



Local coverage, B1



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Biddeford schools approve pre-K programming

By ALAN BENNETT
Staff Writer

BIDDEFORD — Biddeford's youngest students will have the opportunity to attend pre-Kindergarten classes in the fall, the School Committee decided Tuesday. The committee unanimously voted for parents to send their pre-Kindergarten, or pre-K, students to classes for 2½ hours each day, with the option of enrolling them in a morning session running from 9:45 a.m. to noon, or an afternoon session from 1:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Students coming in the morning will be fed lunch, and those attending in the afternoon will receive snacks, said Lindsey Nadeau, early childhood coordinator at John F. Kennedy Memorial School, which currently serves kindergarten students. Biddeford School Superintendent Jeremy Ray said in March the proposed \$35.7 million school budget includes the hiring of two pre-K teachers, one pre-K educational technician, or ed-tech, and one English language-learning ed-tech.



The John F. Kennedy Memorial School in Biddeford, which currently houses kindergarten, will see pre-kindergarten students next year following the School Committee's approval of session timing on Tuesday.

Ray said the budget will allow for the creation of three pre-K classrooms that will serve 96 students. Up to 130 students may be served with the addition of a Head Start pre-K program established within the Biddeford School District. Per state law, pre-K classes must include one teacher, one ed-tech and no more than 16 students. Ray said there would be three classes in session both in the morning and afternoon through the School Department. Head Start would hold three classes of its own, and

is looking to add an additional round to accommodate the total desired number of students, Ray said. School officials said the need for a pre-K program is apparent based on initial kindergarten performance. With a year of schooling under their belts — focusing on social, cognitive, self-help and gross motor skill development — officials say kindergarten performance indicators would be above where they are currently. Nadeau said only 54 per-

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No cash flowing for court-appointed counsel

By TAMMY WELLS
Senior Staff Reporter

ALFRED — Attorneys who provide legal services for the poor won't get paid from the state for their work until the new fiscal year begins July 1. The Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services has run out of cash. That, say attorneys who take part in the program to provide indigent legal services, can mean a hardship. It means attorneys whose client base is mostly made up of court appointments and providing services as 'lawyer of the day' to inmates making their first court appearances may have to do some financial juggling. "What if your employer told you 'I'll pay you eventually, but not for two months,'" said Bernard Broder, a self-employed attorney who said 95 percent of his case load is court appointments. "How many would have the resources to get by?" Broder said he does all of his own clerical work and does not employ a staff, but there are still expenses to pay, including quarterly taxes, insurance, meeting continuing education requirements to be among the attorneys who receive court appointments, and more.

statewide who take on appointments to pay for legal representation for the poor from now until July 1, said Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services Director John Pelletier. The commission was established in 2010. Lawyers must apply to be considered for court appointments. They are paid \$60 an hour; some types of cases have a cap on the amount that may be billed. "By late last year, it was clear we needed \$2.8 million more," said Pelletier. Lawmakers approved \$15.5 million for indigent defense for the fiscal year ending June 30, less than the \$18.4 million the commission recommended. Legislators had said they would fill the gap, if necessary, but that has not happened. Pelletier said money also ran out in 2013, but lawmakers were able to fund the shortfall before the fiscal year ended. Rep. Donna Bailey, D-Saco, is an attorney, a former York County probate judge and a member of the Legislature's Judiciary Committee that is looking at indigent legal services. In an email, she said the committee is working to ensure the problem doesn't resurface in the years ahead. "This was a problem we

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University of New England Environmental Studies professor Thomas Klak talks to students from his ecological restoration class in the greenhouse on campus recently.

UNE part of effort to restore American chestnut

By LIZ GOTTHELF
Staff Writer

BIDDEFORD — Students in Thomas Klak's Ecological Restoration class at the University of New England are not just sitting in a classroom, they're getting their hands dirty and helping to bring back an important tree.

