DEAR CMJ 102

FROM THE MAINE CAMPUS & THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM'S CMJ 102 CLASS

DROP A DILEMMA
COLUMNISTS GIVE A SOLUTION

SCAN THIS LINK TO SEND IN QUESTIONS!

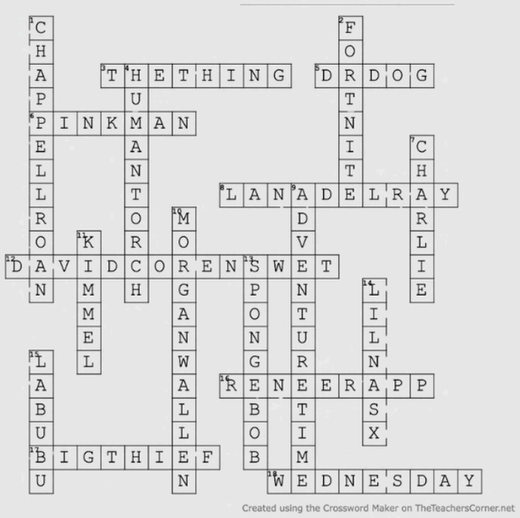
SCAN THIS FOR OUR INSTAGRAM!

> Dear CMJ 102,
> I'm returning home for fall break and would like to treat my girlfriend to nice date but I'm not really sure where to take her that would be a nice surprise, any suggestions to make it more meaningful?
> -Meaningful Date

Meaningful Date,
We think it's great that you want to be a thoughtful partner towards your girlfriend. Here are some ideas that we tossed around in our class:

- Make her a nice dinner from scratch and show your appreciation with thoughtful efforts or activities.
- Worry less about surprising her and ask directly what would be meaningful to her.
- Think about all the ways you know your girlfriend well, and go for the surprise based on all the times you've paid close attention to the kinds of things she likes.

But here's our real advice: whatever you do, consider the communication climate that would be the most enjoyable and special for her. According to one of the texts in our class, a communication climate is the overall feeling or mood created because of the people involved and the type of communication they bring to the interaction. It's the overall "vibe" of emotional warmth and pleasantness (or emotional coolness and unpleasantness) that people create with their verbal and nonverbal communication. Regardless of what activities you choose for a date, a warm, caring communication climate can be created through genuine confirming responses to whatever she wants to talk about, intentional presence, and generous listening (free from distractions like stress and devices). Whatever you choose for a date activity, if you prioritize a warm communication climate, we argue that this is always a meaningful experience and a nice surprise. Have a great fall break, and have a great date!



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Horoscopes: 10/06 - 10/12

BY JESSICA A WOLFE

Weekly Theme: Realizing our hearts desire through the Full Moon.

Aries: March 21 to April 19
The Ram. Ruled by Mars
Hi, Aries! You are in charge this week, but here's the thing: Being in charge does not mean being reckless or impulsive. This is a week to take matters into your own hands but first listen to your heart and the hearts of others.

Taurus: April 20 to May 20
The Bull. Ruled by Venus
Hi, Taurus! You may have a tug on your heart this week. If you feel confused about what you desire, go with the option that feels less scary even if it does not make logical sense.

Gemini: May 21 to June 20
The Twins. Ruled by Mercury
Hi, Gemini! You are ruled by the planet Mercury which represents communication. Gemini, how do you communicate with yourself? This is a week to allow your higher self to show you your heart. This week you may have a hankering to impulsively write, create art or call a friend to talk out an inner thought.

Cancer: June 21 to July 21
The Crab. Ruled by The Moon
Hi, Cancer! You are the crab and ruled by the Moon! In astrology, the Moon rules our emotions which is sometimes why the crab is considered "moody." This week we have a full moon. This would be a great opportunity to connect to your emotions and see what rises up in you, like the moon lights up the dark. You don't need to become the emotion but rather observe it.

Leo: July 23 to Aug. 22
The Lion. Ruled by The Sun
Leo, my friend! Hi. Leo, for you, this week may be a good opportunity to ask yourself "where am I in life? Am I where I want to be? What baby steps can I take to achieve my true goal?" Asking yourself these questions this week may bring light to the answers, with Monday's full moon. Use astrology transits to help you jump ahead in life.

Virgo: Aug. 23 to Sept. 22
The Maiden. Ruled by Mercury
Oh Virgo, have I got news for you. This week transiting Venus is in the sign of Virgo. Venus represents what we desire in our hearts. This week especially, but as long as Venus is in Virgo you may have lots of epiphanies on what you desire in life. This isn't the week for you to chase your desires but rather figure them out. Use Monday's full moon to see what lights up your life and heart.

Libra: Sept. 23 to Oct. 22
The Scales. Ruled by Venus
Libra! This may be a week to dance for you! Do you have a dancing partner or friend? A dancing partner does not have to be romantic. Who do you dance in life with? Use this week and Monday's Full Moon to ask yourself "do I enjoy the people I spend my time with?" If the answer is no, it may be time to figure out why.

Scorpio: Oct. 23 to Nov. 21
The Scorpion. Ruled by Pluto and Mars
Hello, darkness, my friend! Scorpio loves the dark like a cute little scorpion going inside their hole. I have really good news for you. This week, Pluto, which rules Scorpio, hence the love for darkness, goes direct. Confusing, I know, but basically that means you may have felt like you were back peddling in life. This week things may slowly (because Pluto is slow) start to feel like you have traction again in some areas of your life.

