

A quarterly publication featuring Main Street Programs and Downtown Alliances in our communities

Downtown Quarterly

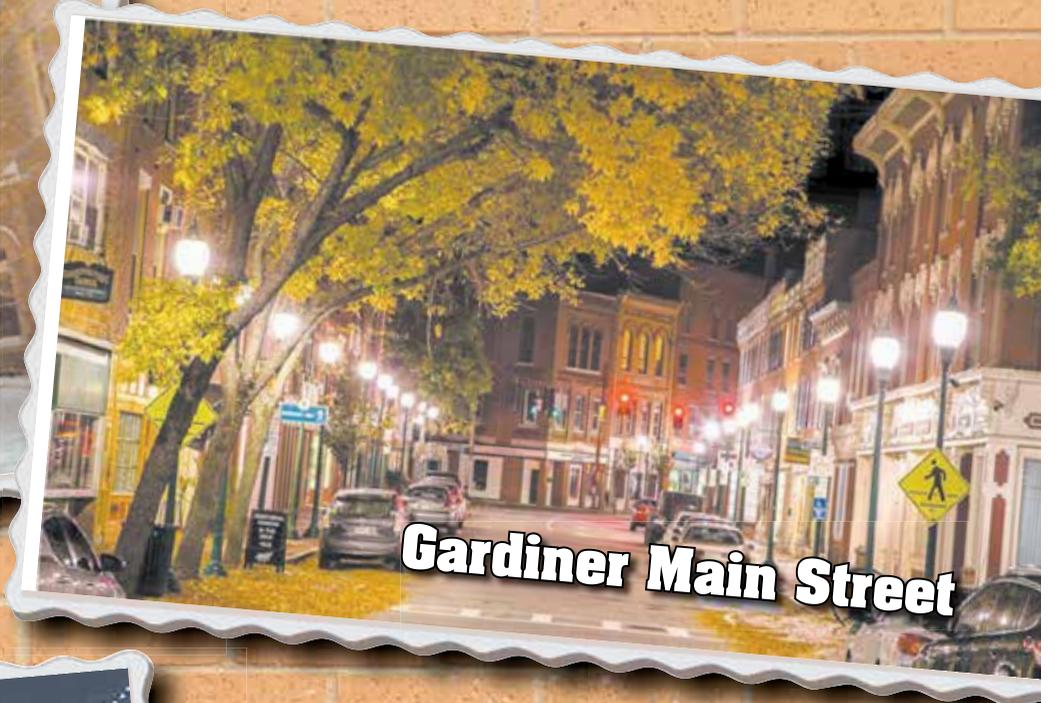


Special Supplement to the Kennebec Journal • Morning Sentinel

Wednesday, November 16, 2016



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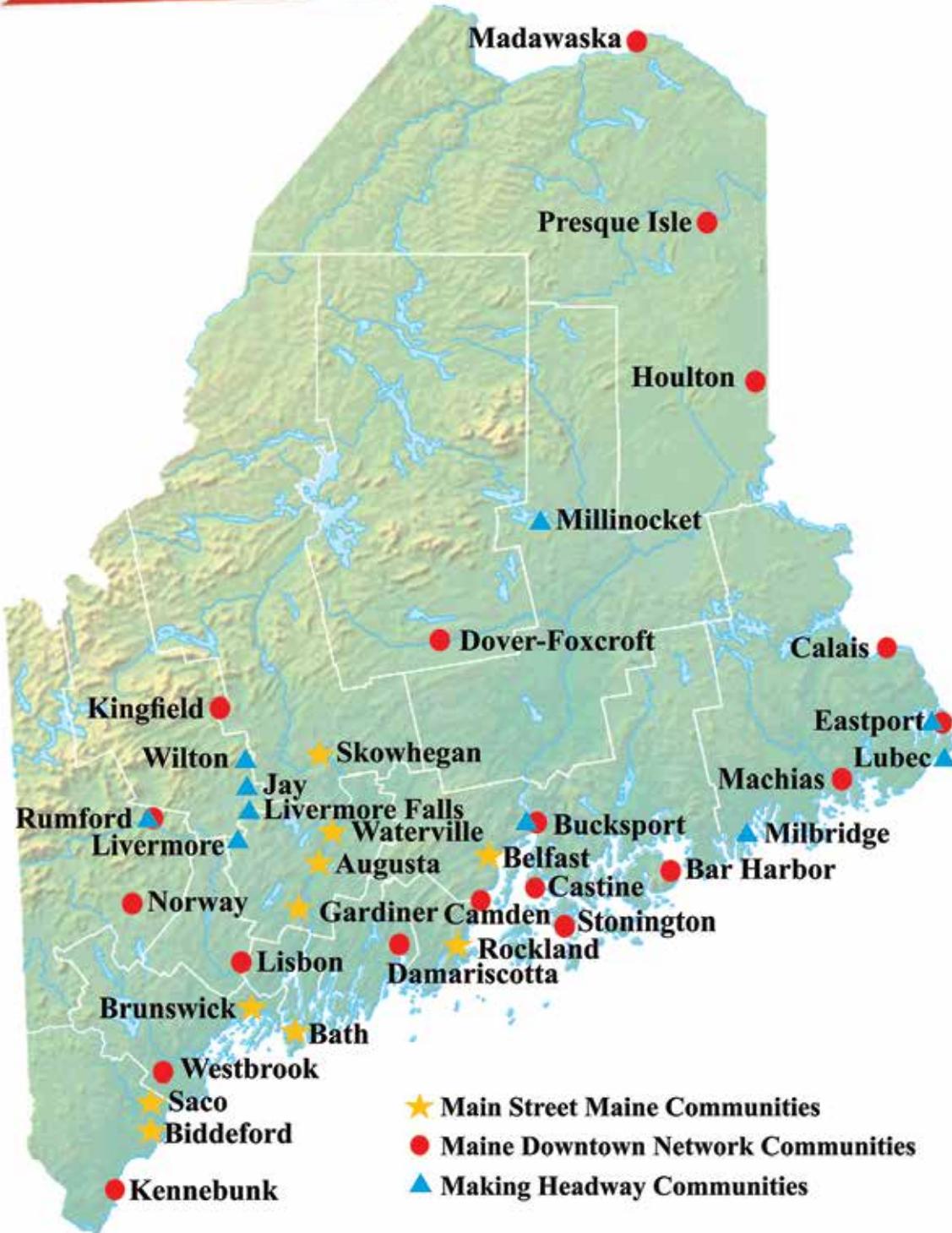
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PARTICIPATING DOWNTOWN COMMUNITIES

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Take ME Downtown for the Holidays

*Shop and dine
 locally this season*

*Maine Development Foundation/Maine Downtown Center
 Special to Downtown Quarterly*

Our Maine Downtowns are getting ready to kick off the holidays in true Maine styles with activities, open houses, Small Business Saturdays and Early Bird Sales!

Head to your favorite downtown or explore a new downtown during this festive season. Every community in Maine has its distinctive historic character, locally-owned restaurants, businesses and unique shops brimming with holiday merchandise and friendly customer service.

Maine has 140,000 small businesses that are owned by friends and neighbors and are responsible for the majority of the jobs in our state. The more loyal we are to small businesses, the more of our money comes back to benefit local communities, so this year give the gift of support to a local business. They give back to the community in so many ways.

Downtowns are the place for holiday fun! Christmas trees, Maine's own evergreen wreaths, lights and decorated windows full of gift ideas festoon Main Streets. Each Community has its own celebration, be it Festival of Lights, Old Fashioned Christmas, Kringleville, a Lobster Trap Tree or Santa's arrivals and parades.

There are special sales, gift wrapping and holiday music in the air. Carriage rides, lovely window displays, hot chocolate and cookies abound. Get out and meet old friends, create family memories along with enjoying old and new traditions.

Unique, locally-owned businesses and restaurants help complete a memorable holiday and provide an authentic experience. All of this and much more can be found on "Main Street, Maine."

When you shop and dine at small, independent, family-owned businesses, know that you will be giving from the heart and helping Maine's economy at the same time.

Discover the true meaning of the holidays in Maine's historic downtowns, and tell your friends and family to "Take ME Downtown for the Holidays!"





Welcome to Downtown Skowhegan

Skowhegan prepares for the Yule Tide season

Skowhegan's Small Business Saturday offers savings, prizes



Main Street Skowhegan is planning its second annual Passport to Savings program for Small Business Saturday, Nov. 26.

