

The Hermon CONNECTION



Vol. 33 Issue 1 - January 2026

Updates • News • Events • Information

HERMON LEGEND: TERRY STAIRS

Article & Photo Submitted by: Barbara Sargent, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools



For half a century, the familiar face of Terry Stairs has been a comforting sight for generations of Hermon students. This beloved bus driver recently celebrated an incredible milestone: 50 years of dedicated service to the Hermon School Department.

Stairs' unwavering commitment to his job goes far beyond just driving a bus. For five decades, he has been an integral part of the community, ensuring the safe passage of countless children to and from school. Terry is known for his friendly demeanor, his genuine care for each child, and his ability to make even the earliest morning commute a little brighter.

Over the years, Stairs has seen children grow into adults, and then transport their own children to school. He's been a constant presence and a friendly face that many Hermon residents associate with their school years. His dedication is a testament to his character, demonstrating a profound sense of responsibility for his community and its children.

Here's to Terry Stairs, a true Hermon legend, and to many more safe journeys on the road ahead.

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If you have a news story or article for publication in the next edition of The Hermon Connection, please send it to: ouellettel@hermonmaine.gov
Deadline for submissions: February 20, 2026
Next Edition will be published mid-March

Message from the Town Manager

Greetings to the Residents and Businesses of Hermon,

Happy New Year! As we look ahead to 2026, there are many opportunities for both the Town and the School Department, along with a full calendar of events for residents to enjoy throughout the year.

Budget season is now underway. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will be presented at the January Town Council meeting, followed this spring by consideration of the municipal and school operating budgets. The Penobscot County budget impact has not yet been finalized; however, I do anticipate a higher increase in our assessment compared to last year. Town staff and I are working diligently to finalize the operational budget while maintaining responsible financial planning.

The Capital Improvement Plan being presented outlines the next five years, with an additional overview extending out to 15 years. This plan reflects all anticipated funding sources, equipment, facilities, and reserve needs necessary to support the community's long-term operations. The itemized projects included are the result of discussions with all departments and represent identified needs at this time; however, the list may not be all-inclusive. A key focus of the CIP is to highlight future requirements and emphasize the importance of saving through reserves to help reduce the need for loans or bonds. While the Town and School may still require financing in the future, this planning process helps determine financial impacts.

Please continue to follow the Town's website, Facebook page, and other social media platforms for information on upcoming events and important updates.

As always, I encourage everyone to stay safe and make the most of the season in **A Great Little Town in the Heart of Maine to Live, Work, and Play.**

Stephen Fields, PSHRA-SCP
Town Manager

A NOTE TO OUR READERS...

For a long time, The Hermon Connection has been a way for the Town of Hermon to share updates, stories, and announcements from across our community. We appreciate the contributions from town departments, residents, and local businesses who help make each issue informative and engaging.

Effective July 2026, The Hermon Connection will transition from a bi-monthly publication to a quarterly schedule, with issues released four times per year: Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring. This change will allow us to better manage production while continuing to provide timely and meaningful information to our residents.

We remain committed to keeping the community informed and connected, and we thank you for your continued support and participation.

New Connection Deadlines:

Fall 2026 - Deadline is August 1, Published early September
Winter 2026/27 - Deadline is November 1, Published early December
Spring 2027 - Deadline is February 1, Published early March
Summer 2027 - Deadline is May 1, Published early June





Hermon Recreation

DONATE A DRESS. CREATE A MEMORY.

Help make the 2026 Daughter Dance special for local families
We are accepting clean, gently used formal dresses, all sizes!

Donations collected at the Hermon Town Office!

DRESS BOUTIQUE NIGHT, 2/6/26

Families are invited to browse, try on and select a gently worn dress for the upcoming Daughter Dance—no exchange required.

Refreshments and giveaways included!

Friday, February 6 at the Council Chambers

DAUGHTER DANCE, 2/15/26

All daughters and a guest are welcome to attend our well-loved annual event filled with dancing, fun & refreshments! Due to the popularity of the event, it is offered at both 3-5pm and 6-8pm.

Sunday, February 15 at Morgan Hill Event Center

Article & Photo Submitted by: C/2LT Nanette Holmes

greeted guests, supported operations, and spoke at the event, while three color guards participated in the massing of the colors outside the school. In addition to greeting and supporting attendees, Battalion Commander Aubrey Searway, spoke and served as the Master of Ceremonies. Executive Officer Mikel Verrill, and Command Sergeant Major Jacob Hulbert, laid a wreath during the ceremony. Cadets wore their dress blue uniforms to honor our fallen soldiers and to welcome the Gold Star Families in attendance. To further honor these families, a challenge-coin exchange was held between Gold Star Families and sixteen JROTC cadets. JROTC as a whole is incredibly grateful to have had the privilege of hosting this ceremony and deeply honored by the opportunity to recognize the Gold Star Families, and first responders taking part in the convoy headed to Arlington Cemetery in Washington DC. We are thankful for everyone who attended and for all who helped make this event possible. Thank you, Wreaths Across America for ensuring our fallen soldiers are never forgotten.



