

Visually impaired Bangor woman earns high school diploma

BY JODI HERSEY
SPECIAL TO THE WEEKLY

A 31-year-old Bangor resident who just earned her high school diploma now wants to help others with visual disabilities achieve their goals.

Vicki McTigue was born with a visual impairment that continually causes her eyes to focus and refocus. She describes it as "flickering" and it made learning in a traditional classroom difficult and at times uncomfortable. So a few years ago McTigue took control of her education and decided to enroll in the Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

"I just needed a lot more one on one activi-

ties. I was able to go at my own pace, ask questions I needed without feeling like I was in front of a whole group of people and I could see the materials a lot easier," she explained.

The Hadley Institute, a nonprofit based in Illinois, offers all its distance learning courses absolutely free of charge to the blind, visually impaired and their families thanks to donations from individuals, foundations and corporations. All the course materials needed can be specially designed for students in either Braille, large print, audio or online.

McTigue took two courses at a time until her last semester when she carried a full work-

load of four classes. Like most high schoolers, she studied math, history and English and completed several technology based courses. Whenever she needed a little extra help in a class, she simply turned to her mom and dad for assistance.

"My mom is really good at math as long as it's not algebra," explained McTigue with a laugh. "And I learned my dad knows a lot of history, a lot more than I ever thought. But my favorite [class] was math and anything computer related. I got As for the most part."

The Hadley Institute's accommodations along with McTigue's determination helped her finally achieve her goal of earning her high school diploma,

which she recently received in the mail.

"It's made me very proud to be able to show my friends and family that I worked hard and succeeded," she said. "I hope to continue to grow as a person and continue to try new things I thought I would never be able to do."

The 2016 graduate has her diploma on a shelf in her bedroom where she can see it every night before she closes her eyes.

"Don't let people tell you, you can't do something because if you try hard enough you can," said McTigue.

For more information on the Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired, visit hadley.edu.

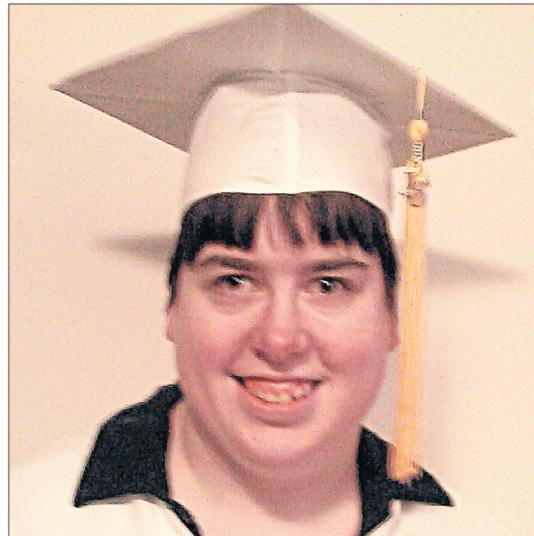


PHOTO COURTESY HADLEY INSTITUTE
Vicky McTigue this year earned her high school diploma.

Specialty Sweets to expand into renovated downtown Bangor storefront

BY NICK MCCREA
OF THE BDN STAFF

A popular Bangor candy shop is expanding operations to a historic downtown building, where a familiar developer is working to breathe new life into the 165-year-old structure.

Specialty Sweets makes and sells candy of all sorts at its Springer Drive location next to Christmas Tree Shops and Harbor Freight Tools, near the Bangor Mall. Its owners, Wade and Eliza Butler, plan to open a second location at 31 Main St. by late August or early September.

Eliza Butler said their busy season tends to be around holidays, but they see an opportunity to

draw new customers from downtown events.

"There's the art walk, folk festival, parades, and there's just so much going on around here that we could be a part of," she said.

Production will continue to be based at the Springer Drive store, but with the new challenge of making enough product to supply two stores.

"This will be strictly retail sales of our products," Wade Butler said during an interview Friday inside 31 Main St. The second floor will be an events space, available for rent for parties, meetings and other occasions. The Butlers will have indoor seating and hope to have seats on the sidewalk in the summer so

customers can eat gelato outside.

In March, Telford Holdings purchased the building from its previous owner, Paul Cook, for \$300,000. Telford Holdings is owned by Telford Allen III, whose family launched Telford Aviation in 1982 before selling the company in 2009.

Allen and Telford Holdings manager Louie Morrison were behind the redevelopment of one of downtown Bangor's most iconic buildings, the long-vacant former Merchants Bank building on Broad Street. Today, the curved building houses five luxury apartments and Evenrood's restaurant.

Most recently, 31 Main St. was home to Maine

Asset Management, which only used the first two floors. Before that, the building was home to Maine Times Magazine, a monthly publication that eventually ceased publication in 2004.

The upper two floors have been vacant for more than a decade. Now they're being renovated into a pair of 1,400-square-foot, two-bedroom luxury apartment units.

"We've already got one rented," Morrison said, standing inside one of the units, which are still in the very early stages of construction.

The second apartment is expected to be available starting the second week of July. Rent is expected to run about \$1,800 per month, Morrison

said. High-end apartment units have been popping up in renovation projects across the downtown in recent years, and developers say the demand is still high. Often, tenants are visiting-physicians or doctoral students seeking to live in a lively downtown area.

"We hear constantly that people want to return to urban living, and we have seen tenants from Maine and from away converge in downtown, filling up the new residential units almost as fast as they can be rehatted," Tanya Emery, the city's economic development director, said.