"Last year's program was a big hit," said Kristina Cannon, executive director of Main Street Skowhegan. "The event not only increased sales, it boosted brand awareness for local businesses as well."

The program encourages shoppers to visit any or all of more than 30 participating businesses in the Skowhegan area on Small Business Saturday. Each business will offer an incentive — from 10 percent off at Country Crow Primitives to a chance to win a piece of art at River Roads Artisans Gallery. With each purchase, the shopper's name is entered into a drawing for one of two prizes, this year sponsored by Bangor Savings Bank.

During last year's inaugural Passport to Savings program, 132 shoppers made 383 purchases at the participating businesses. Two of those businesses reported having their best sales day ever as a result, and several others reported their best Small Business Saturday ever.

To learn more about Main Street's Small Business Saturday Passport to Savings program, visit MainStreetSkowhegan.org.

Roll the dice and have some fun with Skowopoly!

Main Street Skowhegan has created Skowopoly, a version of Monopoly featuring Skowhegan businesses and organizations. Games are \$35 each, and all proceeds benefit revitalization efforts in Skowhegan.

Prepurchase online at MainStreetSkowhegan.org/Skowopoly. Games will be available at the Bankery and Skowhegan Fleuriste in early December.



MainStreetSkowhegan.org/Skowopoly



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24th Annual Holiday Stroll on tap

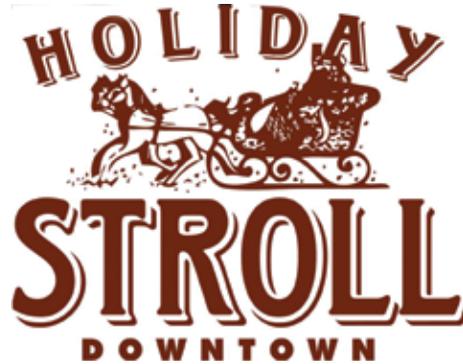
Main Street Skowhegan will host the 24th annual Holiday Stroll on Friday, Dec. 2, and Saturday, Dec. 3, in downtown Skowhegan.

The event kicks off with a parade at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2. Parade floats will feature local businesses, community members and organizations, plus Santa on a fire truck.

“The Stroll is such a great way to bring together the community and celebrate the season,” said Kristina Cannon, Main Street Skowhegan’s executive director. “Local businesses enjoy hosting activities for families, and everyone is excited about the parade.”

A few downtown shops will stay open late the night of the parade, offering treats that include free gift wrapping at Country Crow Primitives and free hot chocolate at the Bankery and Skowhegan Fleuriste.

The festivities continue Saturday, Dec. 3, with breakfast with Santa from 8 to 10 a.m. at Tewksbury Hall, behind the Skowhegan Federated Church. During breakfast, the Skowhegan Area Middle School Student Council will be on hand to help kids create their own tree ornaments, and Kid Friendly Photo will offer professional photos with Santa for a small fee. All proceeds will help with ongoing



revitalization efforts in Skowhegan.

The popular Santa’s Village will begin at 9:30 a.m., with many downtown businesses offering children’s activities and crafts from yo-yo making to cookie decorating. The second annual elf-on-a-shelf scavenger hunt will send kids and families searching for elves hidden in downtown businesses and organizations.

Other events include horse-drawn wagon rides, marshmallow roasting, a petting zoo, the Festival of Trees, free holiday movie screenings and a holiday bazaar.

For more information about the Holiday Stroll, visit MainStreetSkowhegan.org or find the event on Facebook.



Contributed photo

Main Street Skowhegan will host the 24th annual Holiday Stroll on Friday, Dec. 2, and Saturday, Dec. 3, in downtown Skowhegan.

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The Holiday Stroll in Skowhegan kicks off with a parade, left, at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2. Parade floats will feature local businesses, community members and organizations, plus Santa on a fire truck. Saturday, Dec. 3, the popular Santa's Village will begin at 9:30 a.m., with many downtown businesses offering children's activities and crafts from yo-yo making to cookie decorating. The second annual elf-on-a-shelf scavenger hunt will send kids and families searching for elves hidden in downtown businesses and organizations. Other events include horse-drawn wagon rides, marshmallow roasting, a petting zoo, the Festival of Trees, free holiday movie screenings and a holiday bazaar.