On a recent afternoon, Klak and a handful of his students were in a greenhouse in the back of the Harold Alfond Center for Health Sciences, tending to some of the more than 1,000 chestnut seedlings, made up of three varieties: American, Chinese, and a hybrid of the two. Students, as part of

the requirements of the class, volunteer time for a chestnut restoration project, headed by Klak, who also chairs the Gene Conservation Committee for the Maine Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation. The Chestnut restoration project began in the 2015-2016 academic year as

a senior capstone project by some UNE environmental science students who have now graduated. The project is continuing with participation from current students and through partnerships with Unity College and the University of Maine Orono.

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World wide wow

Participants tackle computer basics in Waterboro

By TAMMY WELLS
Senior Staff Writer

WATERBORO — It seems these days, if you're not ready to be online, you're left behind. People talk about the web, about Facebook and other social media, or what they've seen on Pinterest. It is a brave new world, and it can be daunting. But some basic computer classes offered by Massabesic Center for Adult Learning is changing that — giving older students the skills to maneuver their way across

the world wide web — and the confidence to do so. On Tuesday, students were learning about Google and generally exploring the internet. About half a dozen folks, ranging from their mid-50s to early 70s, were at their keyboards, listening and learning as instructor Lisa Joiner gave them some of the basics. They were encouraged to explore. Daylilies, genealogy, quilts, Maine news stories, and Asian lacquered boxes



Pat Hussey of Waterboro, in the foreground, and Mary Reed of Newfield are among those taking Computer Basics courses at Massabesic Center for Adult Learning in Waterboro, learning how to be proficient in today's technological world.

were among the subjects folks Googled — and voila, got to explore. Pat Hussey of Waterboro

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Exploring the Web

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is a quilt maker who enjoys looking at the variety of patterns available on the internet.

Hussey also likes being on the computer for another reason. With sons in Texas and Guam, communicating by the internet helps keeping in touch easier, she said.

Shane Lamontagne is also trying to become more computer literate. In today's word, "I don't have a choice," he said.

Shirley Hawkins, exploring genealogy pages, said she's upgrading her skills.

Mary Reed, 72, of Newfield, first learned about computers when she was taking care of some local children — they taught her how to navigate. But they grew up and didn't need a sitter any longer, and Reed's skills began to falter, she said.

"I didn't have a computer," she said. Reed still doesn't, but she goes to a nearby library and with her skills now up to date, uses the ones there.

"I had known how, but had forgotten," she said, "Now, I'm much more comfortable."

Barbara Gauvin, director of Massabesic Adult Learning Center, said in the fall semester, 47 students took part in the computer basics classes, and 42 in the spring semester. They're winding down for the summer, and are expected to commence again in the fall.

The classes are underwritten by OTT Communications, known locally as Saco River Telephone. Spokeswoman

Tracy Scheckel said OTT Communications, a division of Otelco Inc., operates several small telephone companies based in New England, and also in Alabama and Missouri.

The company underwrites computer basic classes in a couple of Maine locations — at the Massabesic Center for Adult Learning in RSU 57 and in Gray-New Gloucester. As well, the company just completed arrangements to install half a dozen computers at the Eastern Maine Agency on Aging office in a community north of Bangor so folks there can become computer proficient, she said.

The reason is simple — if you want people to be able to age in place and make broadband available, it's good to teach them how to use it, she said. Scheckel said that in the classes offered so far, about 70 percent of the participants are 60 years old and older.

Cynthia Libby isn't 60 — she has a ways to go to reach that milestone — but she's a novice in the computer world. Together with her husband, she operates Ossipee Mountain Daylilies. On Tuesday, she was looking to use some graphic design techniques to make literature for their business.

"I didn't know how to turn a computer on," when she first came to class last fall, said Libby.

"She's come a long way," said Joiner.

— Senior Staff Writer Tammy Wells can be contacted at 324-4444 (local call in Sanford) or 282-1535, ext. 327 or twells@journaltribune.com.

UNE Chestnuts

FROM PAGE A1

At one time, there were more than 4 billion American chestnut trees from Alabama to Maine. The chestnut was unaffected by frost, making it the single most important food source for a variety of wild life, according to the American Chestnut Foundation.

A fungus accidentally imported from China in the early 20th century is responsible for a blight that decimated the tree.

