
3-2020

Amjambo Africa! (March 2020)

Kathreen Harrison

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/samgen_amjambo

 Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Commons](#), [Africana Studies Commons](#), [African History Commons](#), [African Languages and Societies Commons](#), [African Studies Commons](#), [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), [Cultural History Commons](#), [Digital Humanities Commons](#), [Diplomatic History Commons](#), [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Genealogy Commons](#), [International and Intercultural Communication Commons](#), [Journalism Studies Commons](#), [Language Interpretation and Translation Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), [Other American Studies Commons](#), [Other French and Francophone Language and Literature Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), [Poetry Commons](#), [Public History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), [United States History Commons](#), and the [Women's History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Harrison, Kathreen, "Amjambo Africa! (March 2020)" (2020). *Amjambo Africa!*. 24.
https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/samgen_amjambo/24

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Items From the Collection at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Amjambo Africa! by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu.

AMJAMBO AFRICA!



Understanding, Embracing, and Celebrating Diversity in Maine

Free

WELCOME | BIENVENUE | KARIBU | MURAKAZE | SOO DHOWOOW | BEM VINDO | BOYEYI MALAMU



Team207 presents African Night on March 7 at South Portland High School. The event will showcase cultures of Africa.

Story on page 19.

L to R: Salah Isaack, Casay Mohamed, Djamal Maldoum, and Abdirahman Abdirahman



AMJAMBO AFRICA! turns two years old on April 1, 2020! For a fun look at a few of the amazing people and wonderful events we have profiled since our launch as a print newspaper in April 2018 see pages 2 and 3. We now also host a website that is updated daily and social media sites. We have grown from a distribution reach of 10K to upwards of 35K. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Maine Initiatives, the Maine Community Foundation, our loyal corporate sponsors (see page 4), and our fabulous readers. Thank you one and all!

Deering High School Diversity and Quality are Points of Pride by Kathreen Harrison

In This Issue...

- Why participate in the Census ..p. 4
- City Announces Expo Grantsp. 6
- Justice for Women.....p. 9
- Fulbright Scholar Escajedap. 9
- Portland Adult Edp. 11
- English Classesp. 14
- Musician Angelikah Fahray.....p. 19

In Every Issue...

- Community News.....p. 10/11
- Translations
- French p.5
- Swahili p.6
- Somali p.7
- Kinyarwandap.14
- Portuguesep.15
- News from Africa p. 5 & 15
- Columnsp.17
- Colon Cancer
- Let's Talk
- International Women's Day
- From the Desk of Dr. Ahmed



Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and on the web amjamboafrika.com

DEERING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, parents, administrators, and teachers feel a great deal of pride for their school, and that pride was palpable at the school's well-organized and well-attended January 22 evening open house for eighth graders. When asked to comment on an August 2019 article in the Portland Press Herald that said students felt unsafe at Deering, multiple students interviewed at the January open house said they love their school and feel completely safe there. In fact, all spoke extremely highly of their experience at Deering. Joey Lancia, who penned a letter to the editor of the Portland Press Herald on August 6, in opposition to the article by Rachel Ohm, said "The rumors fostered by the article last year misrepresented the school." Lilly Russell, also a senior, agreed. "Some incidents last year were blown way out of proportion." Indeed, there was no discernible sign of tension at the January event.

Instead, the school's regard for academic excellence, global competency, diversity, community, and the uniqueness of the individual was on full display throughout the evening, which featured a warm welcome in the gymnasium, time to browse club and activity offerings, workshops in classrooms, and plenty of opportunities to talk with current students, parents, and staff. The school purports to be the most diverse school north of Boston, with 825 students who come from more than 30 countries on five different continents and speak over 32 home languages.

Deering offers 16 Advanced Placement courses, multiple dual college enroll-



Students Aria and Nazik share a moment with Dr. Ahmed, Co-principal of Deering High School, and Superintendent Xavier Botana on

ment programs, 39 co-curricular activities, 25 athletic teams, Mandarin, Arabic, Engineering, Street Law, and a number of other courses not offered elsewhere in Portland. The Four Block schedule enables students to explore more disciplines and topics per year than traditional schedules, and to

Continued on page 13



*Do you need assistance applying for work authorization? Hope House can help. Nancy Markowitz and Carolyn Graney **Story p. 16***



*Maine College of Art's (MECA) inaugural Resilience Week GLIMPSE OF THE CITY by Amber Shahzad **Story p. 18***



*Titi de Baccarat's 'Who is it?' art exhibition at UMVA **Story p. 18***

Amjambo Africa Celebrates Community, Diversity, and the Future of Maine!

Glimpses from our first two years



Westbrook City Councilor Claude Rwaganje, Yusuf Muse Yusuf of Gateway Community Services (and Somali translator for Amjambo Africa), Dr. Abdullahi Ahmed, Co-Principal of Deering High School



Mechanical Design Engineer Oumalkaire Said Barkad from Djibouti



Adele Ngoy and models

Photo by Tsukroff Photography

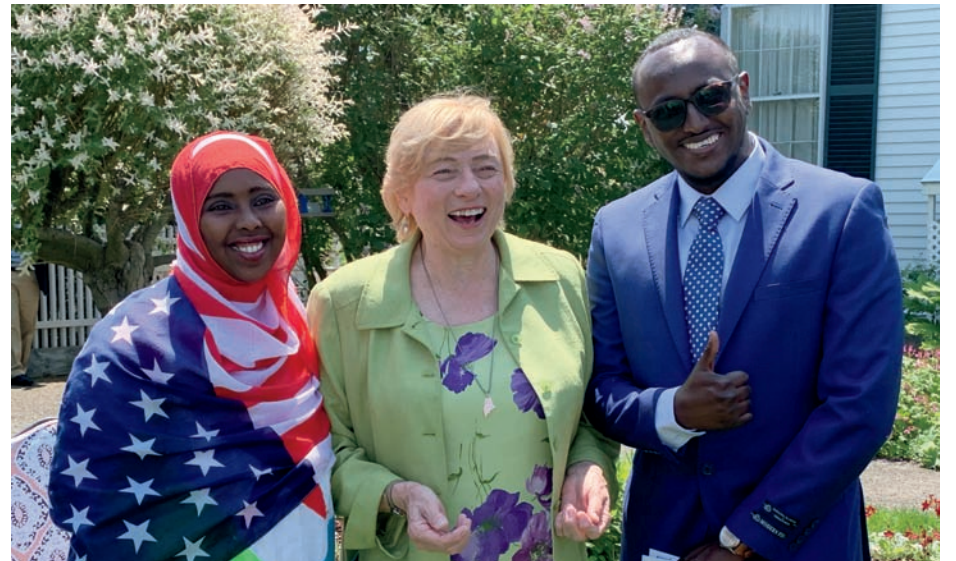


Danny Kazadi

Photo | John Ochira



Lucie Narukundo, owner of Moriah Store, at 364 Cumberland Avenue, Portland.



Governor Mills with Djibouti refugees Araksan Egueb & Hassan Guedi at the first-ever Blaine House celebration of World Refugee Day on June 23, 2019 Photo | Afshin Mahmoodi



Isuken food truck, Lewistown



Papy Bongibo, president of COCO Maine



Marwa Hassaniien, Stephanie Harp, and Angela Okafor



Orson Horchler explores what it means to be a "Mainer" Photo | Titi de Baccarat



Claudette Ndayininahaze and Abusana Micky Bondo, co-founders of In Her Presence, with board members Katlyn Buckingham and Baba Ly.



Benedicte Wonganombe

Photo | Tom Bell



Mufalo Chitam, Laura DeDoes, Deqa Dhalac, Marina Nahimana, Ghomri Rostampour



OVER TWO HUNDRED PEOPLE GATHERED MARCH 23 IN AUGUSTA'S MILL PARK to stand together against violence and hatred. Organized by the Capital Area New Mainer's Project (CANMP).



Diane Nyagasaza, Solange Mutunzi, Lise Karara, Aline Mutware, Lucie Narukundo, Betty Mucyo, Grace Sebaziga and Aline Mwamikazi



Maine's Congressman Jared Golden celebrates 'History in the Making' with Lewiston's newly-elected Safiya Khalid.



South Sudanese Soccer



Nsiona Nguizani helps a family unpack in Brunswick August 15, 2019 - Expo Move out day.



Adele Weaver and Yenenesh Wilson serve coffee at Ethiopian New Year celebration.



The Nuer Community of Maine gathered in Portland to commemorate the December 2013 massacre in Juba, South Sudan



Alicia Roberts, Director of Human Resources, Jacquelyn Murphy, Senior Branch Manager Of Middle Street Branch, cPort CEO Gene Ardito (with giant scissors in hand!), Portland Public Schools Superintendent Xavier Botana, Portland Chamber of Commerce CEO Quincy Hentzel, Immigrant Welcome Center Executive Director Alain Nahimana Photo | Hamid Karimian @OPENVISIONSTUDIOS



Mainers gather in support of Sudan on June 10, 2019

AMJAMBO AFRICA!

