

**Louis J. Marin**

is the winner of a 2020 Heroes calendar  
from Maine Veterans Home.  
See Hidden Word Contest  
on Page 4B.

Down in their hearts, wise men know this truth: the only way to  
help yourself is to help others.

— Elbert Hubbard

# Rumford Falls Times



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## Dixfield police chief asks to apply for COPS grant

## RSU 56 board approves measures for after-school, Head Start grants

By Bruce Farrin  
Rumford Falls Times

DIXFIELD — Years ago, the police department hired an officer through a COPS (the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services) grant. Police Chief Aaron Mick would like to apply for another COPS grant.

At the Jan. 27 Select Board meeting, Mick introduced Brandon Kelly, a reserve from Auburn and Lewiston police departments recently hired as a fulltime officer.

Also with the chief were reserves Robert Haseltine

and Rex Schweighofer, hired a couple weeks ago. Mick said both are currently into their field training and should be ready to go in a few days.

Town Manager Dustin Starbuck said both were reserve officers in Old Orchard Beach before coming here. Mick added both recently graduated from college.

Haseltine said he and Schweighofer are undecided what they're going to do this summer. "We're somewhat planning on taking a

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By Marianne Hutchinson  
Rumford Falls Times

PERU — Regional School Unit 56 directors Jan. 28 approved hiring a grant writer to apply for \$250,000 for after-school programs at Dirigo elementary and middle schools.

Superintendent Pam Doyen said a federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant funded art, science, technology and fitness programs at the elementary school until last year when the application was not rejected because of "technical" errors.

"We would like to pursue this next round of grant applications for the elemen-

tary school and the middle school, so we would have two locations," but still have one bus run bringing them home, Doyen said.

She estimated it would cost from \$1,000 to \$2,000 to hire a grant writer.

Doyen, who is also principal of Dirigo High School in Dixfield, said neither she, nor middle school Principal Jason Long, or Dirigo Elementary School Principal Charlie Swan have the time to write a full grant at this time.

In other business, the board voted to partner with directors of a local Head Start program in seeking a grant for child care on school property.

Kim Bessette and Dianne

Nelder of Community Concepts told the board they were approached by administrators from Region 9 School of Applied Technology in Mexico last fall about the possibility of creating a Head Start program for infant and toddler care in RSU 56, which includes Canton, Carthage, Dixfield and Peru.

Head Start is a federal program by the Department of Education offering of child care services, education and social services for families of infants and children up to 5 years old.

Nelder, the director of children's services at Community Concepts, said their Head Start program covers Oxford and Franklin

counties. It is among the largest Head Start programs in Maine with 15 locations including Rumford, where they have three to four classrooms of 16 to 18 each for 3- and 4-year-olds, she said.

With the board's support Tuesday, the Head Start administrators said they will apply for a grant that could potentially add two early Head Start classrooms in the district's buildings. The administrators also said they could ask for enough money to build another building if it was needed.

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## How three Mainers got Gilbert Gottfried to perform in a Rumford church

By Bruce Farrin  
Rumford Falls Times

RUMFORD — Comedy legend Gilbert Gottfried headlined a sold-out night of comedy Thursday at 49 Franklin.

Getting him to appear culminated years of work by Scot and Cindy Grassetto to turn a former church into a showcase for top-quality acts, including live local theater, top-notch stand-up comedy, amazing magic and incredible music.

Gottfried is an American stand-up comedian, actor and voice actor. His comedic persona features an exaggerated shrill voice and emphasis on crude humor. His numerous roles in film and television include voicing the parrot Iago in Disney's "Aladdin"; a player in the new "Hollywood Squares"; and Kraang Subprime in "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles." Gottfried was also the voice of the Aflac Duck until 2011.

In the days before 190 people filed into the Fernand Room for the show, Scot Grassetto was constantly asked how this small community was able to attract such a celebrity.

Grassetto said it began one night after a 49 Franklin comedy show when he went to Hotel Rumford to share a couple of beers with New England headliner Rob Steen, who organizes Headliner Comedy Club.

He asked Steen, "How can we get Gilbert here?"

Steen, who said he's known Scot Grassetto for years, said he had Gottfried perform in Bangor, but needed help to bring the comedy legend to Rumford, so he contacted Maine's Mark Turcotte, who is the organizer of Maine Event Comedy and has made appearances all over Maine and up and down the East Coast.

The three worked together to make it happen.

Steen noted, "We're competitors, but we're friendly competitors, meaning he works for me at my club, and I work for him sometimes at his club. Then occasionally, we can work together on something. To bring in an act like Gilbert is very costly, for one night, especially so far away from the city (New York). But then when you book him for



Comedy legend Gilbert Gottfried performs a one-night show Thursday at 49 Franklin in Rumford. Photos by Bruce Farrin/Rumford Falls Times



Mark Turcotte, left, Rob Steen, center, and Scot Grassetto worked to bring comedian Gilbert Gottfried to Rumford for a show Thursday night.



Among the 190 people in the Fernand Room at 49 Franklin in Rumford to watch comedian Gilbert Gottfried on Thursday evening are, from left, Jackie Kilbreth, Catherine Johnson and Joanne Smith.

four days, it works out." Scot Grassetto said having the right connections made this happen.

Steen then joked, "The question is how do you get Gilbert to perform in a church?"

Gottfried flew into

Portland from New York, and Steen drove him to Rumford.

Then on Sunday, Steen said he'll leave Gottfried at the bus station, where he'll take the bus home. "He's cheap."

Being cheap is part of a

legacy of sorts with Gottfried. Scot Grassetto noted, "We gave him dental floss, some super glue and a toothpick plaque!"

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## Donation to help maintain well-used Rumford trail

By Bruce Farrin  
Rumford Falls Times

RUMFORD — Efforts to maintain the well-used River Trail got a needed financial boost Thursday.

Miranda Kessel, manager, stakeholder relations for Brookfield Renewable, presented a \$1,750 check from Brookfield to Jim Theriault, president of the Rumford Riders ATV Club. Also accepting the donation was Bev Soucy, secretary for the club.

Theriault said the trail runs over land owned by Brookfield, which runs from the park and ride at the top of Falls Hill up to the old bowling alley along Route 2. From the River Trail, it hooks up with other trails.

Soucy noted this trail is used by people with ATVs, snowmobiles, walkers, hikers, fat tire bikers, etc.

Theriault said work on the River Trail, that's still ongoing, includes repairing culverts, and fill placed where the roots from pine trees were coming up into the trail.

"We had two bridges put in years ago by the snowmobile club that the high waters damaged, so those needed to be rebuilt. This (check) is going to help," he

said, noting that when work started to rebuild one of the bridges, there were 15 volunteers from different clubs.

Kessel said, "We support organizations where our employees live and work, and organizations that align with our core values of community environmental stewardship and public safety."

She added, "With past support and current support we're providing with the Rumford Riders ATV Club, it really covers all those bases as far as environmental stewardship with what they're doing with making safe access of the trail for the community."

Theriault said in 2013, when his brother, Bill, was the president of the club, Bill spent two years getting Brookfield's permission to use that trail.

After getting that permission, Brookfield provided the club with a \$2,000 check for that trail.

Theriault said trail work will begin again when the ground is dry in the spring.

To donate to the club's efforts, call Jim Theriault at 357-1040.

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Miranda Kessel (center), manager, stakeholder relations for Brookfield Renewable, presents a \$1,750 check from Brookfield to Jim Theriault, president of the Rumford Riders ATV Club, to go toward maintenance of the River Trail. At left is Bev Soucy, secretary for the club. Bruce Farrin/Rumford Falls Times

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