Sagittarius: Nov. 22 to Dec. 21
The Centaur. Ruled by Jupiter
Hello, Sag! How are you? How is your health, both mental and physical? This week it may be a good time to check in on your mental health. Especially on Monday's full moon. Areas for you to explore this week may be: your home life, your physical and mental health and heart's desires. How do all these themes in your life feel? As a Sagittarius, you have the ability to see far into the future with your Centaur's bow and arrow. If you stay on your current track, will these areas of your life improve or not? Adjust as needed.

Capricorn: Dec. 22 to Jan. 19
The Sea Goat. Ruled by Saturn
Hi! Capricorn, this week please allow yourself to soften. It may be wise to spend time working on listening to your intuition and higher self. It's easy to physically work toward a goal, which is what the Goat may enjoy, but how do you work on yourself? The part of you that feels things? What does your heart feel this week? Pay attention on Monday and Saturday.

Aquarius: Jan. 20 to Feb. 18
The Water Bearer. Ruled by Uranus and Saturn
Oh, Aquarius, you represent humanity. Often people mistake Aquarius for being insensitive or detached but really you are very attached. You understand that being codependent can be unhealthy and detrimental to one's life's goals when the attachment is not balanced. Please don't let others make you feel guilt or shame for being independent. You are the future, Aquarius. Keep following your heart and listen intently this week.

Pisces: Feb. 19 to March 20
The Two Fish. Ruled by Neptune
Okay, Pisces, my friend. Do me a favor this week and use your skills to daydream! This week if you spend time with your heart through meditation or art, you may find answers you've been seeking. Create time and space to listen.

The Maine Campus

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Triota hosts performative masc competition

BY QUINN D'ALESSIO

If you found yourself on the University of Maine mall around noon on Oct. 3, you would have encountered a sea of tote bags, matchas and Labubus. These items belonged to the contestants of Triota's fundraising competition, the winner of which became "UMaine's Ultimate Performative Masc." Surrounding them was a lively crowd listening to the statements of each contestant on how they were the top performative masc present.
But what does it mean to be a performative masc? That all depends on who you ask. To some it means a man who has curated his image based on the female gaze in order to gain such attention. As Charlie Thrush wrote for Block Club Chicago, a "performative male is a man with traditionally feminine hobbies with the sole intent of cultivating an inauthentic aesthetic that might appeal to progressive women." Popularly, this entails sporting swag such as a thrifted outfit, recycled tote bag and perhaps a book on feminism that really conveys a sense of this person being in touch with their emotions and keen on empowering women.
After the testimonials of each participant, the hosts, including Casper Cowan, elected three of their favorites to be voted on by the audience. By a show of clapping and hollering Sasha Rapoport was selected as the winner.

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Senate candidate, Graham Platner joins the UMaine Grad Workers Union March to demand better working conditions on Friday, Sep. 26, 2025 on the University of Maine campus in Orono, Maine. PHOTO BY TYLER BRIDGES

You have to point out what you're for': An interview with Senate candidate Graham Platner

BY SOFIA LANGLOIS

Senate candidate Graham Platner (D), an oysterman and veteran from rural Maine, is making his campaign known across the state by promising an approach different from current Senator Susan Collins (R), who has won five consecutive elections. Maine residents will cast their votes in 2026, and Platner is getting his name out now.
His journey to the ballot is already atypical. Platner was never interested in becoming a politician, he told the Maine Campus.

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UMaine Women's Soccer Ties Bryant in Home Opener

BY AMANDA CLAUZEL

READ PAGE 4

The University of Maine's women's soccer team lines up ahead of their match against Bryant. PHOTO BY OWEN BULMER

Plan B should be available for free on campus

BY ALEXA ROSE PEROCILLO

OPINION: Sexual and reproductive health services nationwide are facing potential federal funding cuts or have already been impacted. It is heartbreaking to witness women's right to access these essential services being systematically dismantled — resources that are not only fundamental to our health and autonomy but also to our dignity and well-being. In response to this, Maine recently implemented state-level funding bills to offset the costs of providing free or discounted care at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) and Maine Family Planning (MFP).

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UMaine students react to removal of climate signs from Acadia National Park

BY IZZI STUBBS

On March 27, President Donald Trump signed an executive order entitled "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History." The purpose of the order was to amend the perceived partisan biases assigned to the representation of American history. As a result of the executive order, various signs and exhibits displaying information on climate change, slavery and indigenous land have been removed from several national parks. According to The Washington Post, Maine's very own Acadia National Park was one of the parks affected.
The Maine Monitor reported that the signs at Acadia were installed in 2023 as part of an initiative to educate the public on the effects of climate change. The National Park Service kept a log of the now removed signs. "Is there a refuge from a changing climate?" read one sign.