Ladder to the Moon Network
24 Preble St. | PO BOX 10379, Portland ME 04104

Publisher

Georges Budagu Makoko
amjamboafrika1@gmail.com

Editor in Chief

Kathreen (Kit) Harrison
amjamboafrika@gmail.com

Graphic Designer

Stacey Warner, Warner Graphics

Translators

Nathalie Gorey
Pastor Maurice Namwira
Jean Damascène Hakuzimana
Yusuf Muse Yusuf
Elisabeth Yala

Copy Editor

Stephanie Harp

Poetry Editor

Gary Lawless

Photographers

Steven Bridges
Laura deDoes | John Ochira
E'nkul E. Kankan

Editorial Intern

Abigail Nelson

Partners

cPort Credit Union

Sponsors

Lee Auto

Supporters

Coffee by Design
Allagash

Patrons

MEMIC

Portland Food Co-op

Northern Light Mercy Hospital

Amjambo Africa! welcomes letters to the editor, notices of local events, photographs, and suggestions for future stories.

Contributions are published at the discretion of the editor and as space allows.
Email: amjamboafrika@gmail.com

amjamboafrika.com

All contents copyright 2020. All rights reserved.
Printed in Maine.



The views expressed by contributors belong solely to the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of Ladder to the Moon Network.

What is the U.S. Census, and Should I Participate?

By Stephanie Harp and Kathreen Harrison

Every 10 years, the U.S. conducts a census to count every single person living in this country, and the 2020 Census begins in March. Between March 12 and 20, each home will receive an invitation to answer a simple questionnaire; you may choose to answer online, by mail, or by phone. All information is kept confidential. By law, Census data may be used only for statistics and nothing else.

Census results determine the number of seats for each state in the U.S. House of Representatives for the next 10 years, based on population. Maine currently has two Congressional districts. If the Census shows that a state's population has increased, that state may be able to add additional Representatives. (Each state always has two U.S. Senators, regardless of population.) Census statistics also determine how each area of Maine is represented in the State House in Augusta.

"Representation matters!" said Mufalo Chitam, Executive Director of Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC). "Participation in the Census will ensure that immigrants are represented in Maine." U.S. Census Bureau provides translated web pages and guides in 59 non-English languages, including American Sign Language, as well as guides in Braille and large print for residents with sight impairment.

Federal and state governments use Census statistics about population to distribute more than \$675 billion in funds, grants, and support that is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works, and other programs. In FY2016, for example, Maine received \$4,114,357,289 through 55 federal spending programs guided by data derived from the 2010 Census. "The federal government will base funding for social services for the next 10 years on the 2020 Census numbers, which means that if you or your children are not included in the upcoming Census, social services for so many – children, the elderly, the disabled, for example – won't be properly funded in Maine's towns and cities," said South Portland City Councilor Deqa Dhalac. "Many children of color were not counted in the last Census, and budgets for social services were negatively impacted. It's important to be counted, to be included as part of the Maine community. Do you want to be included, or left out? And remember, the Census is anonymous."

Many people may be concerned about the privacy of the information on the Census, but Title 13 of the U.S. Code prevents the Census Bureau from releasing any identifiable information, not even to law enforcement or the courts. The National Archives and Records Administration, which maintains Census records, is not allowed to release it for 72 years. If Census Bureau employees violate their oath to protect private information, they could be fined up to \$250,000 and jailed for up to five years.

“You are not mandated to answer any question about your immigration status, but you must not give untrue answers. This makes it safe for immigrants to take part in the Census. If we do not get counted, we will be denying ourselves – and especially our children – proper representation and other funding due to us. **”**

— Angela Okafor, Immigration attorney and Bangor City Councilor

The Census is mandated in Article II of the U.S. Constitution. It has been conducted every 10 years since 1790 to count all residents, including non-citizens and undocumented immigrants. This year, following a schedule, the Census Bureau will work to educate people about the Census, send invitations to answer the Census, and send reminder letters to answer the Census. Households that haven't answered by the end of March will receive a reminder postcard, followed by a reminder letter and a paper copy of the questionnaire, and another reminder postcard. If the Census Bureau still hasn't received the information, a Census worker will follow-up in person and come to your home.

"It's not only important that all people are counted, but it's critical that all immigrants are counted," said Claude Rwaganje, Executive Director of ProsperityME. "Most asylum seekers' eyes are on their pending applications, and they may think that the Census doesn't concern them, but it does. I urge all immigrants to participate."

Census results impact how each state is represented in Congress and what resources states can receive from the federal government. For every child that is not counted, Maine could potentially lose \$16,400 in federal funding over a 10-year period, according to Morgan Hynd, Director of The Bingham Program. Historically, children under age five, people of color, tribal nations, people in rural communities, and people experiencing homelessness have been undercounted in Maine.

Fourteen nonprofits have been awarded grants by Maine Census Outreach Fund 2020 (MCOF 2020) to support participation in the Census. This is the first time that Maine philanthropies have worked together to support Census work, which will help to inform future Census outreach efforts in 2030 and beyond. MCOF 2020 is a collaborative funding effort supported by the Maine Philanthropy Center, which pooled \$170,000 from different philanthropies that make grants in Maine, including The Betterment Fund, The Bingham Program, Broad Reach Fund, The Doree Taylor Foundation, Bank of America N.A., Trustee, Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, John T. Gorman Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Health Access Foundation, and Sam L. Cohen Foundation. Non-funding partners include: Maine Philanthropy Center, Maine Women's Fund, and United Way of Greater Portland.

The nonprofits that were awarded grants are Gateway Community Services Maine; Mano en Mano / Hand in Hand; League of Women Voters of Maine – Education Fund; Literacy Volunteers of Greater Augusta; Maine Access Immigrant Network (MAIN); Maine Adult Education Association; Maine Children's Alliance; Maine Equal Justice; Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition; Preble Street; Rural Community Action Ministry; Sunrise County Economic Council; Tri-County Mental Health Services; and YWCA Central Maine. Grant-funded activities include a variety of outreach efforts, such as going door to door, distributing flyers, hosting workshops, and conducting social media campaigns. On February 23, Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC) filmed a PSA to promote participation in the Census with 16 community members and elected officials.

WHAT'S AN ASYLUM SEEKER?

Asylum is a protection granted to foreign nationals already in the United States or at the border who meet the international law definition of a "refugee." The United Nations 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol define a refugee as a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her home country, and cannot obtain protection in that country, due to past persecution or a well-founded fear of being persecuted in the future "on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion." Congress incorporated this definition into U.S. immigration law in the Refugee Act of 1980.

As a signatory to the 1967 Protocol, and through U.S. immigration law, the United States has legal obligations to provide protection to those who qualify as refugees. The Refugee Act established two paths to obtain refugee status—either from abroad as a resettled refugee or in the United States as an asylum seeker.

FRENCH TRANSLATION UNE INVASION DE CRIQUETS MENACE L'ÉCONOMIE DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'EST

Par Jean Damascène Hakuzimana

Les Nations Unies ont annoncé que des nuées de millions de criquets sont en train de ravager les récoltes au Kenya, en Ouganda, en Tanzanie, en Somalie, et en Ethiopie, et le souci grandit que cette infestation va sérieusement empirer les conditions en Afrique de l'Est selon l'agence de presse Associated Press. Face au phénomène, les gouvernements de cette région travaillent sans interruption afin de contenir et d'éradiquer cette catastrophe. L'Ouganda a réuni son Cabinet le 10 février dernier après que l'invasion massive ait atteint le territoire et a celui-ci annoncé la mobilisation de forces militaires et de civils afin de pulvériser des pesticides dans le but de contenir l'épidémie. Le Cabinet a aussi proposé de faire des pulvérisations aériennes par hélicoptères, ce qui paraît-il serait une façon efficace de combattre une catastrophe de ce genre.

De fortes pluies récentes (et rares en Afrique de l'Est) ont aggravé l'invasion de criquets dans la région. Les chercheurs experts alertent que le changement climatique causera plus de pluies abondantes dans un avenir proche, et ils ajoutent qu'il est crucial de contenir l'invasion des criquets avant ces nouvelles précipitations—sinon les insectes profiteront de la végétation fraîche et se multiplieront d'une manière exponentielle.

L'Agence des Etats-Unis pour le Développement International rapporte qu'une infestation de criquets dans le désert s'est intensifiée depuis juin 2019 en Ethiopie, envahissant presque 581 000 hectares de cultures et de pâturages. En moyenne, une nuée de crickets dans le désert peut parcourir jusqu'à 150 kilomètres par jour et un essaim peut consommer à lui seul autant de nourriture que l'équivalent d'environ 35 000 personnes en une journée, selon l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture.

Le changement climatique a causé le mouvement de migration humaine en Afrique de l'Est, et le Secrétaire Général adjoint pour les Affaires Humanitaires Mark Lowcock craint que les 12 millions de personnes qui font déjà face à l'insécurité alimentaire dans cette région auront du mal à supporter cette nouvelle calamité qui sera aussi susceptible d'apporter des maladies.

