

THE BRIDGE

Fall 2020
Norridgewock, Maine

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townofnorridgewock.com

Election Day : Large Turnout Expected

Absentee ballot requests set stage for record-breaking turnout

Even before absentee ballots became available, over 400 absentee ballots were requested by Norridgewock voters for the November 3 General Election. In a Presidential Election year, voter turnout is always high; this year, it is magnified by one of the costliest political races in Maine history as four candidates vie for one of Maine's seats in the United States Senate. While the races have drawn a lot of attention, many absentee ballot requests can be attributed to COVID-19 and additional safety regulations put into place through Executive Orders.

In cooperation with the Secretary of State, a large secure drop box was installed outside the Town Office to receive ballots without having to enter the office. Voters may deposit their absentee ballots in the box, which is emptied several times per day.

If you have recently moved or believe that we may not have your current information on file, we recommend that you contact the Town Office in advance of Election Day to make those adjustments. Contacting us in advance should save a significant amount of time in line at the polls.

Polling will take place on Tuesday, November 3, at Mill Stream Elementary School (26 Mercer Road), from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Voters will enter through the main entrance and exit through the side door, which will allow for adequate social distancing while complying with polling place requirements. Election staff thanks you in advance for your patience and understanding at the polls. ◆



Recent Voter Participation, Town of Norridgewock

Election	Absentee	In-Person	Total Voters
July 2020	267	322	589
March 2020	104	664	768
November 2018	344	1,106	1,450
November 2016	506	1,334	1,840
November 2012	318	1,330	1,648
November 2008	463	1,210	1,673

Looking for New Adventures? Visit Norridgewock's New Pocket Park !

Norridgewock's new landmark, the Historical Panel Pocket Park, is located next to the Sophie May Library on the banks of the Kennebec River. As we all look for ways to get out and entertain ourselves/our children, while so many places are closed due to COVID-19, visiting the pocket park is a nice open-air outing. The nearby granite terrace or front porch of Sophie May Library also provide great spots to take a break and enjoy a picnic lunch.

Learn about Norridgewock's history from the time of the Abenaki settlement up to the first part of the 20th century. There is also a panel that tells the story of Sophie May, the well-known 19th-century author of children's books. Tour the Historical Panel Pocket Park and then take a walk over the bridge; enjoy the fall foliage on the river. ◆ RFK



School Supply Drive: Success

Norridgewock, Mercer, Smithfield Band Together for Students

Students and teachers had been out of school for nearly six months and the community knew it would be difficult to make the return amid the Coronavirus and so many unknown factors. In an attempt to bring some relief to the teachers, students, and their families, a group of volunteers decided to spearhead a school supply drive to benefit Mill Stream Elementary School. The outpouring of support from the communities was so overwhelming, the small group of students at Riverview Memorial School also benefitted from the generous donations.

Hundreds of supplies and thousands in financial contributions helped make the transition back to the classroom a little bit easier for those at Mill Stream. Beyond the traditional school supplies, funding also supported the purchase of outdoor toys that could be used individually by students on the playground as they played at a distance. The Mill Stream community was extremely grateful and it was a true testament to the power of community at a difficult time.

Volunteers on the organizing committee included Jessie Everett, Brandi Ireland, Ruth Keister, Becky Ketchum, Drew Ketterer, John Malek, and Sallie Wilder. ♦



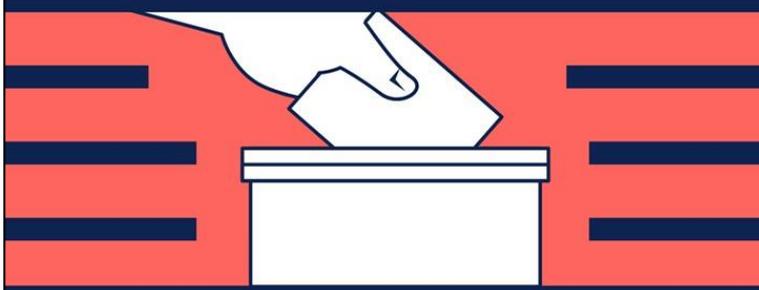
SUPPLY DRIVE• Students and teachers, alike, benefitted from the generosity of individuals and businesses in Norridgewock, Mercer, and Smithfield. Above, children at Mill Stream Elementary School enjoy playing with playground balls and other outdoor toys that were purchased with proceeds from the supply drive.