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Police Beat

BY ELORA GRISWOLD

9/22:
At 2 a.m., the University of Maine Police Department (UMPD) filed a suspicious complaint after they received an alert from an emergency button activated near Munson Road. A female student pressed the button after noticing a male walking behind her. Officers responded and made contact with the individual, who identified himself as a janitor headed toward a dumpster in the same direction. UMPD informed the student and the case was closed.
At 7 p.m., UMPD made an agency assist for the Bangor Police Department, which requested translation help for an individual arrested on drug related charges. An officer served as an interpreter and the matter was resolved.
At 8 p.m., a property damage crash causing personal injury was reported outside Gannett Hall after a student riding a bicycle was struck by a slow moving vehicle at an intersection. The student was disoriented but sustained no major injuries and declined transport to the hospital. UMPD noted the student did not have reflective gear equipped on the bicycle.
9/23:
At 1 p.m., a suspicious complaint was filed from Cumberland Hall after several people called in concerned about three males knocking on doors throughout the hall. UMPD responded and made contact with the men, who shared they were looking for a friend. Officers discovered the three were not students and had been given access to the building by someone walking in. The group was asked to leave.
At 5 p.m., a property damage crash was reported from the Hilltop Lot after a caller shared that they had hit an unoccupied parked vehicle when pulling into a parking spot. There were no injuries reported.
At 11 p.m., an alcohol offense was responded to at Oak Hall after officers received a tip that three students were drinking in the hallway. UMPD made contact and confiscated the beverages. Since the students are under 21, a report was completed and they were referred to student conduct.
9/24:
Around noon, a suspicious complaint was filed from the Memorial Union after a student called in concerned about a male pacing in front of the bookstore asking students to buy him merchandise. UMPD made contact with the man and determined he was confused and may be experiencing a mental health crisis. Since the man is not a student, he was asked to leave and the matter was resolved.
At 2 p.m., a property damage crash occurred on Belgrade Road near the UMPD station when a driver turning from Rangeley Road clipped an oncoming vehicle. No injuries were reported.
9/25:
At 4 a.m., a suspicious complaint was filed on Connecticut Street near University Park after a family housing resident reported a male talking loudly on his phone while walking down the street. UMPD searched the area but were unable to locate him. The case was closed and no further disturbances were reported.
At 9 a.m., an information complaint was filed after Parking Services reported a vehicle could not be towed because its passenger door was ajar. UMPD responded and attempted to identify the owner, but the temporary license plate prevented it. The door was secured and the vehicle was towed.
At 11 p.m., a noise complaint was filed after several residents from Gannett Hall alerted UMPD to a large group of students talking loudly outside the building. UMPD searched for the group, but they had left by the time officers arrived. The case was marked closed and no further noise disturbances were reported.
9/26:
Around noon, an information complaint was filed after a student came into the UMPD station to report that another female student had violated a no-contact order from student conduct. No action was taken, but the student wanted the violation documented. The case was closed.
9/27:
At 2 a.m., an alcohol offense was responded to at the Versant Power Astronomy Center after four underaged students were spotted drinking in a parked vehicle near the building. Responding officers confiscated the beverages and the students were referred to conduct.

YikYak Beat

BY AIDEN LIVIGNI

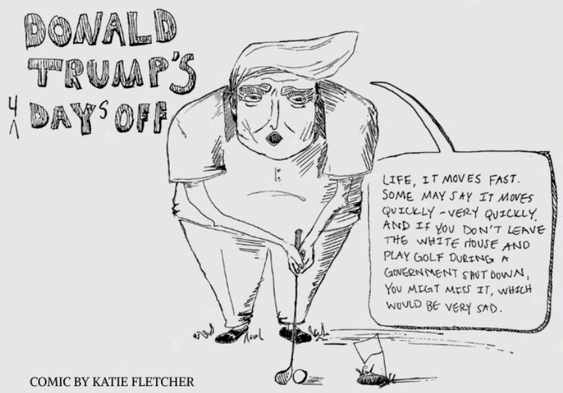
09/29:
A female student lamented how she felt that she had "missed the chance to make friends" and was met with a lot of support. Some indirect via upvoting and some direct with people replying, asking for her to DM them to start chatting. Others offered advice and insight.
One student commented on the large amount of work they had to complete while stating business majors had to "count how many toes they have," with the tag #unfair, to which a lot of users upvoted. A non-anonymous individual replied, telling the original poster to "stop complaining and pick your poison." Only one reply followed clearly taking the same view as the original poster. Another similar post made later in the day — again, obviously satirical — was met with over 500 upvotes.
09/30:
A poster asked if "Anyone [remembered] when those beta brothers hate crimed that kid," which many students upvoted and a few replied to. Another poster added a screenshot of a news article describing the incident in detail, gathering even more upvotes. Some of the replies to this second post seemed to point out that a few individuals had not heard of or were not at the university during the incident, of which was recounted to them. Later, commenting on the conversation one poster said that Beta's "covering up" reaction would only "give all fraternities terrible reputations." A lot of the replies were reaffirming this message. Many students remember when Beta was shut down at the end of last semester only to see them quietly reopen at the start of the fall.
One student said that they, "[Don't open] Brightspace so I don't see my grades the same way I don't open my bank app so I don't see my balance," confirming the broke, confused and blissfully ignorant college student stereotype. The post received no comments but over 300 upvotes.
110/01:
A student posted a screenshot of a Turning Point USA announcement of their stop at the University of Maine titled, "You're More Pro-life Than You Think," with the added, "actually not!!" as a caption. The post received almost 300 upvotes and over 30 replies in agreement with the poster. A lot of comments had a sentiment of unwelcomeness towards Turning Point, one commenter even saying "Do not come to my town."
One student commented on the fact that Hilltop had, "f*ck all after 6:45," to which one student replied saying how they did not miss dining halls because of their early closing habits. They said that especially for a student who had late classes it was frustrating for dinner to be "literally an apple and lettuce."
One post consisted of a photo of a man breaking free from chains with the caption, "me when I lie on yik yak." Receiving 132 upvotes.
10/2:
A student criticized the reckless driving they have seen around campus, especially at night time. Getting a lot of upvotes and some comments playfully agreeing with the original poster. Interestingly, none of the responses, nor the original post, took the subject very seriously despite the genuine danger it could pose to students.
"I'll delete this shortly but I wish my girlfriend knew how genuinely beautiful I think she is," followed by much more compliments like this was met with overwhelming positive support. Many replies told the poster to "never change," and how they wished that others were more like this person.
10/03:
One student commented on how they could not receive their package because The Avenue — an off-campus apartment complex — had odd sets of rules and is slow with processing packages. One reply said, "do not withhold my packages from me." While this is a more mundane criticism, there was a significant volume of upset toward the Ave and other off-campus apartments in their relationships to their tenants.