Les chercheurs avertissent aussi que les essaims menacent désormais de se propager au Soudan du Sud où des millions de personnes meurent de faim après des décennies de guerre civile. La Tanzanie a également été touchée par l'invasion de criquets sur ses terres et utilise trois avions pour vaporiser des pesticides, selon le journal anglais, The Guardian. La pulvérisation aérienne de pesticides est le moyen le plus efficace pour enrayer ce fléau mais tous ces pays manquent de ressources et n'ont pas les finances pour se procurer ces avions indispensables.

Selon les spécialistes du changement climatique, les pluies exceptionnelles qui se sont abattues sur la péninsule arabique dans le désert Oman après la formation d'un cyclone au-dessus de l'océan Indien en décembre 2019 étaient les conditions idéales pour favoriser la reproduction du criquet. La chaleur et l'humidité sont les deux facteurs qui expliquent la prolifération de ces insectes.

Les chercheurs craignent que les zones de reproduction principales pour les criquets soient dans une région de la Somalie contrôlée par les groupes extrémistes Al Shabab et que, par conséquent, il sera très difficile d'endiguer l'invasion à sa source: un seul essaim peut en effet contenir plus de 150 millions de criquets par km carré de terres agricoles, couvrant un espace similaire à 250 terrains de football, selon les autorités régionales qui ont parlé avec le journal The Guardian.

C'EST QUOI, LE RECENSEMENT AMÉRICAIN, ET EST-IL SANS RISQUE?

Par Stephanie Harp

Tous les 10 ans, les Etats-Unis font un recensement afin de compter chaque individu résidant dans le pays, et le recensement de 2020 commencera en mars. Entre les dates du 12 au 20 mars, chaque foyer sera invité à répondre à un simple questionnaire; vous aurez le choix de répondre en ligne, par email, ou par téléphone. Toute information reçue sera gardée confidentielle. La loi assure que les données du recensement ne peuvent être utilisées que comme statistiques et rien d'autre.

Les résultats du recensement déterminent le nombre de sièges que chaque état peut avoir au Congrès des Etats-Unis pour les 10 prochaines années, selon la population; le Maine est représenté actuellement par deux districts au Congrès. Si le recensement établit que la population de l'état a augmenté, cet état peut alors ajouter des Représentants supplémentaires. (Chaque état a toujours deux Sénateurs américains, quelque soit la population.) Les statistiques du recensement déterminent aussi comment chaque région du Maine sera représentée à la Chambre des Représentants à Augusta.

"La représentation est importante!" insiste Mufalo Chitam, Directeur Exécutif de Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC).

"La participation au recensement garantira que les immigrants soient représentés dans le Maine." Le Bureau de Recensement américain offre des pages internet et des guides traduits en 59 langues autres que l'anglais, y compris la langue des signes américaine, ainsi que des guides en braille et en gros caractères.

Le gouvernement utilise ces données statistiques de recensement de la population afin de distribuer plus de 675 milliards de dollars en subventions, bourses et aides distribuées aux écoles, hôpitaux, routes, travaux publics, et autres programmes. En 2016, par exemple, le Maine a reçu 4 114 357 289 dollars grâce à 55 programmes créés d'après les données dérivées du recensement de 2010. "Le gouvernement fédéral déterminera quels fonds donner aux services sociaux pour les 10 prochaines années selon les résultats du recensement de 2020, ce qui signifie que si vous ou vos enfants n'êtes pas inclus dans ce recensement, les services sociaux pour de nombreuses personnes—les enfants, les personnes âgées, les handicapés, par exemple—ne seront pas justement financés dans les communes et les villes du Maine," a déclaré Deqa Dhalac, Conseiller à la ville de South Portland. "Beaucoup d'enfants de couleur n'avaient pas été comptés dans le dernier recensement, et par conséquent les budgets pour les services sociaux avaient subi un impact négatif. Il est très important d'être compté, et inclus comme faisant partie de la communauté du Maine. Voulez-vous être inclus, ou laissé de côté? Et souvenez-vous que le recensement est anonyme."

Beaucoup de gens peuvent s'inquiéter de la confidentialité de l'information sur le recensement, mais le titre 13 du Code des Etats-Unis empêche le Bureau du Recensement de communiquer toute information privée, même aux services de la police ou de la justice. L'Administration des archives nationales et des documents, qui conserve les dossiers du recensement, n'a pas le droit de partager cette information pendant 72 ans. Si les employés du Bureau du Recensement ne respectent pas le serment qu'ils ont prêté de protéger l'information privée et la règle de confidentialité, ils pourront recevoir une amende s'élevant à 250 000 dollars et être mis en prison pour une durée maximum de 5 ans.

Angela Okafor, avocate de l'immigration, propriétaire d'un commerce, et Conseillère à la ville de Bangor, a dit, "Vous n'êtes pas obligé(e) de répondre à toute question sur le statut de votre immigration, mais vous ne devez pas donner de fausses réponses. Cela permet aux immigrants de participer au recensement en toute sécurité. Si nous ne sommes pas comptés, nous nous priverons-et surtout nos enfants- d'une bonne représentation et d'autres bénéfices financiers auxquels on aurait le droit."

Le recensement est un mandat dans l'Article II de la Constitution américaine. Il a eu lieu tous les 10 ans depuis 1790 afin de compter tous les résidents, y compris les non-citoyens et les immigrants sans-papiers. Cette année, le Bureau du Recensement suivra un emploi du temps et s'efforcera d'éduquer les gens à propos du recensement, enverra des invitations et des lettres pour rappeler aux gens de répondre au recensement. Les foyers qui n'auront pas répondu avant la fin du mois de mars recevront une carte postale de rappel, suivie d'une lettre de rappel et d'une version papier du questionnaire, et enfin une autre carte de rappel. Si le Bureau du Recensement n'a toujours pas reçu l'information, un employé se présentera chez vous pour faire suite.

"Il est non seulement important que tous les citoyens soient comptés, mais il est crucial que tous les immigrants soient aussi comptés," a déclaré Claude Rwaganje, Directeur Exécutif de ProsperityME. "La plupart des demandeurs d'asile surveillent leurs demandes en attente, et ils peuvent penser à tort que le recensement ne les concerne pas. J'encourage tous les immigrants à participer." Les résultats du recensement feront évoluer le nombre des représentants par État au Congrès des États-Unis avec cette information, et décider de quelles ressources les états pourront bénéficier et recevoir du gouvernement fédéral. Pour chaque enfant qui n'est pas compté, le Maine pourrait peut-être perdre 14 400 dollars en fonds fédéraux pendant une période de dix ans, d'après Morgan Hynd, Directeur du programme Bingham.

On a attribué des bourses à quatorze associations à but non-lucratif afin de soutenir la participation au recensement. Celles-ci sont Gateway Community Services Maine; Hand in Hand Mano en Mano; League of Women Voters of Maine - Education Fund; Literacy Volunteers of Greater Augusta; Maine Access Immigrant Network (MAIN); Maine Adult Education Association; Maine Children's Alliance; Maine Equal Justice; Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition; Preble Street; Rural Community Action Ministry; Sunrise County Economic Council; Tri-County Mental Health Services; YWCA Central Maine. Parmi les activités financées par ces bourses, il y aura une variété d'initiatives de communication, telles que faire du porte à porte, distribuer des brochures, animer des ateliers, et organiser des campagnes de médias sociaux.

Les partenaires du financement du Maine Census Outreach Fund 2020 (MCOF 2020) sont: The Betterment Fund, The Bingham Program, Broad Reach Fund, The Doree Taylor Foundation, Bank of America N.A., Trustee, Elmina B. Sewall Foun-

ation, John T. Gorman Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Health Access Foundation, and Sam L. Cohen Foundation. Non-funding partners include: Maine Philanthropy Center, Maine Women's Fund, and United Way of Greater Portland.



Locust Outbreak May Have Heavy Cost in East Africa

The United Nations has announced that billions of locusts are raiding crops in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, and Ethiopia, and fears are growing that the infestation will seriously worsen conditions in East Africa, according to the Associated Press.



Governments in the region are working around the clock to contain the calamity. After the outbreak reached Ugandan territory, Uganda convened a Cabinet meeting on February 10 and announced the mobilization of military forces, as well as civilians, to spray pesticides aimed at containing the outbreak. The Cabinet also proposed aerial spraying by helicopters, which they said is an effective way to fight a calamity of this sort.

The locust outbreak in the region, in part, was exacerbated by recent heavy rains, which are unusual for East Africa. Experts warn that climate change will bring increasing amounts of heavy rains. They say containment of the locust outbreak before more rain falls will be crucial; otherwise the insects will benefit from fresh vegetation and will multiply exponentially.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) reports that, since June 2019, a desert locust infestation has intensified in Ethiopia, affecting nearly 581,000 acres of cropland and pasture. On average, a desert locust swarm can travel up to 93 miles per day. Even a small swarm can consume the same amount of food in one day as approximately 35,000 people, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) reports.