Klak is enthusiastic about being part of a project that could restore the wiped-out species.

"I call it the miracle tree," said Klak. He said the nuts are highly nutritious and a desirable food source for many animals. He said when experimental trays of a variety of nuts are put out in the woods, wildlife go for the chestnuts first.

"They know what's good," said Klak.

Also, the wood from American Chestnut trees is light-weight and rot resistant, making it an ideal building material.

As part of the restoration project, a database of American chestnut trees in the state is being maintained.

Hybrid plants — the American chestnut tree is crossbred with the Chinese chestnut tree — are being

grown to create trees that have the height of the American chestnut tree but are resistant to the damaging blight.

Hybrid trees were planted last year on campus as part of an Earth Day project, and more were planted this year. The trees will be also planted in other designated locations in the state.

Research on blight resistance is being done as well.

Klak and his students are learning as they go, discovering that seedlings planted outside have a much higher survival rate than seeds and determining what type of pot is most conducive to growth for seedlings.

Student Rachel Amoroso, a marine science and animal behavior major, said working in the greenhouse is her favorite part of Klak's class.

"I'm a hands-on learner," she said. She said she's very interested in conservation and learning about sustainability and she's excited to be part of the American chestnut restoration project.

"I've always wanted to make a difference," she said.

— Staff Writer Liz Gotthelf can be contacted at 282-1535, ext. 325 or egotthelf@journaltribune.com.

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Great East Dental Associates in Springvale prides itself in working with the latest techniques in technology coupled with good old-fashioned patient care.

Dr. Knudsen and his highly trained staff provide exceptional oral health care and provide a variety of services, including dentures, root canal therapy, extractions, teeth whitening, porcelain veneers, dental crowns, dental implants, oral conscious sedation dentistry and laser dentistry.

Dr. Knudsen works with three different lasers right in the office. One detects cavities while another fixes cavities, eliminating the familiar sound of a drill that many patients dislike.

Novocain isn't even needed in some cases because of how gentle the laser can be. The third laser treats periodontal disease without surgery.

Dr. Knudsen said it's the most advanced non-surgical technique in treating the disease.

"We push the limits of technology," he said. He went on to describe the technique: A laser is used to remove infected tissue. Energy from the laser vaporizes the tissue and toxins from harmful bacteria, which provides healthy, more efficient healing by achieving new attachment of gingival fibers.

"Patients love it because it's non-invasive and less painful. Traditionally we'd have to go in with a scalpel and cut off parts of the gums. Bottom line is we get results," Dr. Knudsen said.

Dr. Knudsen also prides himself on doing every procedure in-office.

Patients must often seek a specialist to treat an ailment such as periodontal disease and then go back and forth from that office to their regular dentist.

"I want to be in charge of everything from the beginning to the end — it gives our patients peace of mind," he said, adding that he and his staff participate in continuing education courses to offer the most up-to-date procedures.

Dr. Knudsen takes special care of children who visit his office.

He was recognized as outstanding in the field of pediatric dentistry and also has two children of his own.

"I treat my young patients as if they were my own family. I do everything to ensure they experience no trauma," he said.

Dr. Knudsen and his staff work with the best materials in the field.

"We pride ourselves in doing a job once and stand behind our work," he said.

He and his staff educate their clients about the pros and cons of every procedure and let them decide what's best.

In addition, staff use digital X-rays, which significantly reduces radiation.

Technology is not only important in the dental chair at Great East Dental — clients can schedule an appointment through text message or e-mail.

Dr. Knudsen's staff of seven includes three hygienists, all of which he describes as family.

"We have fun here. I look forward to coming to work. Isn't that the way it should be?" he asked.

Dr. Knudsen gives back by participating in Maine's Donated Dental Services, a project of the National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped. He said the program serves the handicapped and elderly who qualify and he's always working with one such patient at any given time.

Great East Dental welcomes new patients.

Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday through Thursday and Dr. Knudsen is on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Great East Dental Associates is located at Village Green in Springvale, near the Department of Motor Vehicles.

For more information, call 324-6182 or visit www.mainesmiles.com.

