

# Local author's new novel explores Maine women in 19th century

BY EMILY BURNHAM  
OF THE WEEKLY STAFF

Novelist Ardeana Hamlin — well-known to Weekly readers as its former editor and staff writer — comes from a long line of Maine writers and storytellers, whether they were in her family or in her hometown of Bingham. Writing comes as naturally to her as breathing, as evidenced in “The Havener Sisters,” her third book, which came out this month from Islandport Press.

“My family was all storytellers, and they were all letter writers,” said Hamlin. “They were all comfortable expressing themselves on paper. I remember hearing stories all throughout my childhood. My great-grandfather could remember Lincoln’s assassination, and my mother could remember him telling the story. The past was always with us.”

“The Havener Sisters”

takes place in 19th century Maine, much like Hamlin’s previous novels, “Pink Chimneys” and “Abbott’s Reach.” It tells the story of the extraordinary Havener sisters — China, India and Persia, who appeared peripherally in “Abbott’s Reach” and who take center stage with this book. They are triplets, raised on the seas on their father’s ship *Empress*, whose lives are turned upside-down when he dies and they return to Maine to along the shore in Castine.

“These women needed a life of their own, so they slowly came to life during the course of writing this book,” said Hamlin. “I think these characters come from my own experience growing up in a family with lots of good old Maine women, who are sensible, hardy, good-hearted, good-natured, and know how to do stuff.”

A running theme through Hamlin’s novels are strong

female characters — something she’s been fascinated by since first learning about women’s history and feminism in the 1970s.

“I have a need to know how women operated back in a time when they didn’t make it into the history books,” said Hamlin. “Back in the 70s, there were scholars that began to find these stories about these women, and that’s where a lot of my interest stems from. I love to write about strong women doing unusual things.”

The stories of Maine’s past remain a source of inspiration for Hamlin — she’s been plugging away for many years at a book about a Maine childhood not unlike the one she had, as well as doing early research for a possible novel about some recently discovered ancestors that moved from Maine to Mississippi. Regardless of the specific topic, Hamlin’s books retain an air of authenticity

— right down to the words her characters speak.

“I’m interested in writing not just the stories but in the idiom that I grew up speaking,” said Hamlin, who cites Maine writer Holman Day as an inspiration. “There are so many ways in which words were put together that I always heard people say, growing up. There’s a certain kind of dialect that I can still hear in my head.”

As a native of the town of Bingham, Hamlin not only had a word-loving family, but also her hometown was home to a number of acclaimed Maine writers, including Cliff Reynolds, who wrote “Life Along the Kennebec,” and Arthur MacDougal, who wrote the *Dud Dean* stories.

“That’s compelled me to keep writing,” said Hamlin. “I had a lot of good models.”

“The Havener Sisters” is available at local bookstores or via [islandportpress.com](http://islandportpress.com).

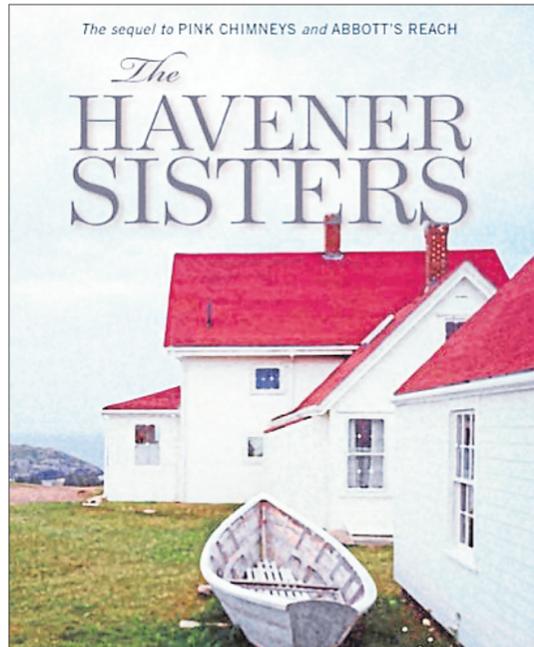


PHOTO COURTESY ISLANDPORT PRESS

Cover art for Ardeana Hamlin’s newest novel, “The Havener Sisters,” out now in bookstores and online via Islandport Press.