Climate change has led to human migration movement in East Africa, and United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock is concerned that the 12 million people who are facing food insecurity in East Africa will have difficulty coping with the additional calamity of the locust outbreak. The UNFAO has expressed concern that the outbreak will bring disease.

Experts also warn that the locust outbreak is heading to South Sudan, where millions of people are starving after decades of civil war. Tanzania has also detected the locust outbreak on their soil. They have hired three airplanes for aerial spraying, according to the Guardian. Aerial spraying is considered the most effective way to contain this outbreak, but not all countries are able to afford the necessary airplanes.

Climate scholars blame the unusual heavy rains, coupled with a powerful cyclone off Somalia in December 2019. The locusts are believed to come from the Arabian Peninsula, where heavy rains in the Oman Desert provided conducive breeding conditions for these insects.

Scientists are concerned that the primary breeding grounds for the locusts may be in an area of Somalia controlled by al-Shabab Islamist extremist groups, and that therefore containing the outbreak at the source will be a challenge. A single swarm can contain up to 150 million locusts per square kilometer of farmland, an area the size of almost 250 football fields, according to regional authorities who spoke to the Guardian.



COME JOIN US!

Venez nous joindre

Venha se juntas a nós

Kaalay nagu soo biir

Njoo ujiunge nasi

Ngwino wifatanye natwe

Our knowledgeable and friendly staff would love to share our beer and brewery with you.

50 Industrial Way, Portland, Maine



MAINE MADE US

Dependable

THE PRIMARY CARE YOU NEED IS NEVER FAR AWAY.

Northern Light Mercy Hospital health centers offer primary care, radiology, and lab services on site, and our Windham, Yarmouth, and Gorham locations also offer convenient walk-in care. We are a part of a statewide healthcare system dedicated to better health and better lives for the people of Maine.

Visit MaineMadeUs.com/MercyPrimaryCare to learn more.

NORTHERN LIGHT MERCY HOSPITAL HEALTH CENTERS
74 County Road, Gorham | 385 Route One, Yarmouth | 409 Roosevelt Trail, Windham
75 Gray Road, Falmouth | 43 Baxter Boulevard, Portland | 778 Main Street, South Portland



Northern Light
Mercy Hospital

Justice for Women Lecture Series Hosts Poet-activist Emtithal Mahmoud

by Gary Lawless

Each year the Justice for Women lecture series organizes a series of talks and workshops “bringing global voices to the people of Maine.” The series celebrates global voices of those who have experienced grave injustices yet have found the strength to make a difference and to inspire others to act.

This year’s speaker is Emtithal Mahmoud. Born in Sudan, Mahmoud and her family moved to Yemen, and then to the United States. Emtithal graduated from Yale University, where she studied anthropology and molecular biology, and participated in the Yale slam poetry team. In 2015, she was the International Poetry Slam champion and, in 2016, was co-champion of the Women of the World poetry slam. Emtithal was named a United Nations High Commission on Refugees Goodwill Ambassador in 2018. The BBC named her to their “100 Women List” of the most inspirational women across the world.

She has spoken and read poetry in Oslo, Stockholm, The Hague, Brussels, Paris, and London, recited poetry in front of the UN General Assembly, and met with the Dalai Lama. For the United Nations, she has traveled to meet with refugees in Jordan, Uganda, and Lesbos, Greece. Leading a “One Woman Walk” to raise awareness for peace, Mahmoud walked from Darfur to Khartoum in 30 days, giving readings and talks along the way. Thousands joined the walk.

“If we can walk together, we can work together,” she said. “We can create and inspire a collective responsibility for peace. We will bring the peace together.”

In 2018, Emtithal published her first collection of poems, “Sisters’ Entrance.” Her poetry expresses the real emotions behind the headlines, she said. “It’s hard, in our world, when you see violence everywhere – you’re desensitized to it. What I try to do is to change the approach, so it helps people feel that it’s OK to feel again, and to recognize that it’s scary, and it does hurt, and it’s OK to cry. And people do cry. A lot of things are said about people like me – young people, black people, Muslim people, women – the reason I perform is to answer those things, to be a voice I didn’t really have growing up.”

Emtithal Mahmoud will be in Maine from Monday, March 23, to Friday, March 27.

The Justice for Women lecture series has scheduled several opportunities to hear Emtithal. The following events are free and open to the public:

Monday, March 23, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Muskie Archives, Bates College, Lewiston. Interview and spoken word event.

Tuesday, March 24, 7:00 p.m. Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick. Daughters of Darfur, featuring Emi Mahmoud and Ekhlal Ahmed. Additional readings by invited guests. For information: gulfomainebooks@gmail.com

Wednesday, March 25, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Hannaford Hall, University of Southern Maine, Portland. Justice for Women lecture by Emtithal Mahmoud. She will be introduced by Safiya Khalid. Blanca Santiago will receive the Courage Is Contagious award. Open to the public, but a reservation is required. Register at <http://www.mainerawcommunity.org/2020jfw>

Thursday, March 26, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Indigo Arts Alliance, Portland. Spoken Word event with Emtithal Mahmoud, Moon Nguany, Desiree Lester, and Ekhlal Ahmed. <https://indigoartsalliance.me>



New Amjambo Contributor Heads to Greece

New *Amjambo Africa!* contributor Karina Escajeda is a Fulbright Scholar studying the integration and second language instruction of refugees who have received asylum in Greece. From January–June 2020, she will be based at Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece. Her focus is on building learner engagement through increased family involvement and improved school-home relationships. When in the United States, Escajeda lives and works as an English Language Learning teacher in the Augusta schools.

In over 20 years of experience with language learners at all grade levels, Escajeda has worked as a teacher and administrator in both public and private schools in California, Maine, Mexico, Honduras, and Japan, and is a board member of the Capital Area New Mainers Project.

She wants to address three questions that pertain to communities in Greece as well as communities in Maine.

- What can be learned in Greece to better understand generalities about the refugee experience in a new community after a mass-migration event?

- How can we better equip teachers to appropriately present content to language learners while second language skills continue to develop?

- How can partnerships with outside organizations provide beneficial supports and services to asylee students?

She hopes that thoughtful conversations and research into best practices will bring about improved perception and reception of asylees in Augusta.



Ongoing Urgent Needs for New Asylum Seeker Arrivals Can you help?

- TenRide Metro Bus Tickets
- Reny’s gift cards (\$50 and \$100) to help families with basics as they move out of the shelter into empty apartments
- Cash donations for phone minutes

Please mail to:
Maine Immigrants’ Rights Coalition (MIRC)
Immigrant Welcome Center
24 Preble Street, Suite 306, 3rd floor
Portland, ME 04101

If sending a check, please make it out to MIRC



HARPWORKS
WRITING

STEPHANIE HARP

Stephanie@HarpWorksWriting.com
www.HarpWorksWriting.com

Facebook: HarpWorksWriting
Twitter: @HarpWorks
207.852.6746

Writing | Editing | Grant Writing
Publicity | Research

GOOD WRITING IS GOOD BUSINESS

WELCOME HOME. WORK SAFELY.

MEMIC

Community News



Capitol Area New Mainers Project



The Capitol Area New Mainers Project (CANMP) was founded as a nonprofit in 2017 when a group of local residents decided they wanted to assist new arrivals to integrate into the community. Chris Myers Asch is the CANMP co-founder and executive director. The goals of the organization are to help new arrivals navigate their new home, build bridges between newcomers and long-time residents of the Augusta area, and educate Americans about immigration issues and diverse cultures. The organization's volunteers try to plug gaps in social services provided by other nonprofits and the City of Augusta. They also hold potlucks, holiday celebrations, an international children's festival in mid-July, game and movie nights, teen gatherings and trips. They offer Arabic classes for interested Americans during the week; on weekends, they hold Arabic literacy classes for children growing up in the U.S. CANMP's comfortable community space at 70 State Street, Augusta, has a pleasant play area for children complete with a reading library stocked with bilingual books; parents can read aloud in Arabic to their children while the kids follow along in English. Books may be checked out.

The Augusta area is home to approximately 65 families of recent arrivals, most of whom are originally from the Middle East, primarily Iraq and Syria. The majority of these are secondary migrants who were admitted to the United States as refugees, resettled in Florida and Arizona, and then beginning in 2013 chose to relocate to Maine. Augusta has also embraced a small number of recent African immigrants from Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda, and has been home to a number of families from South Asia for many years. The Augusta school system educates over 100 children whose mother tongue is not English.