Support the UMaine community and beyond

13th Annual
March Against Domestic Violence

Meet at the Fogler Library steps and march into the North Pod. Once inside, we'll have speakers, resources, and a remembrance ceremony for those we've lost to domestic violence this year.

Friday, October 17th
at 5 PM



COMIC BY KATIE FLETCHER

COMIC BY TABITHA DEAN

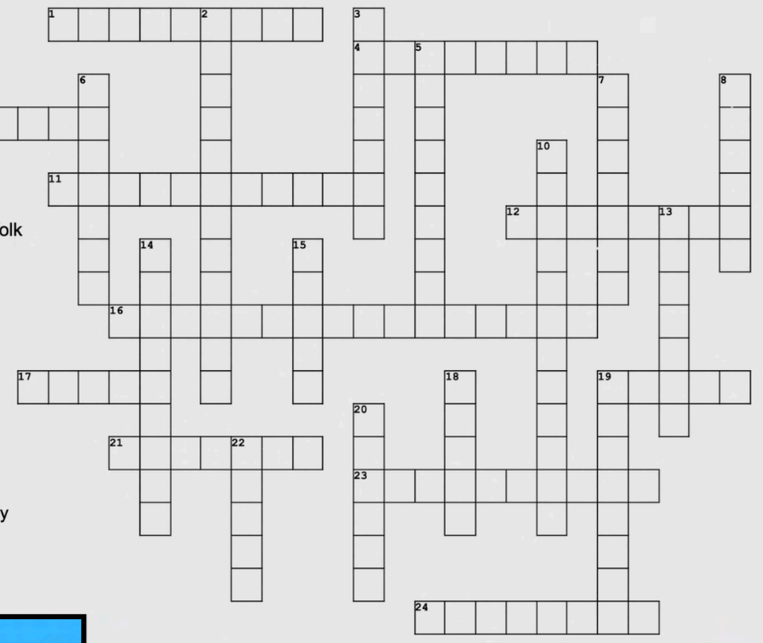
Campus Crossword

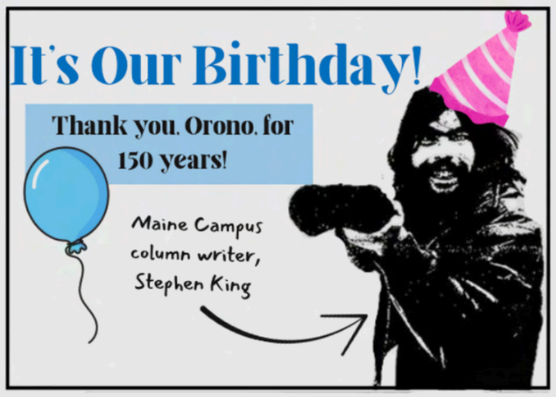
BY QUINN D'ALESSIO

POP CULTURE EDITION

Across
3. It's clobbering time!
5. Where'd all the time go?
6. Yeah Mr. White! Yeah Science!
8. She let the light in
12. (S)uper hero actor
16. New Regina George, and gay pop icon
17. Synonymous to large burglar, and an indie folk band
18. Day of the week, also a hit Netlifx remake

Down
1. THE midwest princess
2. Where we droppin'?
4. Flame on!
7. Unfairly slammed in new Swift song
9. What time is it? Also a kids show
10. Country artsist who threw a chair off a roof
11. Suspended over Kirk comment
13. Kitchen aid, and kids show
14. Rapper recently arrested, debuted with country hit
15. A performative male's sidekick





Plan B should be available for free on campus

BY ALEXA ROSE PEROCILLO

CONTINUED FROM COVER

This eases the financial burden on these organizations. LD 143, effective as of Sept. 24, along with an allocation from the state's supplemental budget passed in June, LD 210, has provided $6 million in one-time funding to the state's family planning care network.

According to the University of Maine Student Wellness Resource Center (SWell), "College can be a stressful time for many students, but you are not alone. Research shows that when you are healthy in both mind and body, you are more academically successful and feel more fulfilled. Whether it is mental or physical health, we have resources at the ready for topics like stress management, sleep, substance abuse, sexual health, and nutrition."

Recently, it seems that Swell's team of professionals and student staff, who are committed to supporting overall health and well-being through accessible resources, have been lacking a crucial resource for promoting "sexual health" emergency contraceptives, commonly known as the morning-after pill. UMaine students who are on a budget depend on sexual and reproductive health products such as Julie, the brand of emergency contraceptive the university receives for free.