Important Waterfront News

New Dock Float System is Coming Next Spring

Town Manager Richard LaBelle applied for, and secured, a Boating Facilities Grant from the State of Maine. This grant was used to improve the waterfront experience at Oosoola Park, with the upgrade of the boat launch. The new launch (20 feet wide by 90 feet long) is larger than many other public launches on the Kennebec.

As a part of this grant, a float system more appropriate for the launch will be installed in Spring 2021. The existing Shoremaster dock will be relocated to allow for carry-in boats and for those wishing to enjoy the dock space for purposes other than launching. ♦ RFK

**HOW DO I
VOTE ABSENTEE?**

State officials say Mainers concerned about COVID-19 and voting this fall can use the absentee voting process to cast their votes.

1. Request your ballot from the Town Clerk (by phone, mail, or online).
2. Return the application by Friday, October 30.
3. Fill out your absentee ballot when it arrives in the mail.
4. Mail back or drop off your completed absentee ballot so that it is received by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day (November 3, 2020).

Town of Norridgewock
Post Office Box 7
16 Perkins St.
Norridgewock, ME 04957
(207) 634-2252



Norridgewock's Waterfront has been a Great Escape During Pandemic

Social distancing and having more free time have encouraged more folks to take advantage of Oosoola Park and the river. Exercising and relaxing are important contributors to reducing stress and staying healthy. On a recent visit, 15 boat trailers were parked at Oosoola Park, and based on a casual count taken during a fly-over, 30 private docks (of varying degrees of size and quality) were spotted along the shoreline properties in Norridgewock.



Shoreline residents report seeing a wide array of vessels traveling up and down the river, starting with fishing expeditions at 5 am and ending late at night with party boats decked in colored lights, streaming by. Some of the vessels spotted include pontoon boats of all sizes, cruisers, fishing

boats, outboards, paddleboards, jet skis, and colorful canoes and kayaks. Some boats speed along pulling tow lines for water-skiers, tubes, or rafts. On one very hot and humid August day, a middle-aged woman was spotted drifting slowly downstream, sitting comfortably atop a vintage black inner tube. About the only recreational water vehicles missing completely from the scene are sailboats.

Fishing has also been on the rise and one of the most notable changes versus non-COVID times is that the outings are often full boatload family affairs—adults and children on board and all have fishing rods—sometimes standing up in the boat, too! But everyone seems to be having fun—except perhaps the perch and bass. Who needs TV sports when you can watch all the comings and goings on the Kennebec River? ♦ RFK



OCTOBER IS NATIONAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Start the conversation. End the stigma.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SAMHAS National Hotline 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

It's a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service for individual and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. Callers can also order free publications and other information.

www.samhsa.gov



COVID Relief Grants Awarded

TIF Committee backs awards to local businesses

In light of the recent pandemic, Somerset Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) announced grant awards, up to \$5,000 per business, to support local businesses through the COVID Relief Grant Fund. The Town of Norridgewock Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Committee endorsed the program and recommended up to \$10,000 in financial support.

