

Local holiday shopping events abound in Bangor region

BY EMILY BURNHAM
OF THE WEEKLY STAFF

It may not seem possible, but the holiday season is just around the corner, with Thanksgiving just one month away and Christmas coming up right after that. Alongside the turkeys, pumpkin pies and twinkling lights, it's also time to think about shopping — not just at big, national chains, but also at local businesses.

The Downtown Bangor Partnership has three separate events planned for holiday shoppers in the month of November. Caitlin Brooke, Business Development Officer and Downtown Coordinator for the City of Bangor, said businesses have been busy preparing for the big shopping season.

"This is a great way to get an early jump on your holiday shopping. Not only are you able to get gifts that you cannot find anywhere else, with these discounts, you can justify buying something for

yourself, too," said Brooke.

The fun starts with an Early Bird Sale set for Saturday, Nov. 7. Many stores will be opening as early as 6 a.m. and discounts will be as high as 40% off. While some businesses are offering their discounts throughout the day, many are tapering their discounts as the day goes on.

A few weeks after that, the big post-Thanksgiving weekend arrives, with Plaid Friday — the alternative to Black Friday — arriving bright and early on Friday, Nov. 27, and then Small Business Saturday on Saturday, Nov. 28. On all three of these days, parking will be free all day in the Picking Square Parking Garage.

Speaking last year about downtown Bangor's holiday shopping opportunities, city councilor Gibran Graham, also a staffer at downtown children's bookstore the Briar Patch, said it's important to support local businesses.

"It's great to see so many people out in support of local business," Graham said, adding that downtown shopping is a different sort of experience from in the mall area. "Everyone's in a good mood and you don't see that stressed out zaniness you might find elsewhere."

Other towns in the region also offer local business shopping opportunities. In Bucksport, established shops offer deals throughout the Plaid Friday/Small Business Saturday weekend, and last year, a number of local artisans and business people organized pop-up shops along the Main Street corridor, as a show of support for a community hit hard by the Verso Mill closure.

For more information, visit downtownbangor.com or like Downtown Bangor on Facebook, or like the Bucksport Bay Area Chamber of Commerce on Facebook.

Bucksport coach credited with saving choking football player

BY JULIA BAYLY
OF THE BDN STAFF

The quick action of Bucksport's junior varsity football coach, who is also the town's police chief, is being credited for perhaps saving the life of one of his players.

The player, a freshman quarterback on the school's JV football team, was sitting with several teammates at the weekly team dinner during the week of Oct. 12-16 when something suddenly went wrong. That's when Sean Geagan jumped into action.

"We saw a commotion and people were getting up saying, 'Someone is choking,'" said Joel Sankey, Bucksport High School varsity football head coach. "Everyone rushed over and [Sean Geagan] was right there."

Geagan said he thought the students were clowning around at first, until

he heard someone yell that one was choking on a piece of chicken.

"I was on the other side of the room and I stood up and saw one kid bent over and another kid beating him on the back," Geagan said. "I thought, 'That's not good at all.'"

In his rush to get to the student, Geagan says he does not remember much, but was told by other parents he "went over one side of the [cafeteria] table in the air and landed on my feet."

Several nurses were also at the dinner, he said, and one was already attempting the Heimlich maneuver on the student when Geagan got to him, but was having no success in dislodging the food from the young man's airway.

"But she pushed him toward me and, long story short, I Heimlich'd him three or four times before things started to clear out,"

Geagan said. "I held on to him for a bit longer and told him, 'I've got you.'"

Thanks to Geagan's quick action, no ambulance or emergency responders were needed.

"By the time I was all done and he was OK, I looked up and there were at least four or five RNs who are moms of some of the kids standing around," Geagan said. "They were all looking at me and saying, 'It's all good,' and patted me on the back."

Sankey and Geagan declined to identify the student that choked. Bucksport High School Principal Bill Tracy said the student is grateful for Geagan's actions, but prefers to keep his name out of any publicity.

"Coach Geagan is a phenomenal person and for him to step up like that is amazing," Tracy said. "We are just very happy he was there."

OUT AND ABOUT IN GREATER BANGOR



PHOTO COURTESY JEFF KIRLIN/THE THING OF THE MOMENT

An estimated 200 people took part last week in the fourth annual Bangor Walks to End Abuse. Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance hosted the downtown walk as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. People walked in support of survivors, to remember those who have died and to make a statement that the community will not tolerate domestic abuse. Participants received T-shirts, purple ribbon temporary tattoos and purple ribbon stickers. Many walked carrying purple balloons. Purple represents the courage of domestic abuse survivors and the dedication of those working to eradicate it. Domestic violence assaults constituted 47 percent of all assaults reported to police in Maine in 2013, according to the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. There were 21 homicides in Maine in 2014, and 14 were the result of domestic violence. Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance primarily serves Penobscot and Piscataquis counties, providing safety planning, support and advocacy for those affected by domestic abuse. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence and would like to talk with an advocate, call 866-834-4357, TRS 800-787-3224. This free, confidential service is available 24/7 and is accessible from anywhere in Maine.