This pill can help prevent pregnancy within 72 hours after unprotected sex or other birth control failure. The cost of this pill at drugstores can range from $40 to $50, which is costly for students.

> **We are currently in a political climate where many of our reproductive rights are under attack. Being able to provide this medication, which people often overlook its importance, at zero cost in a safe and non-judgmental environment, is important to me. I want to make sure that everybody is safe, comfortable, happy and healthy,**

said Casper Cowan, the President of UMaine's Triota chapter, the national honor society for Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies (WGS).

The remaining boxes have been relocated to the Wilson Center, a non-profit organization that has been supporting the UMaine community for more than a century but is not affiliated with the university. Each student is allowed to take one box, and once they expire in December, UMaine will no longer provide free emergency contraception on campus.

"We are discussing exploring potential funds or resources for students who are looking to access these resources but are unable to. However, I really want to avoid that if possible because I think that this needs to be institutionalized within UMaine so that our students have the right to access these resources at a reduced cost," said Cowan.

The change in policy at UMaine regarding medication distribution on campus extends beyond emergency contraceptives. Medications such as Midol, ibuprofen and acetaminophen will no longer be provided by campus offices. While financial barriers are a factor, they should consider alternative solutions such as partnering with a third-party organization that can provide funding for the redistribution of these medications.

"They are not even allowed to hand out their current stock to students who need it. For example, SWell still has a lot of Midol in their office, but they are not allowed to give it. This was news to me and other students because we were under the impression that their available stocks of any of these supplies would still be available to students. However, that was no longer the case," said Cowan.

What happened to protecting our on-campus resources that promote our health and autonomy? UMaine's decision to stop providing free emergency contraception and other medications is a disservice to students, particularly those who depend on the university's supply.

Let's go to the Orono Thrift Shop

BY JORDAN THOMSPON

OPINION: My favorite place to shop is in other people's closets. I often "borrow" flannels and blouses from my mom, and my aunts know to check with me before getting rid of anything.

here are a few photos of me from around middle school, wearing outfits proudly cobbled together from such sources — one where I'm wearing my aunt's corduroy jacket paired with a purple skirt and white collared shirt with tan flowers. Another where I'm wearing a bright yellow jacket, gray patterned skirt, black belt and a long purple necklace. I might not have been "dressed for success" as is typically understood, but my beaming smile indicates that I felt I was. From a young age, I've enjoyed sorting through old clothes, discovering hidden gems and creating outfits by mixing and matching.

UMaine Freshman Logan Hart poses with a thrifted jacket on The Mall. PHOTO BY OWEN BULMER

To me, a thrift store is a huge closet. For that reason, and because my high school band director recommended it as though sharing a secret, the Orono Thrift Shop was on my list of to-dos within my first month of college.

I wasn't sure what to expect, being relatively new to thrifting. One room felt like the home of a prolific collector. The shelves were lined with everything: pots and pans, office supplies, books, puzzles, dishware and yarn. Another room felt like an entire clothing store, condensed into the small space. There were racks of coats, shirts, shoes, pants, scarves and anything else you could think of. Eclectic to be sure, but that was the charm.

n that first visit, I went a little overboard. I picked out four new shirts, two sweatshirts, a book, a pair of earrings and a pumpkin wall decoration. I was a bit apprehensive as I carried my items to checkout, not having done the math. Altogether it was $14.25.

The Orono Thrift Shop is one of those rare places that seems untouched by inflation, where you can bring a quarter and leave with something. Items such as a crochet hook, small piggy bank, coffee mug or spool of ribbon are just a few examples. It's hard to feel buyer's remorse, but easy to regret not purchasing something at a thrift store, which makes one a bit adventurous. Of course, I have some thrifted items that I don't wear much, but then there's my go-to shirt for anything business casual. If it had been more than $2, I would have left it there, being skeptical about the bold, vertical and diagonal stripes. Now I wear it almost every week. You never know what may turn out to be your style.

But the adventurous feeling and low prices are not the only reasons to thrift. According to the United Nations, the environmental impact of the textile sector is huge — up to 8% of global emissions and the equivalent of 86 million Olympic-sized swimming pools worth of water every year. Somewhere between 16-35% of microplastics that end up in the ocean are from synthetic textiles. Annual textile waste is staggering — 92 million metric tonnes, the equivalent in weight of about 40 million mid-sized SUVs.

Fast fashion, in particular, preys on our desire for something new. The business model relies on the consumer buying cheap clothing, wearing it a few times before it disintegrates or goes out of style and then throwing it away, and it works.

Thrifting breaks this cycle. It lets us scratch the itch for something new or get rid of things we don't wear, without using up new resources or creating waste. It's a cliché to say that one person's trash is another's treasure, but that doesn't make it any less true. Additionally, by using our money to buy higher quality clothing secondhand, we are sending the message that we don't want to keep producing clothes that have been designed to fall apart after being washed a few times.

You have to point out what you're for': An interview with Senate candidate Graham Platner

CONTINUED FROM COVER

BY SOFIA LANGLOIS

Platner does not feel called to the role of senator itself so much as the progress that can be made through it. He wants to make structural changes in the state and understands this position can help organize communities and workspaces.

"I'm not going into this because I want to protect some political career," said Platner. "I'm going into this because I think that we need to change our politics."