Djiboutian American Community Empowerment Project



DACEP held their annual meeting on February 2. The meeting reviewed finances of the organization and recapped achievements of 2019, which included becoming a nonprofit 501(c)(3) and opening an office. DACEP's plans include a Djibouti Independence celebration on Saturday, June 27, and an Eid Festival in Lewiston that is similar to last year's, but more extensive. Plans are also underway for a Women's Empowerment and Family Development program and an Adult Literacy and Self Development program. DACEP will collaborate with New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) of Portland Adult Education to tackle issues faced by individuals from Djiboutian and French-speaking communities as they pursue professional careers here in Maine. DACEP met with members of Bates College's Harvard Center for Community Partnership and agreed to partner on an afterschool program, which will include Bates student volunteers helping children with homework. The annual meeting concluded with a discussion on the importance of community and of deepening the support and participation of the Djiboutian community in DACEP.

Somali Bantu Association of Maine



The Somali Bantu Community Association is gearing up for the 2020 farming season, and the Association has hired a new production manager. This year's focus is on starting a Senior Shares program for the first time.

The Kasheek Project, a cultural program for youth, is rapidly expanding. Winter used to be the slow season, but this winter approximately 60 kids have been attending the weekly program, and the Association expects a robust program in the summer. Farah is the Program Coordinator.

The Elders Connect Program creates a safe space for elders to come together and have fun. Participants enjoy coffee and refreshments, share conversation, and gather information. During the cold season, when elders can't get outside to meet with their friends, the Elders Connect Program provides a second home.

Muhidin D. Libah is the Executive Director of the Somali Bantu Association of Maine, which has been the center of the Somali Bantu community since 2005. The association's mission is "to provide vital transitional services, advocacy, and programming that empowers members of the refugee community to uphold cultural identity and thrive in their new life." Farming projects have been a focus since the association's beginning. A 2020 goal is to focus equal attention on a number of other important projects and to find funding and resources for these projects. Approximately 3,000 Somali Bantu live in the Lewiston/Auburn area. The office is at 145 Pierce Street, Suite 101, Lewiston.

Maine Youth Network



Mariam Mohamed is the founder and president of Maine Youth Network (MYN), founded in 2017 and previously known as Somali Mainer Youth Network. The group changed their name because they want to include all youth, regardless of race, ethnicity, or age. MYN works to provide guidance to youth in the Greater Portland and Lewiston/Auburn areas about how to connect to their roots, communities, and professional and academic endeavors, in order to ensure competency for adulthood. Their aim is to provide immigrant youth the necessary tools to compete and succeed in life, and their vision is to inspire academic excellence, encourage civic engagement, and enhance relations between parents and youth. They want to create a stable and effective platform for Maine youth to navigate adolescence, build leadership skills, and develop strong and sustainable community relations.

Since 2017, Maine Youth Network has hosted events such as Somali Independence Day, Eid Celebration, the Identities of Migration Conference, Young Girls Workshop, Youth Dialogue Nights, and others. MYN believes these events bring together young people from all walks of life and ensure that they feel seen and heard. MYN hosts weekly classes about Islam in Portland that are open to both Muslims and non-Muslims. The classes are held on Fridays from 7:00-8:00 p.m. and focus on a different topic each week. Each class includes question and answer time. Currently, MYN is working with SPACE Gallery to plan a presentation intended to raise awareness about issues of mental health in the immigrant community, and to share resources so people can get help, rather than suffer in silence. The March 15 event will include a panel discussion and presentations at SPACE Gallery, Portland, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. All are invited. Maine Youth Network is based at 991 Forest Ave., Portland.

Congolese Brazzaville Community of Maine



Mileina Beatrice Balou was elected president of the Congolese Brazzaville Community of Maine (CCBM) in September 2019. Since then, CCBM has become a 501(c)(3) with a board of seven members – each with a particular area of responsibility – and a full slate of officers. CCBM also has an Integration Commission, whose members provide assistance to those looking for jobs or housing, needing help with immigration lawyers, or applying for green cards. Elders in the community serve as advisors, helping to resolve conflicts. In recent months, CCBM has launched a website (<https://ccbm-us.org/>) and created a Facebook page. The group wants Mainers to learn about Republic of Congo (also known as Congo Brazzaville, after its capital city) and understand that it is a distinct country from Democratic Republic of Congo (also known as Congo Kinshasa). They would like to raise the visibility of the community in Maine. To that end, President Balou has been visiting with mayors and city council members in the Greater Portland area, and plans are underway for events that will display the food, clothing, and natural resources of Congo Brazzaville. CCBM also plans to raise funds to help those suffering from a financial crisis back home. An estimated 300-500 people live in Maine who were born in Congo Brazzaville. Of these, approximately 100 individuals have become members of CCBM. The group has an online membership form, which is available on the website.

Maine Ivorian Community



Simon-Pierre Obrou is the president of the Maine Ivorian Community, a nonprofit that seeks to create an environment where immigrants of Ivorian origin can come together to share and support each other. The community values Ivorian culture, family and education, good neighborly relations with the host community, successful community integration in Maine, and the well-being of Ivorian immigrants. The next meeting of the community will be in late March. Approximately 50 Ivoirians live in the Greater Portland area. Ivoirians living in Maine who are not connected to the organization are encouraged to email President Simon-Pierre Obrou and introduce yourselves: simonpierre.obrou@yahoo.fr



**Every great relationship
begins with a “hello.”**

**kila uhusiano muhimu
huanza na “ hujambo”**

**Toute bonne relation
commence par un “salut”.**

**Umubano unoze wose
ubimburirwa na “Muraho”.**



 cportcu.org  1-800-464-0253

Federally insured by NCUA

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

Class of 2020

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Assumption College | Seattle University |
| Boston University | Southern Maine Comm. College |
| Central Maine Comm. College | Temple University |
| Clark University | The University of Tampa |
| Columbia University | Thomas College |
| Creighton University | Tufts University |
| Curry College | Tulane University |
| Drexel University | University of Central Florida |
| Franklin Pierce University | University of Hartford |
| George Mason University | University of Maine |
| High Point University | University of Maine at Farmington |
| Hollins University | University of Massachusetts, Lowell |
| Husson University | University of New England |
| Ithaca College | University of New Haven |
| Keene State College | University of South Carolina - Columbia |
| Keuka College | University of Southern Maine |
| Lesley University | University of Vermont |
| Mary Baldwin University | Wheaton College MA |
| Merrimack College | Worcester Polytechnic Institute |
| Mount Holyoke College | Yale University |
| New England College | |
| Nova Southeastern University | |
| Pace University, New York City | |
| Quinnipiac University | |
| Saint Joseph's College-ME | |
| Salem College | |



Lilly Russell, Sahar Habibzai, Aidan Reid

“double up” if desired, meaning that students can follow their interests and take multiple courses in a given discipline each year – such as two science courses or several languages. All of these opportunities, supported with close weekly advisement sessions, translate to a school that current students said works hard to support the individual.

Headed for a career in medicine, senior Sahar Habibzai credited Deering with encouraging her career aspirations by allowing her to take Chemistry at University of Southern Maine, as well as AP Biology and AP Physics. Senior Aidan Reid, who wants to pursue international politics and foreign policy, has interned at the World Affairs Council of Maine in addition to taking courses in Comparative Government and Human Geography. He pointed out that “Deering is a microcosm of the world,” making it a perfect high school for someone interested in global affairs.

The school demonstrates its commitment to global education by offering many international trips, four languages, a required tenth-grade Global Issues course based on the Model United Nations curriculum, partnerships with the World Affairs Council and the University of New England’s Center for Global Humanities, and a mission that includes the fostering of global competency.

“

I work from a place of meaning. One of the most important things a teacher can do is help students build confidence to carry through their lives.

— Art teacher, Audrey Michaud-Rolfe

”

CBD IN NGOZI, BURUNDI

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY. SHARING JOY.

CBD is grateful for our community of farmers, harvesters, roasters, and coffee lovers, locally and globally.

COFFEE BY DESIGN

COME VISIT US AT ONE OF OUR COFFEEHOUSES

Certified **B** Corporation

PROUDLY SUPPORTING

ILAP

IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

Joe's Immigrant Family From Riga, Latvia Arrived In Portland, Maine - 1890



LAW OFFICES OF

JOE BORNSTEIN

ACCIDENT & DISABILITY ATTORNEYS

MAINE LAWYERS WORKING FOR MAINE PEOPLE®

In over 45 years, we've helped more than 25,000 injured and disabled Mainers of all backgrounds and ethnicities.

INJURED? DISABLED?

207-CALL-JOE • 1-800-CALL-JOE

(207-225-5563)

(1-800-225-5563)

- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Trucking Accidents
- Products Liability
- Premises Liability
- Traumatic Injuries
- Birth Defects
- Prescription Drug Recalls
- Medical Malpractice
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Serious Personal Injuries
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Accidents
- Fractures with and without Surgery
- Alcohol Related Injuries
- Serious Spinal Injuries
- Construction Site Accidents
- Admiralty and Maritime Claims
- Mesothelioma/Asbestos Injuries
- Snowmobile Accidents
- Dog Bites

FREE EVALUATION • NO FEES UNLESS YOU WIN

SANFORD • BIDDEFORD • PORTLAND • WINDHAM • LEWISTON • AUGUSTA • BANGOR

Web Site: www.JoeBornstein.com • Time and Temperature Sign: www.PortlandTimeTemp.com

Arrive Alive Creative Contest: www.ArriveAliveCreativeContest.com



Copyright © 2018
Law Offices of Joe Bornstein.