The four-story building at 31 Main St. was completed in 1851, and it is

among the Main Street structures that narrowly survived the 1911 fire that destroyed much of Bangor's downtown.

The building has housed many businesses over the years, including The Fashion, a department store that sold "everything a woman or child needs to wear," according to an advertisement from the time. Frank Wood and Frank Ewer founded the store in 1893, according to Melissa Gerety, director of the Bangor Historical Society. In 1927, Ewer's widow, Clara, took over.

In the 1970s, the building was home to Knapp's Book and Music Store, before Knapp's relocated to a larger Main Street space just up the hill.

UMaine student studying Lyme disease incidents in Maine

With the arrival of spring, many Mainers head outside to hike, mow lawns, picnic and garden. But working and playing outdoors can bring people in contact with deer ticks and tick-borne diseases, including Lyme disease.

"Maine in 2014 had the highest incidence of Lyme disease of all the states in the country," says Susan Elias, a doctoral student at the University of Maine Climate Change Institute. Midcoast Maine and islands were hardest hit, she said, adding, "We've got to get this figured out." To help do that, Elias is studying deer ticks and their spread across Maine. She uses data sets and software that simultaneously take into account numerous variables and indicate the relative importance of each.

In addition to milder winters and sufficient moisture during summers, other factors that affect the spread of ticks and the diseases they carry include deforestation and reforestation, landscaping practices and deer management.

"If we just have a better understanding of all the factors taken together, I think we could do a better job of helping people control deer ticks and prevent disease," she said.

That's good news for Mainers. In the state, deer ticks carry five pathogens

known to cause disease in humans, including Lyme disease, said Elias.

Lyme disease is a potentially long-term debilitating condition that can include facial-muscle paralysis, pain and weakness in the arms and legs, headaches, poor memory, rapid heartbeat, fever, chills and fatigue. Each year since 2011 in Maine, there have been more than 1,000 confirmed cases of Lyme disease. In 2015, 1,171 confirmed and probable cases of Lyme disease were reported and, according to a January 2016 Maine Centers of Disease Control report to the Legislature, ages of people diagnosed ranged from 1 to 95 years old.

Elias' modeling results are expected to inform decisions about adaptations and strategies, including whether to invest in tick vaccines, as well as removal of invasive plants and deer management.

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Maine and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends "No Ticks 4 ME" prevention techniques: Use an EPA-approved repellent, wear protective clothing, do daily tick checks and be cautious in tick-infested areas.

People may submit ticks they find on themselves and their pets to the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Tick Identification Lab for testing. For

information about Elias, visit extension.umaine.edu/maineclimatenews/researchhighlights.

Bangor, Hollywood Casino reach property tax agreement

The City of Bangor and GLP Capital, LP and HC Bangor, LLC have reached an agreement resolving the real property (land and buildings) tax assessment appeals. These entities run the Bangor-based Hollywood Casino Hotel and Raceway and are related to Penn National Gaming, the large regional gaming company headquartered outside of Reading, Pennsylvania. The appeals have been pending before the State Office of Property Tax Review in Augusta and were set for hearings later this summer.

Based on input from nationally-recognized experts for both sides, the gaming entities dropped their challenges to the April 1, 2014 assessment and agreed to a reduction to the April 1, 2015 assessment (from \$97.4MM down to \$82.5MM) and then a normalized \$80MM value for the April 1, 2016 and 2017 dates, the latter of which will serve as the basis for subsequent assessments, subject to changes, if any, in the fair market value of the properties in the marketplace.

"We are pleased to have reached an amicable agree-

ment with the City of Bangor and look forward to continuing our mutually beneficial relationship for years to come," said Jose Flores, General Manager of the casino.

City Assessor Philip Drew was likewise pleased with the outcome for the City based on the experts' opinions. "The settlement is fair and provides certainty for the City's finances going forward."

Literacy fundraiser motorcycle ride planned

Memorial Day weekend brings area motorcyclists food, fun, and a chance to win big prizes during Leathers for Literacy, an 80-mile ride to benefit Literacy Volunteers of Bangor on Saturday, May 28.

The route takes riders to Milo and Dover-Foxcroft and ends in Hermon at Central Maine Harley-Davidson, where the fun continues at the dealer's open house. The event features lunch, entertainment by Bee Bop Bob DJ Service, and ice cream with Darling's Ice Cream Truck for a Cause. A raffle is included with more than 20 items — including an overnight stay at Hollywood Casino, a kayak, and several gift certificates to area businesses. All proceeds go to Literacy Volunteers.

Susan Gaspar, a tutor with Literacy Volunteers and a motorcycle enthusiast, has organized this ride

for the past three years. Since 2012, Susan has tutored a woman who wanted to improve her reading so that she could be more active in her community and feel better about herself.

"I've combined two pastimes that I love: being a tutor and riding motorcycles. I see this ride as a way bikers can do their part to put the brakes on low adult literacy," said Susan.

Interested riders are encouraged to pre-register and find more information at www.lvbangor.org/ride. The Ride has a suggested dona-

tion of \$15/bike. Riders are encouraged to ask friends and other contacts to sponsor them; a pledge form is also available on the website. Registration begins at 9 a.m. May 28 on the Bangor Waterfront and riders put up their kickstands at 10:30 a.m.

Literacy Volunteers of Bangor helps roughly 300 adults each year with their literacy and education goals. These free, individualized services are available through the help of hundreds of volunteers and private donations.

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