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Welcome to Downtown Gardiner

The ultimate Buy Local, Get it in Gardiner Gift Guide is ready

GARDINER MAIN STREET

Special to Downtown Quarterly

The holiday season is all about bringing friends and family together to celebrate. Gardiner Main Street shares in that spirit by offering traditional and unique events that families can enjoy together.

Over the last seven years, Gardiner's Days of Light Celebration has grown dramatically. Last year the Christmas Tree Lighting and Parade of Lights saw an explosion in attendance as the community embraced these events as part of their family traditions. Everyone looks forward to joining their friends and neighbors to drink hot cocoa, sing Christmas carols, and watch dance students from Ampersand Academy perform.

This year, Gardiner has welcomed many new businesses to its downtown. This is a testament to the inviting atmosphere, and love that residents and visitors have for small businesses. Gardiner Main Street aims to draw more people to its small town to shop local for the holidays by participating in American Express Shop Small Saturday, and creating Destination Downtown events.

Saturdays, from Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve, offer an all-inclusive shopping experience, with free gift wrapping and special events. Wish lists will once again be offered in most stores, an opportunity to help shoppers get a gift that they know their loved ones will enjoy.

One new addition to downtown, Starfruit Solutions, connects buyers and sellers with New England-made goods through its website Upta.Market. There's something for everyone on the gift list, and 50 percent of the profit goes to charities in New England, so the purchase gives twice.

Purchasing gifts from a local business this year helps ensure that one's buying power is working in the Maine economy, and it also means that gifts for loved ones are unique. When shoppers take a stroll through downtown Gardiner, there are many treats.

In addition to great deals on clothing, Bella Donna Consignment Shop has handmade, all natural products made by Rustic Harmony Candles n Things. The shop has hand-poured soy candles of wonderful and varied fragrances, all natural laundry soap and beautiful all natural bar soaps. These would make great gifts for a party host, or quality stocking stuffers.

Candle in the Window offers many options for decorating a home and bringing that nostalgic feeling to every room. Here they show a beautiful assortment of table runners that will enhance any holiday and throughout the year. These are a sampling of just a few of the wonderful primitive decor items offered at Candle in the Window. A visit to this shop will get shoppers in the holiday spirit.

Craft Beer Cellar carries more than 200 labels of high quality beer and wine. Enjoy a 24-day Advent Box, or a custom mix and match six-pack.

FOOD CO-OP, SHOPS PROVIDE DELIGHTS

The Gardiner Food Co-op & Cafe offers locally-made coffee mugs with an imprinted Co-op logo. The mugs are made by The Potter's House in Litchfield. They also have several options available for coffee and tea to go along with the mugs. Additional items that would complement the mugs include chocolates and locally-produced honey.

Mainiac Brewing & Supply Co. LLC has everything needed for the perfect home brew. For someone just

starting out, the K3 Homebrew Equipment Kit for \$79.95 is all the equipment he or she needs for the first five-gallon batch of beer.

HANDCRAFTED ITEMS

Monkitree offers a variety of handcrafted items. Whether a shopper is hunting for a teacher or hostess gift or the one special gift for a special someone, he or she can find it at Monkitree. It is a great source for Maine-made gifts, hand-woven scarves, unique jewelry, pottery, serving boards, leather wallets and so much more.

A ukulele is a fun gift for someone who enjoys music. Niche, Inc. has colorful single ukuleles with matching bags. For someone who is anxious to learn, there are kits that include a ukulele, book and CD to learn with. Niche also has all the accessories, picks, strings and cases.

A shopper can never go wrong with a gift certificate.

GIFT GIVING

Consider pampering a loved one with a gift certificate to Krome Hair Salon, a \$30 gift certificate is only \$25. Give a gift, get a gift at Lisa's Legit Burritos. Purchase a gift certificate valued at \$10 or more, and get a coupon for a free taco. Johnson Hall gift certificates are essential for anyone on your list who likes to be entertained. Throughout the year they bring a variety of acts to Gardiner, comedy, music, movies, and more. Visit www.johnsonhall.org for a list of shows. Frosty's gift certificates make great secret Santa gifts.

Zardus Art of Massage & Wellness Spa will be offering six, one-hour massages or Aromatouch sessions for \$350 (a \$100 savings if a shopper was buying each separately). They also have gift certificates and holiday essential oil gift bags for great gift ideas.