Platner encourages a more democratic way of life for Maine, one that represents the people and is responsive to their needs. However, he feels the Democratic party itself has failed to "meet the moment" by not enforcing anti-capitalism in a way that Mainers need. Platner saw an opening for a leader with working-class values.

Platner views Maine as a community-oriented state. Throughout his life, he has noticed that the majority of residents are regular people who take care of their neighbors. Due to a smaller population, he considers Maine less polarized than many other states, contributing to its tight-knit feel.

Despite contrasting beliefs across the political spectrum, Platner shared that he hopes all working-class people come to realize how much they have in common and band together to defeat billionaires who take advantage of their honest work.

While Maine has rural and urban communities, Platner believes his legislation would cater to both. His big-picture goals are to expand funding for social programs, which are utilized everywhere.

Platner wants to protect social security, build a universal health care system and bring down housing costs. He sees these initiatives as beneficial to those in any living situation.

To Platner, the primary public concern is the rising cost of goods while wages remain stagnant, along with poor healthcare and housing. He says that because shareholder profit and maximization is prioritized, wealth is extracted from working-class residents.

Good healthcare in Maine, according to Platner, can exist. The resources needed to give Americans good lives are there, but not being provided. He says Maine Republicans should vote for him because they are suffering the same consequences of a political system owned by corporations built to "screw them over." He feels that no one is happy with the current food and health care system in Maine and this sentiment defies political preferences. "Maine Republicans have the exact same concerns and needs as Maine Democrats, in my opinion," said Platner.

> **When you really dig down into it, when the hospital closes, it doesn't matter who you voted for.**

Platner wants to tax billionaires, putting money that belongs to contributing citizens back into social programs that are widely beneficial, like Medicare and Medicaid. In terms of legislation, his first order of business would be to fulfill basic medical and housing needs, noting that nothing else can take the forefront until everyone has access to clinical care and a roof over their heads.

"You can't just point out what you're against," said Platner. "You have to point out what you're for. And I'm pretty convinced that most working people in Maine, they're all for the same things because they have the same material needs."

The Department of Veterans Affairs offered basic services that allowed Platner to live a good life, return to his community and build a business.

"That support gave me a real freedom, an actual freedom. Not a fantastical one, but a material freedom to do things with my life that I wanted to do," said Platner. "And I think that until every American has those freedoms, we will not be living up to our full potential."

At the forefront of Platner's campaign is a promise to hold town hall meetings across the state that allow working people to speak directly to their senator. While these meetings have already been overwhelmed by over 1,000 community members at a time during Platner's campaign, he believes it would become less of an issue with him in office. He said constituents eventually getting bored of him would be a sign that he is representing them properly.

As for college students in Maine who have yet to join the workforce, Platner feels their involvement is still necessary to ensure a better future. Change would require participation in politics and organizing by young adults in Maine. He added that those in charge right now are not leading in the interest of future generations and that a change of course is desperately needed.

UMaine students react to removal of climate signs from Acadia National Park

BY IZZI STUBBS

The remaining text detailed the importance of protecting Acadia's landscape in order for its unique ecosystem to thrive. Another sign said,

> **Acadia is changing, so are we,**

This sign offered information about a plant conservation effort run by members of the community and encouraged visitors to plant native vegetation at home.

In a poll of 17 University of Maine students, 100% answered that national parks should have climate-related signage. In another poll of 19 students, 95% said that the President should not have a say over national park signage.

Sydney Simoes, a first-year student who identifies as a conservative, offered her view on the removal of signage and the President's role in deciding what should be displayed.

"Climate issues are a significant conversation in America...[and] I'm not surprised that it's now affected areas that represent nature. I believe controversial signs should be taken away, but not necessarily because I disagree with them. In my eyes, nature is a place of complete beauty and awe," said Simoes.

Simoes then mentioned that the president has the authority to remove the signs, but in her eyes, not all the signs were actually controversial.

"If people are so upset about ... [the removal of signage], maybe it's not the right move," said Simoes. "Because national parks are national, the President has the right to dictate the way it is run and works, however I don't believe all signage that was removed should be considered controversial."

"The message from Trump is clear from his statements — he does not want the American name to be disrespected. However, this message can be reasonably taken as an effort to silence those who do not agree with him," said Simoes.

Lilia Lambert, a second-year parks, recreation and tourism student, also contributed her thoughts from a different political perspective.

"The removal of signage goes against so much of what the national parks stand for. As a person going into that field, I feel like I know what I'm talking about when I say this," said Lambert.

"Lambert expressed disbelief that the signs could be viewed as political, saying the move undermines the parks' mission to inform visitors.

> **I don't know why on earth these signs could be seen as political, that seems so ridiculous to me. They are there to educate, not persuade. This shows how little our government cares about matters such as this and that if we don't put it to a stop it's gonna get worse. It also shows that they don't have their priorities straight at all,**

said Lambert. Other students have expressed concern over the incumbent administration's decision to remove the signs. They voiced concern over the President's priorities and subsequent decisions in light of what they perceived as a matter that should have been left to local jurisdictions.

"The president should have zero say on these matters, absolutely none at all," said Lambert.

The UMaine Swim Team takes a dive into the competition on Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025 in Orono, Maine. PHOTO BY NOAH FUTRIS

Swim and dive season opener against the University of New Brunswick

BY MADIE MACAULAY

The University of Maine Swim and Dive teams kicked off their 2025-26 season Saturday, Oct. 4 at Wallace Pool, hosting the University of New Brunswick for the first dual meet of the year. The Black Bears showed a mix of veteran leadership and fresh talent, giving fans a glimpse of an exciting season ahead.