Many local businesses applied using the online grant application and six were awarded. Each of the following Norridgewock businesses was awarded \$1,250 to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on their business operations: Everett's Tire, Frederick's Dar-I-Whip, Hardy's Motorsports, Norridgewock Hair Studio, The Quimby Child Care Center, and Triple D Redemption. ♦



The Town Office will be closed:

November 3, for elections

November 11 for Veteran's Day

November 26-27 for Thanksgiving

December 24-25, in observance of Christmas

When the weather is bad, be safe and give us a call to make sure we're open. 634-2252

**Subject to change, office is open weather-permitting*

How to Protect Yourself and Others

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

Know how it spreads



- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - » Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - » Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - » These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - » COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Everyone should

Clean your hands often



- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.** Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact



- **Limit contact with others as much as possible.**
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Put distance between yourself and other people.**
 - » Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
 - » This is especially important for **people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.** www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others



- **You could spread COVID-19 to others** even if you do not feel sick.
- **Everyone should wear a mask in public settings** and when around people not living in their household, especially when social distancing is difficult to maintain.
 - » Masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- **The mask is meant to protect other people** in case you are infected.
- Do **NOT** use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
- Continue to **keep about 6 feet between yourself and others**. The mask is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cover coughs and sneezes



- **Always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

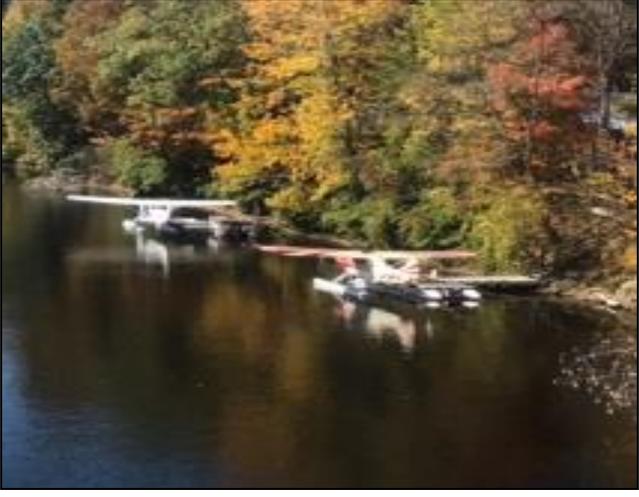
Clean and disinfect



- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces** daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- **Then, use a household disinfectant.** You can see a list of [EPA-registered household disinfectants here](#).

Flying the Friendly Skies of Norridgewock

During these times when the airwaves are often filled with negativity, spotting the little red and white Kennebec Seaplane flying carefree across the sky provides the observer with a quick dose of positivity and quiet comfort. Folks are generally interested and intrigued by the plane. For some, there even seems to be a sense of pride that a pair of the seaplanes are harbored on “our” river.



KENNEBEC SEAPLANES• Two seaplanes are docked at the Morgan residence on the shore of the Kennebec River in Norridgewock. This location is visible from the bridge, looking westward.

Ken Morgan is the primary pilot. Ken and his wife, Brenda, opened Morgan Aviation Flight School and Flight Tours out at Central Maine Regional Airport in 1997. They had operated a very successful flight school at the airport in the 1980s, but took some time off to raise their family— two sons, Chris is now a commercial pilot and Josh is an air traffic controller. In 2017, they added a subsidiary, Kennebec Seaplanes. They currently have three planes, two are equipped with floats and based on the Kennebec River (Cessna 172XP and Champion 7GCB Challenger) and one plane which is based at the airport, Cessna 172.

In addition to students who want to get a pilot's license simply for their personal use, several of Ken's students have gone on to careers in aviation, including pilots for Delta and American Airlines, the United States Army (Black Hawks), air traffic controllers at Logan in Boston, among others. Students currently studying range from 16 to 70 years old. Throughout his career as a flight instructor, Ken has trained approximately 200 pilots!

The Flight Tours service features sightseeing, sunset tours (one couple like to fly to the Village Inn in Belgrade Lakes for dinner), scouting for moose, foliage tours, etc. They also do fly-in events such as Oosoola Days. Providing inexpensive rides at these events allows people the opportunity to ride on a plane who may otherwise never get the chance. Interviewed for this article, Ken shared that his favorite thing to do, in addition to teaching people how to fly, is to introduce young people to the world of aviation.