ENJOY GARDINER

Get out and enjoy the Gardiner experience! Grab a maple latte from the Gardiner Food Co-op & Cafe and browse the variety of quality and unique businesses. The shop owners all value high customer service that will be apparent the minute a shopper walks through the door. There is no rush to get to the next person in line, they will take the time to help you find just what you need. Join the Passport to Prizes event during the Downtown Open House on Shop Small Saturday, Nov. 26. Smell the evergreen wreaths for sale, and enjoy music in Johnson Hall Park. Visit gardinermainstreet.org and the Gardiner Main Street Facebook page to find out more about what's happening in Gardiner this holiday season. Come explore this vibrant, growing community.



Contributed photo
The Gardiner Food Co-op & Cafe offers locally-made coffee mugs with the Co-op logo and other items to fill the mugs!

Events and happenings

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2016

Nov. 26: Small Business Saturday, participating businesses:

- **Bella Donna Consignment:** Raffle entry with qualifying purchase, 25 percent off store wide
- **Candle in the Window:** 20 percent off one item/highest priced item in purchase
- **Gardiner Food Co-op**
- **Lisa's Legit Burritos:** Raffle for a free burrito
- **Mainiac Brewing & Supply**
- **Niche, Inc:** 10 percent off all used vinyl and used CDs
- **Pooch's 2nd Hand Shop:** 10 percent off the total purchase
- **Reny's**
- **Zardus Art of Massage & Wellness Spa:** Holiday Spa Open House on Dec. 3 from 10-4
- **Sidewalk Wreath Sales,** Johnson Park, Water St.

Dec. 1: Downtown Tree Lighting, Johnson Park, next to Johnson Hall, 5 to 6 p.m.

• **Sidewalk Wreath Sales,** Johnson Park, Water Street.

Dec. 2: Holiday ArtWalk - 5:30-8 p.m., Downtown Gardiner, Water Street.

Dec. 2-3: Annual Gardiner Rotary Christmas Tree Sales (Dec. 2 afternoon; Dec. 3 all day)

Dec. 3: Parade of Lights, along Water Street through downtown, 4:30 p.m.

• **Sidewalk Wreath Sales,** Johnson Park, Water Street.

Dec. 7: FaceTime Social Networking, 5 to 7 p.m., Location TBA, visit Gardiner Main Street for info.

Dec.17: National Wreaths Across America - to get involved locally in Gardiner area, contact Jim, with the American Legion Post 4, Gardiner, at 582-6530.

Raggamuffins will be hosting its 3rd Annual "My Christmas Friend" gifting tree to benefit a local organization this holiday season. For more information, contact: 582-2886

ONGOING

Open Mic: Every Tuesday, 5 to 8 p.m., Niche Inc., 289 Water St.

Movies @Johnson Hall: \$5 for Adults, \$2 for Youth-17 & Under. Visit www.johnsonhall.org for showings & times, or call 582-7144.

Gardiner Main Street is on Facebook, like the page to get up to date on community happenings. Sign up for the newsletter, email: info@gardinermainstreet.org. Gardiner Main Street at 582-3100 P.O. Box 194, Gardiner ME 04345. (List of events is continuously updated, visit gardinermainstreet.org)



Welcome to Downtown Augusta

Augusta Happenings

FROM MICHAEL G. HALL
Executive Director, Augusta Downtown Alliance



WORK PROGRESSING AT FARRELL'S

Downtown Augusta will soon be home to 12 new market-rate units and two new businesses, as work continues to progress at the Farrell's building. Work, which began this summer, is expected to wrap up toward the end of this year, forever changing the landscape of downtown living.

Coupled with two new units at 241-249 Water St. (formerly Stacy's), additional units are being added on the second floor of 190 Water St., along with new retail downstairs. It appears Water Street is on the go!



COLONIAL THEATRE

Exciting news from the Colonial Theatre! The Colonial has completed its first large-scale restoration since shuttering its doors in February of 1969. Members are thrilled to announce that G&E Roofing Company has finished putting on the Colonial's new roof — the first and most important work to protect the Theatre from further damage.