Work Authorization Assistance for Asylum Seekers at Hope House

Story and Photos by Kathreen Harrison

With the uptick in arrivals of asylum seekers that began in the summer of 2019, Maine's local immigrant-led associations, their nonprofit allies, faith communities, and supporters around the state have stepped up their game to try and fill the gaps left by government in addressing their needs. Legal assistance, language assistance, transportation assistance, cultural integration assistance, material assistance for items not provided by General Assistance (beds, winter clothing, cooking pans, etc.), health support – all of this the newcomers have needed – and continue to need. And thanks to the kindness and tenacity of Mainers, at least some of the help required is being provided.

Hope Acts, a Portland-based nonprofit with a tiny staff, focused exclusively on addressing the needs of asylum seekers, is one of the organizations working harder than ever in order to help the recent arrivals. Hope



A family of four gets assistance with work authorization forms

Acts operates Hope House, the only residential program for adult asylum seekers in Maine, which houses 13 single adults at a time. "We would love to have room for everyone at Hope House — have another building, say yes to everyone who walks through the door — but we do not have the resources," Hope House Executive Director Martha Stein said. But where there's a will to help, there's a way, and Hope Acts has found a way that makes a measurable difference for many.

From noon until 3:00 p.m. every Monday through Thursday, any asylum seeker needing help accessing services or understanding and completing documents can go to Hope House on Sherman Street in Portland for help through the Asylum Seeker Assistance Program (ASAP). The program is open to all asylum seekers, and assistance is free. Examples of assistance provided at Hope House are housing searches and applications, job searches and applications, reading and understanding English mail & documents, making appointments, finding other services and resources, and managing schedules. ASAP is staffed by social work interns from the University of Southern Maine, who receive clinical supervision from ASAP partner Gateway Community Services, as well as community volunteers, including a large group from the family mentoring group Welcoming the Stranger. On Wednesdays, volunteers assist newcomers in filling out complex work authorization application forms – the only day of the week when this assistance is available.

The Wednesday program was conceived during a conversation in summer 2019 between Carolyn Graney of Hope Acts and Nancy Markowitz of Welcoming the Stranger. Graney and Markowitz knew that Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP), the primary source of immigration help for asylum seekers in Maine for many years, was overwhelmed by the increased demand for legal services presented by the surge in new immigrants. Wanting to take something off ILAP's plate that didn't require attorneys, so ILAP could help more people, Markowitz suggested

reaching out to the extensive Welcoming the Stranger volunteer network for help. The volunteer network responded, and the program was launched.

"At first, no one knew we were offering work authorization assistance, and it was quiet - but now everyone comes. We have French, Portuguese, and Lingala interpreters available, including people on Workfare who live at Hope House. If you build it, they'll come!" said Markowitz. On an average week, volunteers help approximately 20 asylum seekers complete and submit their work authorization forms. And the help extends in both directions.

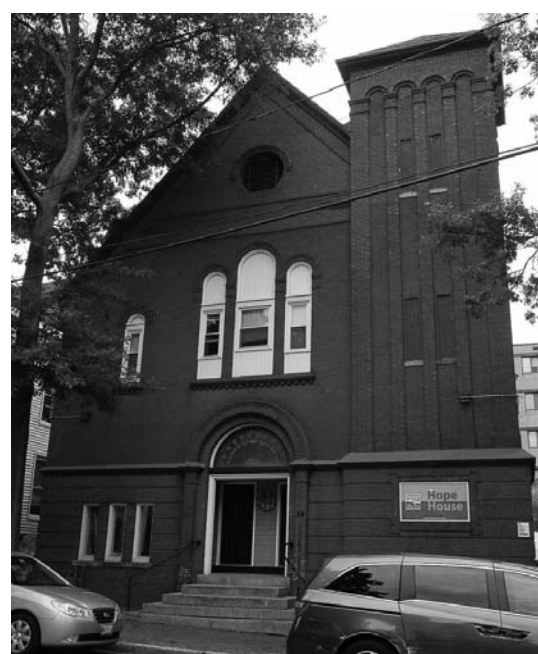
"Hope House is a positive, welcoming space for volunteers and for asylum seekers in need. The work is dynamic and has stretched me to learn in new ways," said Yana Davis, a social work intern from USM.

"I'm retired, and I don't feel comfortable not making some kind of contribu-

tion. It's a great way to help," said Joyce Branaman, a mentor with Welcoming the Stranger, who volunteers each Wednesday.

Since June 9, 857 asylum seekers have arrived in the City of Portland. Beginning life in Maine without English skills and permission to work, and often after experiencing trauma, is not something many people can do successfully without a good deal of help. For information about volunteering, please contact Carolyn Graney, the Hope Acts Program Manager, at carolyn@hopeacts.org or 207-274-6005.

To make a donation to Hope Acts, mail a check to Hope Acts, P.O. Box 7615, Portland, ME 04112, or donate online at www.hopeacts.org/give.



Hope House on Sherman Street, Portland

Screening to save lives

Dr. Catherine McCrann and Christopher Kleeman from Northern Light Mercy Gastroenterology participated in the community screening event.

Ana Torres' decision to have her first colonoscopy three years ago may have saved her life. During the procedure doctors found and removed polyps that could have turned cancerous.

For Ana, who moved to the United States from El Salvador 17 years ago, getting a colonoscopy was not as simple as seeking a referral from a primary care provider and showing up for the screening appointment. Like



many immigrants, obstacles like a lack of insurance and a language barrier have made it more difficult for her to get the care she needs.

Recognizing a need to improve access for this underserved population, Northern Light Mercy Hospital has found an innovative way to help people like Ana overcome the barriers they face to getting screened for colon cancer. A grant provided by the Linda Tallen and David Paul Kane Cancer Education and Research Foundation made it possible for Mercy to address an unmet need in the community for cancer education and screening among those over 50 who are relatively new to this country. Education, cost, transportation, and other variables that may prevent convenient access to screening were funded by the grant.

The first round of cancer screening for this underserved community began in 2016. Based on the outcomes of that effort (and the identification of more than a dozen pre-cancerous, at risk patients), a second wave of screening took place in December.

As in the previous effort, two colon cancer information sessions were held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Portland. One session was held in Spanish for Latin American immigrants, and the other session was attended by French-speaking African immigrants. Ana attended the Spanish-language session and was able to schedule her colonoscopy at the event. The cost of the colonoscopy and all prep materials were covered by the grant along with taxi vouchers and a hospital room for pre-colonoscopy prep for those in need.

While Northern Light Mercy Hospital and its healthcare foundation secured the grant funding, coordinated the information sessions, and performed the colonoscopies, the screenings would not have been possible without support from Sister Patricia Pora, a Sister of Mercy and director of the Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of Portland. Sister Pora regularly travels around Maine to assist Latino immigrants with a variety of issues, and she served as a link between the hospital and the immigrant community.

"When this was offered by the gastroenterology team, I said 'yes, I'm sure there are people who can use it, because healthcare is an area that many of them don't have great access to,'" she says. "Some of them have been here for years and have never had a colonoscopy. And they're older adults."

Sister Pora followed up by phone with those who had scheduled colonoscopies to answer questions and describe some of the differences between healthcare in their home countries and the United States, which removed yet another barrier to accessing care.

Ana is grateful to Mercy for providing an opportunity to get screened. Last fall, she encouraged her husband to attend one of the November 2019 information sessions. He registered for a screening and recently had his first colonoscopy.

"He didn't want to do it," says Anna. "He's 51, so it's time."

While Mercy doesn't have immediate plans to expand the screenings, a similar approach could someday provide better access to mammograms and other screenings. For Catherine McCrann, MD, a gastroenterologist at Northern Light Mercy Gastroenterology who attended one of the two November sessions, this "back to basics" approach to medicine fuels her passion for making a difference.

"This is just good, clean medicine," says Dr. McCrann. "If you can take away all the barriers, like the language barrier and insurance barrier, you can help people stay healthy and prevent cancer. If detected early, it's truly curable. This is truly the Mercy mission."

Contributed by Northern Light Mercy Hospital

From the Desk of Dr. Ahmed

Parental Involvement in Decision Making

I am sure many students and families are asking, "How can I be involved in improving the schools?"



Parental input is particularly encouraged at this time of year, because Maine school superintendents and other school administrators present budgets for approval by their school boards at this time of year. Next, local municipal governments weigh in on the budgets, and finally citizens get a chance to vote on whether or not to accept their district's budget. Since school programs, buildings, and numbers of staff depend on the outcomes of these votes, what happens at this time of year can have a big impact on education.