Kicking off with the men's team, Joey Stauss, a second-year standout, is one swimmer everyone's keeping an eye on this season. After an impressive debut campaign, Stauss is expected to have an impact on individual events and relays. Based on what was shown this weekend, his speed and versatility could help set the tone for Maine's men's team throughout the season.

Matt Bendoraitis, a second-year swimmer, brings experience and consistency in backstroke events. He's expected to contribute key points and help keep Maine competitive in some of the tightest races.

Julian LaPietra, a fourth-year swimmer, adds skill and leadership to the lineup. His presence in the pool strengthens Maine's relays and gives the team a reliable performer in sprint freestyle events.

Noah Machristie, entering his second year, showed flashes of brilliance as a first-year. Known for his speed in the freestyle, he's one of the athletes poised to make a real difference for the Black Bears this year.

Rounding out the men's highlights, Nate Teerlinck, a fourth-year swimmer, brings depth and experience. Competing in breaststroke and medley events, Teerlinck is expected to help Maine capture important points throughout the season.

The women's team also looked strong to start the season. Mia Poirier, a fourth-year swimmer, is a key piece of Maine's freestyle relay team, and her leadership and speed will be important this season in both individual races and relays.

Laura Dube, a fourth-year athlete, remains a reliable force in the breaststroke events. Her consistency and experience will be crucial as Maine navigates early-season meets and looks ahead to the America East Championships.

Nicki Harkins, a second-year swimmer, impressed last season and is expected to provide depth in the distance freestyle events, giving the Black Bears another option for scoring points in multiple races.

Charlie Hoover, a first-year swimmer, showed promise across multiple events last year. Her versatility will make her a valuable asset, especially in relays and mid-distance races.

Newcomer Amelia Obszarny, a second-year transfer from Seton Hall, adds experience from Big East competition. Obszarny is a great addition to the team, as she's expected to contribute in relays and individual events, giving Maine an extra boost as the season takes off.

On the diving side, Ashley LeClaire, a fourth-year diver, returns for her final season, providing stability and experience. Jeremiah Small, a second-year diver, continues to develop into a strong contributor, showing that the Black Bears are set to be competitive on the board as in the pool.

Fans can expect fast races, relay finishes and standout performances as the season unfolds. The Black Bears are officially back, and the pool is ready for another year of competitive action. They will prepare for next week's meet against Maine Maritime Academy.

UMaine defender Rebecca Grisdale looks for an open teammate. PHOTO BY OWEN BULMER

UMaine Women's Soccer Ties Bryant in Home Opener

BY AMANDA CLAUZEL

CONTINUED FROM COVER

On Oct. 2, The University of Maine women's soccer team fought for 90 minutes against the Bryant Bulldogs that resulted in a 1-1 tie for the first-ever collegiate contest at the New Balance Soccer Complex. The one point earned now puts the Black Bears 1-0-1 overall in conference play.

Before the whistle blew, fans gathered with the Dirigo Union supporters club from the Portland Hearts of Pine official supporters club. The UMaine president, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, presented the official game day ball for the first match on the new pitch. People more than exceeded the 525 stand capacity limit, gathering everywhere possible. The electric atmosphere along with the drums from the supporters club and blue smoke bombs put a buzz throughout the air that gave a new energy to the team.

> **"Life is short. This is a great opportunity for us to get out there and do something we love to do,"**

said head coach Scott Atherley.

> **"We're surrounded by the best people in the world."**

The Black Bears ran with this energy and came out flying, scoring the first goal in just under three minutes from the second-year fullback, Hilary Washington. For her first career goal, Washington got the ball from second-year forward Emma Nicholson, her second assist of the season, and drove into the wide space 20 yards from goal and cracked a shot to the far left post. The golazo later made a feature on sportcenter's top 10 plays of the week at number four. UMaine was able to secure a 1-0 lead at the end of the first half, out shooting Bryant by 6-2 and kept the majority of possession.

Bryant forward Samantha Zaslaw watches field. PHOTO BY OWEN BULMER

Once the second half kicked off, Maine was still able to hang on to the lead until the Bulldogs scored in the 68th minute from a loose ball off of a corner kick. Still, the Black Bears battled and searched for that game winning goal, getting an extra 12 shots in the last 30 minutes.

Almost the entire second half was in the Bulldog's territory with threatening crosses, but not enough shots on target. Unable to find the back of the net, the final whistle blew and ended the match at 1-1.

First-year goalkeeper Elena Barenberg only had to make two saves and moved to 1-1-1 on the year. Washington and fourth-year captain Rebecca Grisdale were the only players to play the full 90 minutes as security in the backline for the Black Bears.

The Black Bears have a quick turn around and will now face Binghamton at 12 p.m on Sunday, Oct. 5 at the Bearcats Sports Complex. The game will be streamed on ESPN+ as well as the America East network. A win over the Bearcats could mean that Maine will secure first place in the conference and get an advantage over the other teams.

