

MaineCF

NEWS FROM THE MAINE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

legacies for maine

A Vision for Community Leadership

Commitment to a county guides Art Thompson's philanthropy.

Art Thompson lives on the farm where he was born, in Limestone, at the northeast edge of Aroostook County. Thompson's grandfather cleared the land and built the house where his grandson was born—where quite a lot of his family was born. "I'm the third generation living here," says Thompson with pride. "My son is the fourth generation, and his two boys are the fifth."

Like many in Aroostook County, Thompson was raised to be a potato farmer, and for a good decade he did just that. By 1966, however, he had decided that he would rather work with safer risks: financial investments, tax planning, and insurance. He still watches the plants bloom and the spuds swell, but now he



Art Thompson with one of his antique Farmall tractors. Photo: Nelder Oscar

leases his cropland to other farmers. He remains close to the land, fishing with children and grandchildren and taking opportunities to "mess about in the woods."

Just as farming for Thompson evolved into financial work, tax planning led to charitable giving when clients turned to him for philanthropic advice. From there, it was just a small step to the Maine Community Foundation.

Don Collins recruited Thompson to the foundation's Aroostook County Committee in the early 1990s, around the time Loring Air Force Base, the center of Limestone's economy, was closing.

Thompson was chair of the closure effort, so when Marion Kane, then MaineCF president, made the journey to Limestone to see what the foundation could do to help, the two met and the County man signed on.

Thompson liked what the foundation was doing in his home region: strengthening nonprofits through the Aroostook County Fund, encouraging leadership and focusing on community. "Their objectives and my objectives just lined up," he recalls.

IN THIS issue

- Junior League of Bangor:
Seeding Penobscot Fund – p. 2
- Letter from the President – p. 3
- New CEO – p. 3
- Endowments and Grants:
Celebrating Our 25th – pp. 4-5
- Professional Advisor:
Martha Greene – p. 6
- New Board Members – p. 7
- Philanthropy and Farms – p. 8

(continued on p. 2)

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A Vision for Community Leadership (continued from cover)

Over the years, Thompson has witnessed extraordinary growth in the resources targeted to his home county. When he joined the foundation, Aroostook County Fund assets totaled a bit more than \$60,000 and generated about \$3,000 in grants each year. The fund has grown to nearly \$900,000; it made \$45,000 in grants last year.

Beyond Aroostook, Thompson is passionate about what MaineCF has achieved through its county fund program across the State of Maine. The county funds, he says, are “the heart of the Maine Community Foundation.” Fund advisors, in Thompson’s estimation, “know how to differentiate between organizations that will truly benefit the region and those that are just trying to get a grant.” Grants from the county funds, he attests, “have real impact.”

Recently, Thompson and his wife, Fritzie, decided to establish their own endowment benefiting the Aroostook County Fund, in the form of a bequest in honor of their parents and their dedication to providing a college education



Fritzie and Art Thompson

for their children. To the Thompsons, this fund has meaning beyond providing educational opportunity: the two Limestone natives became a couple while attending the University of Maine at Orono.

As to where he would like to see the foundation heading, Thompson has a few ideas,

most of them focused on the grassroots county base. He would like to see every county have its own fund (12 of the 16 counties currently have endowments) and its own dedicated MaineCF staff member (at present five regional coordinators oversee the county committees). Thompson views this expanded program as a step toward economic growth and increasing the MaineCF endowment.

“County committees and the funds they oversee provide continuity and a source of revenue to support projects that encourage community leadership,” Thompson states. The County man then adds, “We’ve still got a long ways to go in developing community leadership, but the foundation is at the forefront.”

Seeding a New County Fund

Junior League of Bangor “passes the torch.”

Earlier this year, the Junior League of Bangor presented its \$100,000 endowment to the Maine Community Foundation to start a Penobscot County Fund.

Having served the greater Bangor community for the past 76 years, the League decided to cease its work and “pass the torch” to the foundation. “We believe this donation, our legacy, is in

keeping with our mission of building strong communities and supporting projects in our area,” said Dawn England, a JLB member.

When it reaches \$500,000, the Penobscot

County Fund will provide grant funding to nonprofits across the region. To learn more about this fund, contact Laura Young, MaineCF’s vice president for advancement, at 207-761-2440.



**JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
BANGOR**

letter from the president

Looking Back—to the Future

Joining the Maine Community Foundation at the beginning of 2000, I never dreamed the work would be so fulfilling, or that I would make so many wonderful friends. It has been a rare opportunity and privilege to serve Maine as a member of a team committed to providing philanthropic leadership to benefit the future prosperity of our beautiful state.

Were I asked to name the one major accomplishment during my tenure, my response would be immediate: developing a professional staff that is among the most adept and nimble of any non-profit organization in Maine. It is through these individuals and their ability to work effectively together that the foundation has been able to achieve its goals.

Other highlights would include MaineCF's role in founding the Maine Compact for Higher Education. My list would also feature the foundation's support of the Grow Smart Maine-Brookings Institution report "Charting Maine's Future: An Action Plan for Promoting Sustainable Prosperity in Quality Places" and our efforts to act on some of its findings.

I have been pleased to see MaineCF strengthen its network of county committees. These advisors are key to our success in building community and leadership potential across the state. At the same time, we have been persistent champions of Maine's nonprofits, seeking to make them more effective in achieving their goals. I like to think MaineCF has been a role model for nonprofit effectiveness.

Naturally, I am proud of the growth MaineCF has experienced in its grantmaking, with \$16 to \$18 million a year in grants and scholarships now flowing to Maine's nonprofit sector and students. The growth of our charitable assets also speaks to the confidence that our many donors and friends have placed in the foundation.

Looking to the future, in my estimation MaineCF is just hitting its stride. The five-year strategic plan adopted last year commits us to making a greater impact through our grantmaking and to building philanthropy across the state. The plan also sharpens our focus on four critical areas where philanthropy can help shape the future of Maine: higher education, environmental protection, engaging older Mainers, and economic development related to preserving downtowns and supporting sustainable agriculture.

I feel privileged and proud to have been able to work with the dedicated Board, staff, donors, volunteers and friends. I salute every one of you for your commitment to building the foundation, now and into the future.



Hank Schmelzer addresses guests at MaineCF's "Inspiring Philanthropy" event at the Portland Museum of Art. Photo Diane Hudson

Henry L.P. Schmelzer
President and CEO

breaking news

MaineCF Board Names New CEO

The Maine Community Foundation Board of Directors has announced that Meredith Jones has been selected as MaineCF's new president and CEO. Jones, who is currently MaineCF's vice president for program development and grantmaking services, will assume her new position on January 1.

"Few people know Maine better than Meredith Jones," said Ken Spierer, chair of the MaineCF Board. "She brings her considerable energy and broad perspective to our work and her talents have been recognized throughout Maine," he said.

Prior to joining the MaineCF staff, Jones was director of education and communication at the Maine Health Care Association. Before that, she spent 16 years with the Maine Development Foundation, holding several positions, including director of operations and director of the Institute on the Maine Economy.

Jones currently chairs the board of the Maine Philanthropy Center and serves as a member of the board of Maine Campus Compact and the advisory committee of the *Maine Policy Review*.



Meredith Jones,
MaineCF's new
president and CEO

Maine Community Foundation 25 Years and Growing:

As its 25th anniversary year comes to a close, the Maine Community Foundation is looking forward to its next quarter century. Strong and sustainable nonprofits will be needed to build vibrant communities, and new networks will play a major role in carrying Maine into the future.

The 25/25 Endowment Challenge

Nineteen nonprofits build toward the future.

This past September, MaineCF awarded \$25,000 challenge grants to 19 nonprofits in Oxford, Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis, Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock Counties to establish new or expand existing endowment funds. The challenge recognizes the foundation's origins in rural Maine and in Hancock County, where MaineCF has been headquartered since 1983.

The 25/25 Nonprofit Endowment Challenge is a one-to-one matching opp-

portunity that will require the 19 organizations to raise \$25,000 in new funds to secure the grant, resulting in \$50,000 of new or additional endowment dollars.

The nonprofits also receive technical assistance from MaineCF to help them develop a case for support for their endowment-building campaigns and to explore new advancement opportunities, such as bequests and other planned gifts. Training sessions in Bangor and Machias were held in October.