Each month, **Let's Talk** will focus on sayings that might sound funny or confusing to a new language learner. So if you have ever thought "What did they mean by that?" or "What are they trying to say?" this column is for you.

It has been a long, gray winter but do not fear...lots of green will appear nearby very soon. On March 17, many cities – especially those with large, Irish American populations – will celebrate St. Patrick's Day. People wish each other "the luck of the Irish" and celebrate by going to or marching in parades, wearing green, and even drinking green-colored beer. So enjoy the color of St. Patrick's Day. It might be the only green we see until spring!

Here are four idioms – expressions in which the meanings of the words are not the same as the meaning of the saying – which one might hear used in connection with love or friendship.

Cross your fingers — Hope that someone or something is successful

"Fatima studied very hard for the bar exam, so she is keeping her fingers crossed that she learned enough to pass the test."

Break a leg — A way to wish someone in the theater good luck with their performance

"Hugo rehearsed the lines for the lead in his high school musical and his whole family told him to break a leg at his audition."

Knock on wood — An expression that is said while tapping on a surface, to avoid bad luck for future endeavors. "Sadia got a flu shot this year. So, knock on wood, she will not get sick this winter."

Golden opportunity — A chance that should not be missed

"Thierry was approached by a large, multi-national firm for a college internship. It was a golden opportunity that he could not refuse."

If you have questions about sayings you have heard Americans use that you don't understand, or if you have questions about American culture, please email your questions to Claudia at amjamboafrika3@gmail.com and "Let's Talk" will be happy to help.

Claudia Jakubowski has her Masters Degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

Healthcare in the US

By Firdaws Hakizimana

So, March 8th is International Women's Day (IWD). Every year, IWD has a theme. In 2019, the theme was #BalanceForBetter. According to *The Telegraph*, the 2019 theme was "a nod to the growing global push for professional and social equality ... to encourage gender balance in boardrooms, in the media, and in wealth as a way for economies to thrive." The 2020 theme is #EachforEqual.



First, I want to point out that there is an International Men's Day as well, held every November 19. IMD also has a pretty important goal, "to celebrate positive male role models and to raise awareness of men's issues ... mental health, toxic masculinity, and the prevalence of male suicide." However, IMD is not the focus of what I'm going to be talking about in this column.

In 1908, 15,000 women protested for equal rights in New York. International Women's Day was established in 1910 at the International Women's Conference. The year following the declaration of International Women's Day, women held their first rallies for equal rights in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland, with other countries following soon after.

The 2020 theme, #EachforEqual, is all about inclusion. And 2020 is definitely the year to talk about inclusion. Historically, in the U.S. women first fought just to have the vote. Then, we fought for equal rights for people of color. Now, we can finally connect these and work toward inclusion for everyone.

International Women's Day is international in scope, however countries are at different places when it comes to gender equality. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, women have recently gained the right to drive - but even so, they still need permission from a male relative and/or husband to learn to drive. According to the World Economic Forum, there are 104 countries that still restrict what jobs women can get. Considering that there are 194 countries in the world, the fact that in 104 of them women can't have the same jobs as their male counterparts is insane!

Not only that, the United States - a country that holds so much international power and influence - rates surprisingly low on the Social Progress Index, not even making it into the ranks of the top twenty countries. Of course, if you think about it, this makes sense. We are the country where the Me Too Movement was founded, yet people have a hard time even acknowledging that there is a problem of equality in the U.S. We still haven't had a female president, vice president, head of the department of defense, or secretary of treasury. And let's not even get started with the Pink Tax (a specific tax and/or price increase that is placed only on female products)!

At the end of the day, my hope for the future is for inclusivity to become the norm. We need equality for women in order to move forward and succeed in addressing all the big issues that plague the world. After all, women make up about 50% of the world's population - by oppressing women we hold back half of humankind. To summarize, humans have been walking the earth for 200,000 years. Let's strive to make our next years the best possible.

Firdaw Hakizimana is a student at Cape Elizabeth High School. She loves terrible puns, writing, and is one of a kind.

Here are some action steps I encourage you to take to let your voice be heard.

- Ask your child to comment on which school programs seem to work well
- Check in with teachers and ask them what resources they need in order to be more effective in serving students and families
- Meet with the superintendent and other school administrators and share your ideas about programs and resources.
- Collaborate with the superintendent and offer support
- Attend public hearings and express your ideas
- Make phone calls to school board members, city councilors, and state legislators. Let them know your thoughts about what children need in order to succeed.
- Speak with other parents and advocate for what you think is important
- If your municipality requires citizens to vote to ratify the school budget – please vote!

Photography By Steven Bridges
Weddings, Events, Headshots, & Real Estate Photography.
www.PhotographyByStevenBridges.com
<https://www.facebook.com/PhotographyByStevenBridges/>
 207-329-0828
 SNB207@gmail.com

Titi de Baccarat at UMVA

Story by Kathreen Harrison

"Art saved my life," said Titi de Baccarat on February 8, speaking to a circle of art aficionados who had gathered around him



Titi de Baccarat at UMVA

Photo | Steven Bridges

in a Union of Maine Visual Artists gallery, where his show titled 'Who is it?' had opened the previous night. Born in Gabon, forced to flee his country because of political persecution, de Baccarat arrived in Portland in February 2015 without financial resources, family, friends, or English. "Art brought me friends, helps me survive – if art was taken from me, I would have nothing left. Art is my world," he told his listeners, who hung on his every word with rapt attention. De Baccarat often has that effect on people. Philosophical, personable, and deeply passionate about his work – both the man and his art inevitably engage viewers in lively exchanges. De Baccarat's work tackles a wide range of subjects - including sex trafficking, domestic violence, racism, the detention of asylum-seeking children, inequality, and

the loneliness of migration. "My art is not about beauty, it's about the message," he explained. "From youth I have always been attuned to injustice – the injustice I saw around me in my country of Gabon, and the injustice in the world beyond. In order to improve the world, we need to have the courage to talk about topics some people find hard to discuss. We need to see what we don't want to see, feel emotion because of what we see, and take action." De Baccarat stressed the importance of compassion - even for those with whom you have no personal connection. "It is important to think about others, make life better for the community, and collectively make change," he said. "One of the works in 'Who is it?' - a handbag with attached arms and hands he created from a pair of jeans and some fabric – references the detention centers near the Southern border, where children are held apart from their parents. A Trump administration lawyer has argued in court that it is acceptable for children to be held without items such as toothbrushes – so de Baccarat's handbag boasts several toothbrushes in a side pocket, with a hand holding a tube of toothpaste in a clear rebuke to the Administration. "Most kids in detention are not African, but I still feel compassion for them, and want to do something." Art is de Baccarat's way of doing something. He seeks to bring awareness, denounce, and provoke change. De Baccarat's artist statement reads: "My current works describe my experience as an immigrant in the United States: my pain, fear, uncertainty, and hope for my future here." And many of the works in 'Who is it?' include references to his African heritage. Life in the U.S. is a struggle for immigrants, with many working two or three jobs, for minimum wage, he explained. However, despite the challenges, de Baccarat has not lost sight of hope and of visions for the future. He dreams of creating a School of Imagination and Creativity for adults. Kids already have these qualities in full measure, he explained, but when people mature, too many lose the capacity to imagine, and to be themselves, he said. And that has implications for society. To de Baccarat, imagination and creati-

ty are linked to correcting injustice, and to furthering a 'Humanity as one' world view. 'Who is it?' viewers might wonder if visiting the gallery would be depressing, but the whimsical nature of much of the brightly-colored artwork belies the intensity of the work. And this contrast of the playful with the subject of injustice is in itself purposeful, and resonates strongly for those willing to dive into de Baccarat's complex worldview. "When we look at the evolution of the world, there is a lot of darkness and insecurity - but there is also enough light for us to keep hope and optimism -because the day always presides over the night. This light which announces a new day should make us believe that it is still possible to make our world a marvelous place, with more just societies, safer schools, communities of inclusion for all, more united families... if we take responsibility individually and collectively for improving things, it is possible," said de Baccarat. 'Who Is it?' will be on view Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. through February 28. Union of Maine Visual Artists Gallery is at 516 Congress Street, Portland. Several raffles during the show will raise funds for the organization 'Survivor Speaks.

Resilience Week: Opening the door to Inclusivity at MECA



Alejandra Cuadra, Athena Lynch, Ashley Page

Story and Photo by Kathreen Harrison

Maine College of Art's (MECA) inaugural Resilience Week, conceived by students, and dedicated to raising awareness and spurring dialogue around topics relating to racial, sexual, and gender inclusivity at MECA, took place between February 7-February 14 at MECA. The week's activities, which included a dynamic curated art exhibition with 23 participating artists, film screenings, workshops, talks, and children's programming, were organized by the Diversity Committee at MECA and the Students of Color Coalition.

