party rules cannot bind delegates because the rules adopted at the national convention supersede all other rules.

If delegates exercise their authority and vote their consciences — or abstain from



REUTERS FILE

Ohio Gov. John Kasich speaks as he withdraws from the Republican presidential race in Columbus, Ohio, in May.

voting altogether — Trump can be deprived of the required 1,237 votes to become the nominee. The Wall Street Journal last week quoted a Trump supporter on the Republican National Committee as saying their hard count is 890. If that number is anywhere near correct, hundreds of Trump's delegates are soft or even reluctant in their support.

But, ironically, just when many delegates are searching for an alternative, there is none at present.

Trump is dangerous. He operates without a conscience, apparently, and never evidences guilt, shame, embarrassment, remorse or regret. He demonstrates no empathy or sympathy for those he cruelly ridicules. Not for Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, who suffered bro-

ken bones and internal injuries from years of torture, whose heroism Trump cannot bring himself to acknowledge. Not for Carly Fiorina, who ran a determined, classy primary campaign, but whose appearance Trump found unacceptable. Not for the disabled reporter whom Trump callously mocked. Not for the U.S.-born judge subjected to Trump's bigotry. Scores of hurtful statements by Trump, but not a single apology to date. Those who lack a conscience and human feelings of contrition often become ruthless autocrats when given great power.

The Republican Party and the nation urgently need an alternative. The only potential candidate still positioned to offer an alternative to convention delegates is Ohio Gov. John Kasich. He is emi-

nently qualified, he conducted a serious and dignified presidential campaign and, at a time when most Republican officials have discredited themselves by falling in line behind Trump, Kasich firmly rebuffed overtures about serving as Trump's running mate and firmly refuses to endorse him. Further, every poll aggregated by the website RealClearPolitics in almost a year, including the most recent, shows that only Kasich can soundly defeat Hillary Clinton.

But reluctant Trump supporters will not leave that ship unless a seaworthy one is standing by to take them on board. Unless Kasich makes clear his willingness to serve the party as a replacement, Trump will be the nominee. Given his unpopularity across almost all demographics, Trump is sure to be defeated in November, dragging down with him scores of high-level officeholders in Washington and in the state capitals.

Only Kasich can stave off disaster. The convention is not yet Trump's, and it could very well be Kasich's. But Kasich must send a clear signal that he is ready to serve if the delegates find Trump unqualified.

Gordon Humphrey is a Kasich delegate to the 2016 Republican National Convention. He represented New Hampshire in the Senate from 1979 to 1990.

Families

Continued from Page D1

that benefit will be modified if you receive child-only TANF.

Obtaining medical care: Obtaining medical care for your grandchild or other relative without a legal guardianship arrangement has been difficult for families in the past. A recent law in Maine is seeking to change that. Under this new law, if you can obtain a signed affidavit from the child's parent stating the child is in your care, you can obtain medical care for that child. Contact Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine for further assistance at 1-800-833-9786.

Information on substance use disorders: If your family is affected by substance use disorders, connecting with reliable sources of information and assistance is important. The National Institute on Drug Abuse and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provide free fact sheets as well as guidelines for talking with children about issues of mental health and substance use disorder.

Phoenix House has a great website that talks about some of the impacts that families face when dealing with substance abuse. Local resources include Wellspring at 207-941-1613, which provides not only treatment for substance use disorders but also services for affected family members. The National Alliance for Mental Illness, at 1-800-464-5767, sponsors family support groups as well as respite care for families of qualify-

ing children under 18.

Self-care and respite: Grandfamilies experience all kinds of stress, and grandparents who suddenly assume the role of parent need to schedule in time for self-care and respite. Self-care for the caregiver is not "selfish" but practical. While you may recognize "taking a walk," "eating healthy" and "getting enough sleep" as typical suggestions from concerned friends and family, there are three other modes of "self-care" that may, in fact, deliver just as much "relief":

1. Use the team approach as you care for your child. Make a list of dozens of people — teachers, coaches, doctors, relatives, friends — and consider how each can assist you.

2. Use technology to coordinate this team. A useful app for scheduling help is Lotsa Helping Hands. Other apps like Grocery I.Q. and shared calendars can help you "farm out" weekly tasks. Dropbox and Google Drive are good for storage and retrieval of the increased paperwork. Mint and Quicken can track spending.

3. Celebrate your choice to raise your relative child. Take time to care for him or her out of love, not fear. Your decision is a powerful expression of your commitment to ensuring her healthy future.

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Cianchette

Continued from Page D1

signed to combat terrorism. Even if their agricultural burns were done with malice against a federal government they had long feuded with, you would be hard pressed to call it terrorism. That sentiment was shared by the prosecuting attorney and the trial judge, with the latter ignoring the mandatory minimum. It took the 9th Circuit to declare the reduced sentence "illegal" and set the protests into motion; they thought it was an unjust result.

This gets back to Chief Brown's invitation. "We're hiring" is a call to take direct responsibility for the police force by donning the blue. But it also is a challenge to directly engage with problems you see rather than criticize from afar. The criminal justice system is just one example.

Whether you are part of the tea party or an occupier, a participant in the Black Lives Matter move-



ADAM BETTCHER | REUTERS

Demonstrators carry a "Black Lives Matter" banner and protest the shooting death of Philando Castile as they gather in front of the police station in St. Anthony, Minnesota, recently.

ment or a militia member, we need men and women to take personal responsibility for improving things in our towns, states and nation. We're hiring. Want the job?

Michael Cianchette is former chief counsel to Gov. Paul LePage, a Navy reservist who served in Afghanistan and in-house counsel to a number of businesses in southern Maine.

Steed

Continued from Page D1

It's why I am choosing to not link or reference the specific piece here — because I don't want the vocal minority of hostile readers to take out their identity-fueled hot takes on the original author. Setting people up in that way, after all — to be inundated with more hate and ignorance — is no way to be an ally.

A gay ally responded to the piece in this way:

"I feel the same way about straight people who work in LGBTQ advocacy. It can be very exhausting to work with them, especially because you know that their heart is in the right

place but they often end up being extremely condescending and overbearing."

Specifically, this part of his response stood out:

"Non-minorities often think that they deserve a cookie for doing the right thing. It's a little ridiculous."

Good intentions aren't enough, which is a good thing. Remaining comfortable, listening and stepping outside of a comfort zone are more important than, say, throwing temper tantrums on the internet.

Alex Steed has written about and engaged in politics since he was a teenager. He's an owner-partner of a Portland-based content production company and lives with his family, dogs and garden in Cornish.