2026 UPCOMING ELECTIONS

March 2
Nomination papers available for Town Council and School Board

April 10
Nomination papers are due no later than today for Town Council and School Board

May 11
Absentee Ballots are available for voters – Municipal Election

June 9
Election Day – Municipal
Tuesday – Polls open 7:00am to 8:00pm, Hermon High School Gym

June 11
Annual Town Meeting
Thursday – 6:00pm at the Hermon High School Auditorium

Staying Warm This Winter

Article & Photo Submitted by: Senator Joseph Baldacci

Winter is here, and we've had several straight weeks of below-freezing temperatures with much more ahead. Heating systems and old insulation often struggle in these temperatures, meaning more electricity and heating oil is used and more money is spent. Fortunately, Bangor and Hermon residents have a number of options available to help them out during the coldest time of the year.

Penquis, our local community action program, and MaineHousing both provide home energy assistance program (HEAP) services. Through Penquis, these services can be found at <https://www.penquis.org/services/heating-utilities/>, or you can call their Bangor office at (207) 973-3500. Assistance through MaineHousing can be found on their [website](#) as well. Penquis also has several programs designed to make houses more energy efficient in the long-term, as well as an Energy Crisis Intervention Program for income-eligible households.

The City of Bangor and Town of Hermon also have General Assistance Funds available for income-eligible households that can help with necessities such as heating fuel. Bangor residents can call (207) 992-4528, and Hermon residents can call (207) 848-1010. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you are in need.

Finally, all Maine residents can call 211 for immediate referrals to heating assistance programs in the state.

I would highly encourage anyone who needs assistance – or who thinks they may be in need soon – to reach out to these programs as quickly as possible. Resources are limited this year and will be used up soon. For more information on these programs, and to stay up to date with ongoing events and legislation, subscribe to my newsletter at www.mainesenate.org. If I can be of assistance in any other way, please email me at Joe.Baldacci@legislature.maine.gov, or call my office at (207) 287-1515.

Get Town office closures, The Hermon Connection, news & more right to your email!



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Troubling allegations need thoughtful investigation

2026 Legislative Session Update with Rep. Jim Thorne, House District 35 - Carmel and Hermon

In the last edition of the Hermon Connection, I wrote about the importance of extending the benefits of the federal "Working Families tax Cut Act" to the Maine tax code. These provisions include elimination of taxes on tips and overtime pay, as well as an increasing the standard deduction—changes that will reduce the overall tax burden for working individuals. Legislative changes would also allow a new \$6,000 state deduction for seniors and a new deduction for car loan interest. This will be a priority of mine during the upcoming session which begins on January 7. Since I last wrote, serious allegations were raised before lawmakers and the media during a meeting of the Legislature's Government Oversight Committee. A former Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) employee, John Morin, who served as a license examiner for more than a decade from 2013 until April 2024, testified that foreign-language translators have been systematically cheating on Maine learner's permit exams on behalf of non-English-speaking applicants.

According to Mr. Morin, translators were not merely assisting with language translation, but were providing correct answers directly to test-takers, resulting in a reported 100 percent pass rate for applicants using certain private translators – compared to an overall pass rate of approximately 65-70 percent for all applicants.

He described what he referred to as "dirty permits" – licenses issued under conditions that he believes were unsafe and unlawful.

The whistleblower testified that he repeatedly raised concerns with supervisors and higher-level officials, only to be dismissed, ignored, or reprimanded. He stated that after formally reporting a cheating interpreter and referring the matter for criminal investigation, he himself was disciplined. Mr. Morin also provided the names of additional BMV examiners who he said could corroborate his claims, based on their experiences in offices across Portland, Kennebunk, Scarborough, and Lewiston.

These are troubling allegations that need a full, thoughtful investigation. If true, they also demand accountability because they go to the heart of public safety, fairness, and trust in government.

Republican members of the Legislature have called for a full and transparent investigation. People deserve confidence that fraud is not being committed to favor one group over another, and that the same laws, rules, and requirements apply equally to everyone.

Hopefully, by the time you read this, the Secretary of State's Office will have provided the requested information to the Government Oversight Committee and a thorough investigation will be underway. Regardless of the outcome, these claims must be examined openly and honestly. If you have any questions or want to share your thoughts, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at Jim.Thorne@legislature.maine.gov. It is truly an honor to serve the people of Carmel and Hermon (District 35) and the State of Maine.

Sincerely,
Jim Thorne



State Representative



TRACK & FIELD
COACH NEEDED

We are currently seeking a Head Coach for our Middle School Spring Track & Field program set to begin in April. For more information and how to apply, please contact Isaiah at marseille@hermonmaine.gov

The poster features a dark background with a blurred image of a track. On the left and right sides, there are blue 'H' logos with 'REC' written inside. The text 'TRACK & FIELD' is in large, bold, blue letters with a white outline, and 'COACH NEEDED' is in large, bold, white letters. Below this, a white text box contains the recruitment information.