Resilience Week was "a direct response to experiences and conversations among students of color," explained Alejandra Cuadra, who curated the show along with fellow student Ashley Page. They spoke of MECA's strengths, with its facilities, its studios, and its public engagement minor, but they also spoke of the challenges associated with attending MECA as a person of color. "It is difficult to be in a space where you don't see yourself," they agreed.

According to the mission statement of the exhibition, the intention was to "showcase the beauty and resilience of diversity while critiquing the Western art historical canon that perpetuates racist, sexist, and exclusionary pedagogy throughout art institutions." Lynch urged the decolonization of the curriculum and the inclusion of previously overlooked artists. "Leaving out artists of color from the curriculum is racist," she explained in an audio installation included in the exhibition (available on our website). "The art is there," added Cuadra. "You just need to open the door."

The exhibition's large mounted timeline, from Fall 2013 to the present, offered "a brief snapshot of events related to personal experiences in addition to the College's diversity and inclusion efforts told through the perspective of student leaders of color. Setbacks and milestones appear side-by-side." According to the timeline, setbacks include semesters when students of color chose to leave MECA. "These were talented students from across the country who came here to study, and experienced blatant racist encounters, racially motivated microaggressions, and unfair treatment," explained Athena Lynch, who played a key role in organizing Resilience Week. Positive milestones are many and include diversity trainings, the formation of the Students of Color Coalition and its predecessor, International People of Color Group – and Resilience Week.

The organizers commented on the hard, behind-the-scenes work involved in putting on the week, as well as how enormously gratifying it felt to see work by artists of color filling the halls of MECA. President Laura Freid said, "Promoting a culture of racial justice and social change is one of the five core goals that are being addressed through MECA's strategic planning process. I am inspired by the work that our Diversity Committee and Students of Color Coalition have brought to Resilience Week and to MECA." All signs point to a second annual Resilience Week in 2021.



Hire Local. Be Global.
Engineers | Finance | Legal | CompSci



Candidates – upload your resume at
www.IntWork.co





OVER 200 LOCAL FARMERS & PRODUCERS INCLUDING NEW AMERICAN FARMERS IN ONE 100% COMMUNITY-OWNED STORE

present this coupon for
10% OFF
one entire purchase

290 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 805-1599
www.portlandfood.coop

Reg Code: AMJ Valid thru May 20, 2020

ALL ARE WELCOME

Young Maine Musician Angelikah Fahray has International Dreams

Story and Photos by Abigail Nelson

Portland is home to numerous, unique types of artists and creators. Angelikah Fahray, a 24-year-old singer-songwriter, has been a part of the Portland artist community her whole life. She was among a lineup of outstanding local artists who performed on January 26 in the second annual Hear Here 2020 talent showcase at Merrill Auditorium, presented as a collaborative effort by Creative Portland and the City of Portland. Fahray captivated the audience with her powerful and entrancing voice.



Angelikah Fahray loved the experience of performing at Merrill just as much as the audience loved her. “It was the biggest production on the biggest stage. Working with the production team and getting to meet all these cool artists was probably the

coolest thing I’ve experienced in the music industry,” she said. Music and performing has always been a part of Fahray’s life. Her father performed as a dancer in the Portland area and in other states as she was growing up. “We would always listen to music at the house and watch the Grammy Awards – anything having to do with music and performing,” Fahray said.

From a young age, she knew she wanted to pursue music. On and off over the years, she continued to foster that passion. Fahray sang around the house, at school talent shows, and for a few years performed with a cover band called Dream Runner.

It wasn’t until 2018, she said, that she seriously began to pursue music as a career and write her own songs. She starts with a beat or with some notes, then works in the lyrics. Pulling from her own past experiences and relationships, for example, Fahray tries to formulate a story in her songs that explains those experiences or an experience she’s imagined. “Growing up in Maine, where you have to work hard to make things

work, it brings out a very unique part in people’s music that is different than what other artists come out with.”

Fahray’s emotions play the biggest role in her music, she said, crediting her Congolese heritage with her fire and passion to perform. Ultimately, she hopes her listeners will receive healing

from her music. “When I’m singing, I’m singing for my own healing. So hopefully, when you hear me, and the notes and the keys, and the melody, it tugs at your heartstrings.”

Currently, she is working on some new music and creating a website to better connect with and expand her audience. Her goal is to succeed on the national, and then international, music scenes. In the meantime, Maine has been a great place for her to launch her career. “There’s not a lot of people like me out there, in terms of a black female artist. There’s a lot of space in Maine for what I do because there’s not much of it out there,” she explained.

For Fahray, music is part of her life every single day. It’s her college and her job, all in one. Creating new music, making connections, building a website and a following, performing, and all the other tasks musicians face are hard work. “There’s a lot to it,” Fahray said. “But it all serves the big picture.”

In the end, music is Fahray’s passion, and she’s in it for the long haul.

Team207 African Night Coming Soon!

Story and Photos by Abigail Nelson

Team207 will present African Night 2020 on March 7, 4:30 p.m., at South Portland High School, 637 Highland Avenue. African Night will showcase the beauty of African cultures for the community. “One of our goals is to bring everyone together,



and also show everyone that Africa is not only about sadness and poverty,” said Team207 co-founder Djama Maldoum. For seven months, Maldoum, co-founder Casay Mohamed, and their team have been planning and preparing. African Night will feature food, dancing, motivational speakers, poetry, singing, art, and a fashion show. The event, which includes

out-of-state participants, provides a platform for each presenter to display individual artistic talents. Milly Gladys “A lot of people, when you talk about Africa, they think it is the same place. But there are many countries,” said Milly Gladys, who is a model. Team207 has found representatives of different areas of Africa and asked them to showcase their cultures. “Maine has

so much life, but it’s hidden in houses, churches, and mosques,” said Casay Mohamed. Team207 members hope this event will energize people who may have drifted away from cultural traditions for a variety of reasons to embrace where they are from, while showcasing the beauty of African cultures.

“Here in America, people are so welcoming. Everyone is there to help you and pitch in to grow your idea more,” said Maldoum. “But there is still some racism. Not just like black-white racism, but black-black as well.” By holding this event, Team207 wants to break stereotypes and celebrate the continent’s variety of cultures. Although several of the performers and models have participated in similar, African-based events in the past, Team207’s African Night will be their first time in a show of this size. The organizers hope African Night will become an annual event that takes place in different locations up and down the northeastern coastline. They plan to present the show in Boston next year.

Tickets cost \$5.00 and are available in advance at afnbyteam207.com or at the door.

Left Photo: Hafsa and Yabya Hussein

Right Photo: Prince



MAINE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SCHOOL OF LAW LAW Justice for Women Lecture Series

March 25, 2020



The 2020 Justice For Women Lecture will be presented by Emtithal “Emi” Mahmoud of Sudan, an award-winning Sudanese-American slam poet, author, and the founder of the One Girl Walk.



The 2020 Courage is Contagious Award will be presented to Blanca Santiago.

Lee International, a major sponsor of this special event, encourages you to attend.

Register online for the lecture at the following:

<http://mainelawcommunity.org/2020jfw>

See a list of other exciting community events with Emi on Facebook.



INTERNATIONAL



Your Agent
Your Community
Your Neighbor

clarkinsurance.com/community

Learn About Car Insurance, Home Insurance, & Renters Insurance!

(207) 774-6257

0% FINANCING ON ALL NEW TOYOTAS ONLY AT LEE TOYOTA OF TOPSHAM*

Novos Toyotas, tudo mundo está qualificado para financiamento com 0% de juro disponível apenas na Lee Toyota em Topsham.

Véhicules neufs, avec la possibilité de financement à 0%, seulement à Lee Toyota à Topsham.

Imodoka nshya za Toyota, ku ikodeshagurisha rya 0% mwazisanga kuri Lee Toyots mu gace ka Topsham.

Toyota cusub ayaad ka heli Lee Toyota ee magaalada Topsham taasoo qof walba uu uqalmo maalgalin 0% ah.

Gari mpya ya Toyota, kwa "Lee Toyota Topsham", Nakila mtu anaweza kupata Fedha kwa kiwango cha riba 0%



2020 Toyota RAV4

Solid reliability with great handling and a roomy, upscale cabin.



2020 Toyota Camry

An enjoyable ride offering great fuel economy in its segment.



2020 Toyota Highlander

Fully redesigned with great predicted reliability and a gentle ride.



2020 Toyota Tacoma

A nice interior that's loaded with user-friendly technology.



2020 Toyota 4Runner

Great off-road capability, modern infotainment center and spacious cargo area.



2020 Toyota C-HR

Good handling and has user-friendly technology including Android Auto.



2020 Toyota Tundra

Excellent reliability rating and many technology updates.



2020 Toyota Sienna

A spacious cabin which comfortably seats 8 passengers.

FOR INFORMATION CALL TOM SANTOSPAGO AT 207-289-0254



LEE TOYOTA

115 Main Street, Topsham, Maine

www.leetoyota.com

*0% rates reflect a rate buy down that get applied to amount financed. Tier one plus credit approved with Toyota Motor Credit.