"Bolstered, in part, by the City of Augusta's recent \$300,000 challenge grant, the community is increasingly confident of the project's success, which is critical to our fundraising efforts," said Richard Parkhurst, co-chair of the fundraising campaign to restore the theater.



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Augusta celebrates upcoming holidays

River of Trees

River of Trees is Augusta's first-ever Christmas Tree raffle event. Sponsored by the Augusta Downtown Alliance (ADA), this event will take place from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Nov. 25-27, at 241-249 Water St. (formerly Stacy's). Proceeds raised will benefit both the ADA and the Colonial Theatre.

HOW IT WORKS:

Local businesses throughout the area will be donating artificial trees decorated with gifts and certificates ranging in price from \$500 to \$1,000. The trees will be themed for kids, families and adults, while representing a particular business, and will be available for the winning raffle ticket purchaser. Log on <http://riveroftrees.wixsite.com/riveroftreesaugusta> or Like our River of Trees event page on Facebook to find more information.

NEW INCENTIVES FOR DOWNTOWN

The ADA was pleased to receive the endorsement of the City Council of Augusta for its new program aimed at incentivizing new residents and businesses downtown. A direct collaboration between the ADA, the City of Augusta and Kennebec Savings, the Tipping Point program will provide 0 percent interest loans for downtown economic development, while also providing grants for new residential construction. The program will take effect Jan. 1.



Augusta Downtown Alliance Presents:

River of Trees:

A Downtown Christmas Tree Raffle Event

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Welcome to Downtown Waterville

Parade, Santa visit remain a downtown Waterville tradition

Holiday festivities set to start after Thanksgiving

BY MICHELLE TROUTMAN
Correspondent

Santa Claus is coming to town again on “Black Friday,” the day after Thanksgiving, at 6 p.m. Nov. 25 in the 11th Annual Parade of Lights, sponsored by Waterville Main Street.

Among Waterville’s longest-running celebrations, the parade, a tree lighting ceremony and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus at Kringleville will launch the holiday season in the heart of the city.

The immortal jolly old elf, otherwise known as Kris Kringle, has returned regularly to Waterville to star in its holiday celebrations for more than a century.

In the jet age, Santa would fly from the North Pole to the Robert LaFleur Airport. A 1958 account stated that a procession featuring Santa in a convertible traveled from Main Street to his Castonguay Square headquarters, where he and helpers distributed balloons and lollipops, and U.S. Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets performed Christmas carols.

Santa has also taken a train to Waterville and, most recently, flew there aboard his sleigh with his reindeer.

Before Santa’s home (later part of a mini village, Kringleville), was built, he hosted visitors at downtown department stores. A 1916 ad for Emery-Brown Company for Santa Claus’ headquarters, boasted: “Come and bring the children. See Santa Claus and the old-fashioned fireplace; the dolls’ Ferris Wheel in the window. They will enjoy it all and you will also.”

Half a century later, Santa moved to his seasonal home.

The Kringleville tradition began in 1969, when local volunteers brought a small, unheated log cabin to Castonguay Square and lit-up a young tree. In 1973, the energy crisis caused Santa to move to a room at City Hall because his home required “round-the-clock” heat and special lighting. The downtown holiday lights remained dark, too. Waterville joined such cities as Portland, Augusta, Bath and Brunswick to conserve energy.

In the early 1980s, a downtown business association created a new home for San-



Photo by Central Maine Photography

ta, complete with decorations. They held a contest to name the spot, and chose Kringleville. According to Yardgoods Center co-owner Ken Vlodek, he and fellow members of the organization made Santa’s new cottage from an old trailer bed. “We just ripped off the upper part, and then built a building on top of it.”

Vlodek said they added animatronic reindeer and stalls behind them, and had a sound engineer record the voice of Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer asking questions.

“The thing that I just always loved was watching the expressions on the children’s faces when they were talking to Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer. It was always great to listen to those conversations,” Vlodek said.

Local high school students painted large plywood candy canes, snowmen and angels that accented the downtown decor. Beyond the street lamps, large, colorful lights also brightened the tall poles along The Concourse.

To generations of locals, Kringleville is vital to their holiday celebrations, and many carry fond memories of their visits there and with Santa. Whether they remember a more theatrical Saint Nick who lived the role he played, or a department store-style Santa, each performer had a distinct style.