## Winterport Open Stage offers up production of “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever”

Winterport Open Stage will offer up its winter production this December, with Barbara Robinson’s hilarious holiday play “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.” Based on the favorite children’s book, chaos ensues when the unruly Herdman children take over the church Christmas pageant.

Can Mrs. Bradley, the novice pageant director, keep the Herdmans out of mischief? Come find out in this charming comedy which will delight audiences of all ages.

Performances are set for 7 p.m. Dec. 4-5 and Dec. 11-12 and 3 p.m. Dec. 6 and 13 at Wagner Middle School in Winterport. Admission is \$8 or \$6 for seniors and students. They can be purchased online via [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com). For more information, like Winterport Open Stage on Facebook.

## Outdoor chess table to be placed on Brewer Waterfront

The Greater Bangor Association of Realtors has received a \$2000 Placemaking micro-grant from the National Association of Realtors to purchase an outdoor chess table as an addition to the beautification efforts on the Brewer Riverwalk Trail.

The table, styled after the 1939 World’s Fair benches, has a concrete top

playing surface. On each side of the table will be a 4-foot-long iron bench in a design consistent with the overall riverwalk.

The Greater Bangor Association of Realtors will partner with the City of Brewer on this project, while the Public Works Department will install the pieces.

The grant is intended to help Realtor Associations partner with others to plan, organize, implement and maintain placemaking activities in their

communities. Placemaking grants are awarded to local and state Realtor associations to help them and their members initiate placemaking projects in the community, like turning a parking lot into a farmer’s market or a vacant lot into a playground. Realtor associations and their members are actively engaged in the community and know the neighborhoods and the properties that would benefit most from these improvement efforts.

## Sales Pitch

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## The Weekly

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## Tax prep aides needed for United Way

The Eastern Maine CA\$H Coalition (Creating, Assets, Savings and Hope), in partnership with the AARP, the IRS and United Way of Eastern Maine, is currently recruiting volunteer tax preparers. Each year, thousands of low to moderate-income individuals have their tax returns prepared for free by the Eastern Maine CA\$H Coalition. Last year these volunteers helped re-

turn over \$4.4 million in tax returns to people throughout Eastern Maine.

Volunteers are currently needed in Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo and Washington counties. No prior experience necessary; however, basic familiarity with computers and computer software is a plus. All volunteers will be provided with free IRS certification training in December and January.

In addition to tax preparers, there are other volunteer opportunities available includ-

ing, greeters, financial literacy counselors and IT support.

Individuals who volunteer in the tax counseling and preparation process find the experience extremely rewarding and tend to return year after year to reprise their role. The opportunity to give back to their community, as well as gaining new skills, keep volunteers engaged and intellectually challenged. For more information, contact Janelle Wuoristo at 941-280 ext. 212 or [janellew@unitedwayem.org](mailto:janellew@unitedwayem.org).

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## Central Maine Power’s Tree Care program helps keep the lights on

Tree Care is an important part of our efforts to deliver the reliable electricity delivery service you depend on. Because protecting the health of your trees is important, our contractors use techniques sanctioned by the Tree Care Industry Association.

CMP understands that you may want to be personally consulted before our contractors prune trees along roads that border your property.

If you would like to be consulted, please write to CMP, Vegetation Management Department, 83 Edison Drive, Augusta, ME 04336. Include your name, street address and your CMP account number. You will be placed on a permanent list and will be contacted whenever we are pruning adjacent to your property, except in emergency conditions.



Corey Cummings (left), CMP Arborist, reviews tree trimming plans with a licensed Tree Care specialist.

### We'll be trimming trees in these towns in 2016:

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