53rd annual Dysart's Snowmobile Ride-in Weekend to benefit Pine Tree Camp

Article Submitted by: Breeze Kidder



It's time to rev your engines! The Dysart's Snowmobile Ride-in Weekend is just around the corner.

Thursday, January 29: Live WABI-TV5 Telethon and Dysart's Spaghetti Supper

Friday, January 30: Carmel Electric Auction at Morgan Hill Event Center

Saturday, January 31: Pine Tree Camp Celebrity Egg Ride

Sunday, February 1: Penobscot Snowmobile Club Radar Run

This year's roster of Celebrity Egg Riders includes:

- Ricky Craven, Former NASCAR Driver
- Jared "Jedi" Baker, *Maine Cabin Masters*
- Bob Crowley, *Survivor* Winner
- Ethan "Mainah Man" Levesque, Social Media Personality
- Meredith Steele, Social Media Personality
- Kelly "Downeast Cowboy" Hinkle, Social Media Personality
- Gage Nelson, Social Media Personality
- Jeremy Grant, Social Media Personality
- Josh Landry, Chainsaw Carving Artist
- Andy Witham, Penobscot Snowmobile Club
- Austin Witham, Penobscot Snowmobile Club
- Jenna Lawrence, SledME
- Jake Warn, SledTRX

Get involved! You can support Pine Tree Camp by:

- Becoming a sponsor
- Donating a silent or live auction item
- Nominating an Egg Rider
- Attending an event

Contact:

Breeze Kidder - 207-386-6033 - bkidder@pinetreesociety.org

Check out all the action here:

<https://pinetreesociety.org/dysarts-snowmobile-ride-in-to-benefit-pine-tree-camp/>

About Pine Tree Camp: Pine Tree Camp is an American Camp Association-accredited camp for people with disabilities. Every year, hundreds of Maine children and adults with disabilities experience freedom and independence by actively participating in outdoor activities thanks to Pine Tree Camp's 285-acre, fully-accessible campus on North Pond. *Since 1945, no camper has ever been turned away due to their ability to pay. All proceeds from the Ride-in Weekend directly benefit Pine Tree Camp's Open Door Fund.*

DOG LICENSES: 2026 DOG TAGS ARE AVAILABLE



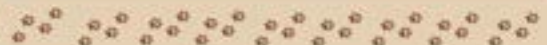
Residents who need vet care or rabies for their animals should make their appointments NOW for 2026 licensing. Information has been communicated by the State Vet Association that they are experiencing a vet shortage / lack of remote clinics and resources.

Please license your dog before January 31. The State of Maine demands a \$25.00 late fee for any dog renewal license after 1/31/2026.

Go to <http://bit.ly/3UWzln4> to license a previously registered dog or a new dog online from October 15, 2025 to January 31, 2026.

If you no longer have a dog to license, please let us know here at the Town Office at 848-1010 #3.

\$25 LATE FEE PER DOG WILL BE IN EFFECT AFTER 1/31/2026!



Hermon Fire Department Adds Ambulance to Emergency Services

Article Submitted by: Shelby Reynolds, Photos: Byron Ouellette

As of December 1, the Hermon Fire Department is officially operating its own ambulance, marking an exciting and important advancement for emergency services in our community.

This achievement was made possible through the strong support of Hermon residents, Town Leadership, and everyone who contributed to planning, funding, and preparing this new service. We extend our sincere thanks to the community for recognizing the value of this investment and standing behind the department every step of the way.

The Hermon Fire Department looks forward to providing this expanded service with dedication and pride.



Want to contribute to the *Hermon Connection*?

If you have an item of interest pertaining to the Town of Hermon we want to hear about it! Submitting an article in the Hermon Connection is a good way for residents and organizations to share stories of interest with the community. If you would like to submit an article, please email it to Lindsey Ouellette at ouellettel@hermonmaine.gov. In order for Hermon residents and/or organizations to submit articles to be published in the Connection, the following criteria must be met:

1. The person submitting the article must be a resident of the Town of Hermon.
2. The organization submitting the article must be located within Hermon's geographic boundaries.
3. The organization has a lawful purpose which does not pose a threat to public order, to the safety of the public, or to the safety of any individual.
4. The organization does not have its primary purpose marketing products or services or making a profit.

Please be aware that any articles and notices submitted by community members and community organizations may not contain offensive language, slander, advocate violence or unlawful activity, or pose a threat to public order or to persons or their reputation. When determining whether or not to submit an article, please be aware the deadlines for submission are approximately the 20th of February, April, June, August, October and December.

Once you have submitted your article, Town staff will be in contact with you to let you know if the article you submitted will be published. We look forward to hearing from you!

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The Hermon CONNECTION

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