Malcolm Trott, who portrayed Santa for a number of years, is perhaps the best known. He and his twin brother, Merle Trott Sr., both played Santa: Malcolm in Waterville, and Merle in Augusta. Merle sometimes filled-in for his twin. In 2010, before they died within five months of each other, the next year at age 73, they co-marshaled the Parade of Lights as “Spirits of Kringleville Past.”

One of Malcolm’s daughters, Mary Ellen Gregory, who will return to Kringleville this year as Mrs. Claus, said her father didn’t tell her he was Santa until 1982 when she was 12.

“Kids just loved him. He was your traditional, ‘Wal-Mart’ Santa. He wasn’t



anything fancy. He had the store-bought beard, and my grandmother made his first outfit.”

Malcolm and Merle were also known for founding the Trott Family Clowns, and for their volunteer work, and they kept the Christmas spirit alive after the holidays.

“He (Malcolm) definitely was Santa year-round. My father did things all of the time to help other people, and even when he was sick, he would call me and say, ‘I need this, this, this, and this,’ and I would go get it, and I would bring it to him. He kept it private. He took care of whatever it was.”

In 2000, the City, business owners and concerned citizens donated thousands of dollars to save a deteriorating Kringleville. Chinet Co. volunteers helped build another Santa cottage. Other improvements included 5,000 more Christmas lights on the nearby evergreen tree, for 10,000 total.

With children and parents waiting in cold temperatures in recent years — sometimes for up to two hours — non-profit volunteer organization Revitalizing the Energy in Maine (R.E.M.) opened its doors to Kringleville in 2013 inside the nearby Center building at 93 Main Street.

Central Maine Photography, which has been photographing the downtown holiday events for about 10 years, will take pictures of children with Santa; families

Waterville

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

can buy 4 x 6-inch prints taken that night for \$6 each. One dollar from each sale will support Kringleville, which is kept free for the whole family.

“This is a wonderful event that does so much for individual families and downtown Waterville,” said Central Maine Photography owner Mark Huard, who also helps coordinate volunteers for the events. “I am blessed to be a part of capturing memories like this that will last a lifetime. There are many amazing people within our community that help support Kringleville, and it means so much to the children!”

People come to Kringleville from all over Maine. Mary Ellen Gregory (Mrs. Claus) suggests out-of-towners arrive at the start of Santa’s visiting hours to “check-in” if they can’t wait in line and to check back — if organizers haven’t contacted them — to see where they are on the list. In the meantime, during long lines, visitors can stay busy nearby, whether they go to dinner, visit friends or relatives, see a movie or a show, or go shopping or sight-seeing.

In recent years, 10,000 to 15,000 people on average have attended the parade annually.

During the decade of World War I, Waterville merchants hosted a weeklong

Christmas carnival; the popular annual holiday attraction included a parade.

Over the years, the parades were often short, with a float, fire trucks and police cars. Gary and Cindy Michaud, leaders of a local band, A Touch of Country, started organizing the Electric Christmas Parade in 1999, with more floats, more lights and participants.

Seven years later, Waterville Main Street — formed from the Waterville In-town Business Association — became the sponsor and organizer of the events, and renamed the annual downtown procession the Parade of Lights.

The 11th Annual Parade of Lights will take place at 6 p.m. on the Friday after Thanksgiving; the rain/snow date is Saturday, Nov. 26. GHM Insurance Agency owner Bill Mitchell will appear as this year’s grand marshal. Floats will assemble on Front Street, travel up Union Street, turn left on Main Street and continue to Castonguay Square for the tree lighting and Santa and Mrs. Claus’s arrival at Kringleville, where visits with them at their holiday home will begin. The Sukeforth Festival of Trees will also return this year.

Despite changes in the downtown business landscape, the Parade of Lights and Kringleville have adapted and survived, and they should remain a popular tradition for years to come.

For more information and for Santa’s visiting hours, visit Kringleville online at kringleville.org or the Waterville Main Street website, watervillemainstreet.org.

“The thing that I just always loved was watching the expressions on the children’s faces when they were talking to Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer. It was always great to listen to those conversations.”

KEN VLODEK , YARDGOODS CENTER, CO-OWNER



Photo by Central Maine Photography
Gauge, 10, Layla, 6, and Mykenna, 9, visited with Santa Claus during his stay at Kringleville in 2015.

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