The performative mascs wait in line for their judgment on Friday, Oct 3, 2025 on the University of Maine Mall, Orono, Maine. PHOTO BY TYLER BRIDGES

Triota hosts performative masc competition

CONTINUED FROM COVER

BY QUINN D'ALESSIO

When asked what it means to be a performative "masc," Rapoport said: "Well, I'm a performative masc, but a performative male does this just to get women. A performative masc does this because this is what's in her heart, which she believes is right. A performative male does this just because they want p*ssy, right? But a performative masc is doing this purely because they want to better the world of all lesbians around them."

This statement brings even more nuance to the situation; what's the difference between a performative male and a performative masc? Well, according to Rapoport, it is all about intention. A performative male doesn't care about actually empowering women, but rather tricking women into liking them. As Mahalie Chang stated for GQ magazine, a performative male "is doing his mating dance, puffing out his feathers, in pursuit of female attention."

In contrast, according to our winner, a performative masc is there to support women without ulterior motives.

The controversy doesn't end there. Inherent to this topic is a discussion on morality and sustainably. A must-have for many performative individuals is their trusty Labubu: a popular stuffed animal keychain sold by Popmart, a Chinese toy company. However, critics argue that these toys miss the mark on being performative.

> **"I think I won maybe because of my anti-Labubu speech, because I am a marine science major, and I care for the environment,"**

said Rapoport. They are referencing the fact that the making of Labubus not only involves unsustainable materials and international shipping methods, but is made by a company that workers complain doesn't uphold basic human rights.

In a review posted on Indeed an ex-employee wrote: "This company, unfortunately, falls short of providing a satisfactory work environment. While the colleagues are friendly and supportive, numerous challenges persist ... Violations of labor laws, card revocations, and inadequate communication about overtime further contribute to an unfavorable work atmosphere."

On Glassdoor, another popular job search website, the company boasts a 2.3 out of 5 star rating. Comments under this include "wrongful termination and hostile work environment," "overworked and underappreciated," and "poor management and employee treatment."

So, being a performative male was never about truly caring about progressive causes, but rather giving the air that you do. But maybe this competition was no different. After all, the voting wasn't totally up to the students. The flyer suggested that the winner would be "UMaine's Ultimate Performative Masc," yet the winner was chosen through a nomination process, a not-so-democratic method. To better understand the nuance of this situation, students in the audience were asked how they felt about the way in which the winner was decided.

"I think it kind of sucked a little bit. I was coming here thinking that audience participation mattered a little bit more because like I said, I think a lot of people didn't get the chance to be in the top three who should have been," said Abby Caruso, international affairs student at UMaine.

To see what the participants thought, the winner was asked their thoughts. "I say we should have let all the people in the crowd vote, but I understand it could have been a little hectic. I think the organizers did the best they could, but maybe if this is an annual thing, maybe next year we can involve the crowd a little bit more," said Rapoport.

A number of students did not find the voting very democratic, making this event no less performative than the masc who won. Yet, perhaps that's the very point. As Alex Michaelides astutely put in his book The Fury, "I often think life is just a performance. None of this is real. It's a pretense at reality, that's all. Only when someone, or something, we love dies, do we wake up from the play — and see how artificial it all is — this constructed reality we inhabit."

And I think even more punctually did one of the student audience members capture this theme; "I don't know if it was that fair, but at the end of the day, it is a performative male contest, so does it really matter? No," said Mazy Karuzis, environmental science student at UMaine.

So maybe, after all this, the true winners of the performative masc competition were those who are able to come to such an event and simply enjoy the inherent beauty of the unseriousness of life.

Climbing to New Heights: a Maine Bound feature

BY BENJAMIN LOCKETT

If you have a love of the outdoors or rockclimbing, you have to give Maine Bound Adventure Center a try.

Maine Bound Adventure Center is the University of Maine's comprehensive outdoor program. They provide rental equipment for camping, whitewater rafting and other outdoor activities. Their program also offers trips where they take students to activities outdoors. Inside their facility, they provide a rock climbing wall with the option of lessons and instruct team bonding courses for students and faculty.

UMaine is known for its beautiful campus and surrounding woodland areas. Maine Bound's mission is to promote and provide opportunities to exercise and explore the outdoors.

Kaisie Malcom, a third-year chemical engineering student, was forced to attend one of their team bonding challenge courses as a freshman. He quickly fell in love with the program and wanted to try more. "I showed up to Maine Bound to rock climb, and I sucked at it, but the staff helped me out all day... later in the year it was at a point where I was going six days a week," said Malcom.

The love of rock climbing wasn't the only thing that kept him going so frequently — Malcom was also developing meaningful relationships with other climbers. "I made a lot of friends through rock climbing and Maine Bound, that I otherwise wouldn't have met. I would get to know people by being stuck on the same bouldering problem and asking for tips, and then the conversation would go from there," said Malcom.

Midway through his second-year, Maine Bound was hiring and Malcom was not going to let this opportunity go to waste. He prepared a presentation for fishing, demonstrating how to prepare and use lures. Shortly after the interview process, Malcom was notified that he got the job.

He now works as a climbing wall instructor and at the front desk. At the beginning of this academic year, Malcom got the chance to have a full circle moment. "So, this year I got the chance to be an instructor for the freshman engineering team bonding challenge. It was really cool getting to be on the other side of that," said Malcom.

The first Maine Bound new student orientation trip was in 1984. They have been providing these amazing services for over 40 years and are a staple of UMaine.

Maine Bound Adventure Center is located on campus by the union and is open everyday of the week. Make sure to check out their hours and give it a shot. Your first time renting rock climbing shoes is free, so you have nothing to lose.