Be on the lookout for the planes! You can often catch one of the seaplanes taking off or landing on the Kennebec near The Bridge. It is quite a sight, especially when they taxi under the bridge or the trestle. By the way, in addition to these planes, also be on the lookout for Maine Warden Service's Cessna 185, piloted by Chief Warden Pilot Jeff Beach. ♦ RFK



**Daylight Savings Time
Ends November 1**

Don't forget to turn your clocks back before you go to bed on Saturday night, October 31!

**Change your clock.
Check your alarms.**

Have working smoke alarms on every level of your home.

Things are Happening at Central Maine Regional Airport !

Officially named "The Central Maine Regional Airport" with the call letters "OWK", our airport is an important asset for both economic and public safety reasons. It is busy even in COVID times. More than 50 airplanes are currently based there, plus many planes from all over the northeast come through.

With two 4,000 foot runways laid out in a cross-way design, this allows pilots to take off and land, based on optimum wind direction. The airport sees a variety of different aircraft from hobby planes to corporate jets, LifeFlight helicopters, and more. As part of the Town's ten-year Airport Master Plan, which was most recently updated in 2019, a taxilane reconstruction was planned and is now currently underway! The improvement is part of a major grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in concert with the CARES Act. The FAA is funding 100% of the cost of this project and has additionally awarded \$30,000 to help offset 2020 operational costs, in light of COVID-19. ♦ RFK



TAXILANE RECONSTRUCTION • Taxilane reconstruction is currently underway at the Norridgewock airport. This portion of taxilane is located on the southeast side of the airport and provides access to 25 hangars.



Keep ME Healthy Projects in Norridgewock

State funding to support COVID education and awareness

The State of Maine opened up grants under the Keep Maine Healthy Initiative. Under this program, the Town of Norridgewock was awarded over \$51,000 in grants. The grants have supported the purchase of a new electronic signboard, the impending redesign of the municipal website, as well as the large purchases of personal protective equipment for use by Town staff and the public.

Hand sanitizer and educational flyers were provided at no cost to local businesses at a time when supply was limited. Free sanitizer and face coverings are available at the Town Office. Roadside signage and banners were purchased, supporting COVID education. The grant has been instrumental in supporting education surrounding the fall soccer program. All teams were provided contactless thermometers and each player was given a water bottle. Many other purchases have supported businesses and the community, helping to educate and create access to goods. ♦

MERCER RD. LIBRARY

NOW OPEN
for indoor browsing

Tues, Thurs 10am – 6pm
Weds, Sat 10am – 2pm

We will continue to offer touch-free curbside service.

(207) 634-2828

For more information and to browse our online library catalog, visit townofnorridgewock.com/library



Waste Management is a private business. As a convenience to residents, we provide their back gate hours.

**Airport Rd.
634-2714**

Sun, Mon, Tues Closed
Weds, Thurs, Fri 9:30am – 6:00pm
Sat 7:30am – 4:00pm



Town of Norridgewock
PO Box 7
Norridgewock, ME 04957

ECRWSSDDM

Postal Customer
Norridgewock, ME 04957

KEEP HEALTHY

THANK YOU FOR
WEARING A
FACE COVERING



KEEP HANDS CLEAN



KEEP 6 FEET APART

KEEP IT
MAINE

Dear Neighbors,

So far, 2020 has turned out to be most unusual; schools shuttered unexpectedly in the Spring, many businesses closed and/or modified operations, face masks and hand sanitizers became hard-to-come-by products, and an air of uncertainty still looms. Through it all, our community has stood resilient in our efforts to educate and protect the public in these uncertain times.

The State of Maine, through its Keep Maine Healthy Initiative, has awarded over \$51,000 to the Town of Norridgewock to support public health awareness and education throughout the community. These funds are paying 100% of the cost of this newsletter (printing and postage) in addition to many other programs and equipment/supply purchases related to the pandemic.

A special thanks to resident Becky Ketchum for her contributions to this expanded edition of *The Bridge*. We hope you find this newsletter informational, both from a health and community perspective.

Stay safe and stay healthy!

Richard

Richard A. LaBelle
Town Manager