The 25/25 Endowment Challenge winners:

- Acadia Senior College
Mount Desert
- Center Theatre, *Dover-Foxcroft*
- Frenchman Bay Conservancy, *Hancock*
- Great Auk Land Trust, *Milbridge*
- Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust, *Orland*
- Healthy Island Project, *Deer Isle*
- Mahoosuc Land Trust, *Bethel*
- Maine School of Science and Mathematics, *Limestone*
- Milbridge Public Library
Milbridge
- Northeast Historic Film
Bucksport
- Opera House Arts, *Stonington*
- Penobscot East Resource Center
Stonington
- Pierre Monteux School, *Hancock*
- Rangeley Region Health Center, Inc., *Rangeley*
- Robert Frost Memorial Library
Limestone
- Salt Pond Community Broadcasting
East Orland
- Western Mountains Alliance
Farmington
- Whitneyville Library and Whatnot Association, Inc., *Whitneyville*
- Woodie Wheaton Land Trust
Durham



Students at Maine School of Science and Mathematics celebrate winning first place at a regional one-act play competition. Photo courtesy MSSM

A Commitment to Community

The special anniversary grants and programs highlighted here reconfirm the foundation's commitment to strengthening communities in every corner of Maine. These honors also underscore the dedication of MaineCF's county and regional advisors and many other volunteers to making the most of charitable resources across the state.

A 16-County Nonprofit Salute

Anniversary awards honor organizations.

To help mark the MaineCF's 25th anniversary and the ongoing success of its County and Regional Program, a nonprofit in each of Maine's 16 counties has received a 25th Anniversary Community-Building Award. The \$2,500 grants, selected by county advisors and

volunteer reviewers, honor some of the most outstanding programs in the state.

The Community-Building Awards are made possible by a grant from the Sandy River Charitable Foundation, which has supported MaineCF's County and Regional Program for the past ten years.

Award recipients:

Androscoggin:	St. Mary's Health System	Oxford:	Susan Curtis Foundation
Aroostook:	Aroostook Area Agency on Aging	Penobscot:	Bangor Public Library
Cumberland:	Rippleffect	Piscataquis:	Pine Tree Hospice
Franklin:	Franklin County Community College Network	Sagadahoc:	Tri-County Literacy Volunteers
Hancock:	Penobscot East Resource Center	Somerset:	Literacy Volunteers of Franklin and Somerset Counties
Kennebec:	Maine Centers for Women, Work & Community	Waldo:	Waldo County YMCA
Knox:	Trekkers	Washington:	Greenland Point Center
Lincoln:	Midcoast Green Collaborative	York:	Community Wellness Coalition



Trekkers enjoying a cultural exchange with Urban Trekkers from Camden, New Jersey, in Acadia National Park. Photo courtesy Trekkers

A Network Wins the Noyce

The FCCCN builds community and enhances education through collaboration.

The Franklin County Community College Network (FCCCN) is the winner of the Maine Community Foundation's 2008 Noyce Award for Nonprofit Excellence. The network was founded on the principle that to improve the region's economic viability, residents needed opportunities to develop marketable skills that would lead to well-paying jobs. Thanks to this network, more than 500 adults have been able to take college courses close to home over the past three years.

"FCCCN's ability to bring businesses, nonprofits, educational institutions, agencies, and state legislators together in a collaborative exchange is a powerful demonstration of community-building skills," said MaineCF President Henry Schmelzer. With locations throughout Franklin County, FCCCN offers training and educational programs that serve a broad range of interests and abilities and give community members a way to achieve their career goals.

The FCCCN was selected from among 16 nonprofits that were awarded special MaineCF 25th Anniversary Community-Building grants.

The Noyce Award honors philanthropist Elizabeth Noyce (1930–1996), who was dedicated to supporting the health and development of Maine's nonprofits. Past Noyce Award winners include the Maine Migrant Health Program, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., and the Maine Mountain Sustainable Development Initiative.

Advocate for the “Power and Joy” of Giving

A Lewiston attorney reflects on lessons learned from advising a private foundation.

Through her work with the JTG Foundation and interactions with the Maine Philanthropy Center (MPC) and Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF), Martha “Meg” Greene, a trust and estate lawyer, has come to appreciate the power of philanthropy. In conversation with Jennifer Southard, MaineCF’s director of philanthropic services, Greene offers insights on how to work with clients to maximize the potential of their charitable passions.

MaineCF: *Would you talk about your work with the JTG Foundation and what you’re learning about philanthropy in Maine?*

Greene: I have been privileged to work with Tom Gorman to create and operate his private foundation, the JTG Foundation. In my dual capacity as estate planning attorney and foundation administrator, I have had the good fortune to

learn what philanthropy is all about, as well as the pleasure of helping a client accomplish his or her charitable goals.