PHOTO COURTESY JEFF KIRLIN/THE THING OF THE MOMENT

Greater Bangor Beer Week kicked off on Sunday, Oct. 18, with two events, including the Beer, Brats and Blues event at Blank Canvas Brewery in Brewer. Blank Canvas is run by co-owners Stephen Genthner and Jessica Wentworth-Genthner, who opened the brewery in downtown Brewer during the summer of 2015. Sunday's brews and blues event featured the talents of local blues band Haddock, and raised money for the Anah Shriners Sunshine Club. Blank Canvas offers a variety of beers, from Oatmeal Raisin to Coconut Red, and also offers homebrewers the chance to brew in a professional facility. The name "blank canvas" refers to those homebrewed beers, and to the ever-changing array of murals drawn on the walls of the tasting room by local artists. Blank Canvas is located at 71B Center Street in Brewer, and is regularly open from 3 to 7 p.m. Thursdays and from 3 to 8 p.m. Fridays. For more information, visit blankcanvasbrewery.wordpress.com. Beer Week also included tasting dinner, tap takeovers, cornhole and horseshoe tournaments, special beer collaborations and much more. It was planned as a celebration of the beer industry in Eastern Maine. Pictured at left are Blank Canvas owners Stephen and Jessica.



UMaine Black Bear license plate raises more than \$1 million for scholarships

The University of Maine Black Bear license plate program has raised more than \$1 million for scholarships to support UMaine students, accord-

ing to University of Maine Foundation President Jeffery Mills.

Mills made the announcement at the University of Maine Foundation's annual meeting and luncheon on Friday, Oct. 16 on the University of Maine campus.

Mills presented commemorative plaques to the Honorable Mary

Cathcart for her involvement in the creation of the plate as the original bill sponsor in the Maine Legislature, and to Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap for his continued support of the program.

Mills also thanked the Honorable William O'Gara, who was unable to attend, for his support as the committee chair

who originally sponsored the final bill that created the commemorative license plate.

The Black Bear license plate became available in Maine in 2003.

"People often look at the foundation and think that you have to have wealth in order to make a difference in the support of our programs. This

project proves that you can make a difference at any level," said Mills, in a press release. "Along with the scholarship support, we are providing an additional way to show our Black Bear pride."

The initial fee for a Black Bear license plate is \$20. Renewals are \$15, of which \$10 supports the UMaine general scholar-

ship fund. New UMaine students receive a voucher covering the initial cost of a Black Bear plate. Anyone can sign up for a UMaine Black Bear license plate through their local town office or through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. For more information about the program, visit umainefoundation.org.

Debit card partnership raises over \$13,000 for Black Bear Fund



Maine Savings, one of Maine's largest credit unions, celebrated an outstanding inaugural year for its exclusive Black Bear Debit Card partnership with the University of Maine Athletics Department and Black Bear Sports Properties during a special intermission at the University of Maine Black Bears homecoming football game on Oct. 17.

Josh Howes, Maine Savings College Avenue branch manager, and Rob Carmichael, Maine Savings senior vice president, presented University of Maine Director of Athletics Karlton Creech with a ceremonial check for \$13,744 to benefit the Black Bear Fund, which provides scholarships to student athletes.

"The support our members have shown for Black Bear student athletes has been amazing," said John Reed, president and CEO of Maine Savings. "We're proud to support the Black Bears and this program shows that our members are, too."

Last year, in conjunction with its College Ave branch

opening, Maine Savings announced a five-year partnership with Black Bear Sports Properties to provide members with a specially-branded University of Maine Black Bear Debit Card. For every purchase made with the Black Bear debit card, Maine Savings contributes 5 cents to the Black Bear Fund, with a commitment to donating a minimum of \$10,000 each year.

"We've been blown away by the level of support from Maine Savings and the Maine Savings members," said Creech. "Like most universities, we need to rely on partnerships like this to make our athletics program as good as it can be. Maine Savings is a terrific partner and we're delighted to have the Black Bear Debit Card hard at work for us."

The Black Bear debit card is available to all Maine Savings members with free RedWallet checking accounts. To learn more about the exclusive debit card and to sign up, visit mainesavings.com or a local Maine Savings branch.