MaineCF: *What has surprised you the most about how grantmaking works?*

Greene: To begin with, how much of a difference relatively modest grants can make to charitable organizations trying to get from point A to point B. Another surprise is how much unmet need there is among disadvantaged Maine residents for help with fundamental services such as food, fuel, dental care, and public transportation. I am also struck by the need for greater coordination and collaboration among grant makers and the public sector, so that we can all work together in achieving the same goal.

MaineCF: *As an estate-planning attorney, what is now different about your conversation with a client regarding philanthropy?*

Greene: Due to my personal experience as a foundation administrator, I better understand the power and the joy of giving.

When I meet with clients with taxable estates, who either have no children or whose children are already well provided for,

I suggest that the client identify his or her personal passions and how the client might make a difference in Maine, or elsewhere, by enabling others to develop or pursue the same passions. I spend some time exploring the meaningful and exciting things the client might accomplish by developing his or her own charitable giving program, whether by creating a private foundation, establishing a fund at the Maine Community Foundation, or another strategy of their own making.

MaineCF: *The Giving in Maine report published earlier this year highlights charitable bequests as one area in which Maine surpasses national numbers. Do you have any thoughts to share with peers who might be working with individuals thinking about bequests?*

Greene: For clients interested in charitable giving, I always suggest they check out the MaineCF website where materials on giving options are readable and useful. For people considering a private foundation, I suggest reviewing the resources on the Maine Philanthropy Center website.

MaineCF: *Any other advice for your peers?*

Greene: Increase your knowledge base. Keep connecting with those who know more than you do, as well as those with whom you can share your knowledge.

Martha Greene is a partner at Brann & Isaacson in Lewiston. Her practice is devoted to estate planning, charitable giving and estate and trust administration. Greene is a graduate of Bowdoin College and the University of Maine School of Law, and is a member of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). She is the managing director of the JTG Foundation, one of Maine’s larger private family foundations. Greene also serves on the Board of the Maine Philanthropy Center.



Martha Greene

MaineCF Welcomes New Board Members

The Maine Community Foundation has elected two members to its Board of Directors. They are Elizabeth Neptune of Princeton and Dighton Spooner of Brunswick.

“The all-volunteer board helps guide the foundation and bring new ideas to the table,” said MaineCF President Henry Schmelzer. “These distinguished individuals are already helping to move us forward,” he said.

Management consultant to the Indian Health Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Elizabeth Neptune is former director of the Indian Township Health Center. While at the health center Neptune directed

“Kmiqhutahasultipon” (“We Remember”), a program based on Passamaquoddy values geared toward special needs children and their families, which has become a national model. The Maine Senate and House of Representatives, the Indian Health Services and the National Association of Social Workers have recognized Neptune for her outstanding leadership in health care.



Dighton Spooner, during a visit to MaineCF's Augusta Office. Photo: Carl Little

As associate director of Career Planning at Bowdoin College, Dighton Spooner advises students in communications, broadcasting, advertising, music and the arts. Prior to Bowdoin, he was project director for “Craft in America,” a multimedia project that included a national PBS TV series. Spooner began his career in television production and broadcasting at Boston’s WGBH-TV and has worked at CBS Television Network in Los Angeles and at Granada Television and ECM Productions, Ltd., in London.



MaineCF President Hank Schmelzer with Elizabeth Neptune. Photo: Ellen Pope

making the **connection**

Philanthropy and Farms

Building Community Through Agriculture

What does grantmaking have to do with local foods? Everything! Local agriculture is a vital part of communities throughout Maine. Our sense of place, our economy, and even our health can be tied to local food production.

Promoting locally produced food is tied to a range of philanthropic interests, from the environment and economic development to health and nutrition and building community. Grants are vital to organizations working in this field—not just for the dollars, but also for the “vote of confidence” that can attract other public and private support.

The Maine Community Foundation stands ready to connect donors to organizations working to create a healthier economy, a healthier environment, and a healthier Maine. For more information on how to get involved, contact the foundation at 877-700-6800 or visit www.mainecef.org.



Field plowing at Six Rivers Farm in Bowdoinham. Photo by Bridget Besaw for Maine Farmland Trust.

mark your **calendars**

On December 11, MaineCF will host a special donor briefing on the relationship between philanthropy and agriculture in Maine. The event will take place at the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport. Please call Garrett Martin, MaineCF director of program strategies, at 512-4902 for more information.



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