

# Stearns Ink



J u n e I s s u e



Photo by Mia Lowery

## Millinocket's Community Garden Project

**MILLINOCKET** - The Community Garden was designed and developed by the Town of Millinocket Sustainability Committee. The Community Garden provides garden plots for individuals or groups who would like space to garden. The garden currently has tomatoes, kale, different types of peppers, and a variety of herbs. The garden project aims to bring people together in a fun, interactive way while providing knowledge about gardening. All ages and skill levels are welcome. If you would like to learn more about the Community Garden please email Brittany Grutter at [bgrutter@mrhme.org](mailto:bgrutter@mrhme.org).



Photo by Mia Lowery

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# Stearns Graduates 2022

By Isaac Hakes

**MILLINOCKET** - The class of 2022 wrapped up a tumultuous year with a grand graduation commencement ceremony. This exceptional class demonstrated extreme poise and perseverance during two years of COVID-19 disruptions, confusion, and chaos. They proudly walked down the aisle to make their last stop on the stage that has been a comforting solace for many. The emotions were high among family members and students. Not a sound was uttered as the emotional audience listened to each soon-to-be graduate's name being called; they watched as the Superintendent shook each hand for the last time, and presented the diplomas.

The class valedictorian, Mckenzie Friel, addressed the class and the audience with a brilliant speech laced with promise and bitter-sweet memories. She talked about the Class of 2022 experiences, the good and the not-so-good times, and she reminisced about how the lessons from her past four years have taught her many things that have helped her mature. The crowd intently listened, and before they knew it, the class of 2022 was turning their tassels from right to left, and it was over; they were all graduates. Congratulations to the Class of 2022! We know you will *all* make Stearns Junior-Senior High School proud!

This year's esteemed graduates are Julia Allen, Alisyn Alley, Makayla Anderson, Grace Bouchard, Damien Boyington, Shawn Clements, Gavin Darling, Dylan, Evans, Avery Farrington, Mackenzie Friel, Michael-Alexander Hakes, Logan Harmon, Jillian Harper, Alexander Jacobs, Ariana Jagodensky, Kasey Kenyon, Katlyn Marcin, Sean McGibbon, Samantha McGreevy, Katie McVey, Riley Moors, Amelia Morrison, Damien Oviedo, Emma Pelletier, Trista Stanley, and Rebecca Lynn Tash. It is important to note that 72% of these students graduated with honors and this class had a 100% graduation rate! Pretty impressive!



## Abigail Sanders Wins SkillsUSA Contest!

By Isaac Hakes

**MILLINOCKET** - The world is filled with many opportunities. The SkillsUSA competition is one of those opportunities that Abigail Sanders seized and won! Abigail is a Junior at the Stearns Jr/Sr High School; she is also an active student in the Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) Program at Region III in Lincoln, Maine.

The opportunity to join SkillsUSA arose earlier this year, and Abigail, of course, pursued it. SkillsUSA is a competition that is offered at the local and state level. She joined the competition for Medical Terminology during the local competition between multiple programs at Region III and won. She then moved on to the State competition. The competition was challenging, but she managed to win.

Abigail, along with a few other winners from different courses at Region III, will be attending a National competition in Georgia this spring. She also won the prestigious *All Cast* award for her theater performance in *Orphan Train* this year. Stearns High School and the rest of the RMA Program at Region III are proud of how far she has come in this competition and know she will make everyone proud! Good luck Abigail!



Additional information about SkillsUSA can be found at [https://www.skillsusa.org/search\\_gcse/](https://www.skillsusa.org/search_gcse/).



# Ava Andersen Wins Award!

By Isaac Hakes



Ava Anderson Photo Ms. Dwyer

## The Ladies Steal Sixth Grade Science Fair Awards

By Fiona Brown



Left - Fiona Brown, Mariah Frost, Gabriella Goodwin, Ava Pelkey, Ava Andersen, Center - Josie Doyle

**MILLINOCKET** - Congratulations to Ava Andersen for winning the 2021- 2022 Grand Lodge Americanism Program Essay Contest. The theme "What does it mean to love your country?" is near and dear to Ava's heart. She was awarded a plaque engraved with her essay, a personalized certificate, and \$100.00 cash prize for entry. Her essay was also featured in the Maine Elks Association April 20 - May 1, 2022 issue.

Ava's essay is below :

There are many ways you can show love for your country. But I think the most important way is to show respect to everyone in it. If nobody respects each other, living there wouldn't be fun. If you want to love the country you live in you'd probably want to know that the people there are kind and respectful. Just because people do things differently or look a bit different doesn't mean you have the right to say mean things, because you're different from them too and do things different from them.

Even if you're nice to everyone you can show more kindness by doing nice things for them. Like donating, paying for the people behind you, and any other ways you can help someone out. Even just doing one of these things makes a difference and may influence people.

Other important ways that you can show love for your country is by respecting the military, joining the military, and helping the environment that you live in. But again the most important way to show love for your country is to show love to the people living in it.

**MILLINOCKET** - The annual sixth-grade Science Fair was back after a two year hiatus due to Covid. The students chose a scientific topic to research and used the scientific method to conduct experiments to test their hypotheses. Students then designed a trifold that showcased their projects. A panel of esteemed judges from the science community choose the top six experiments. They were awarded a certificate and trophy. Below is a list of the top six experiments and their inventors:

1st Place: Ava Andersen	Project title: Paper Speaker
2nd Place: Fiona Brown	Project title: Turning Old Paper New
3rd Place: Gabriella Goodwin	Project title: Sugar Dissolving
4th Place: Josie Doyel	Project title: Eggs in Substances
5th Place: Natelee Allen	Project title: Salty Ice
6th Place: Mariah Frost	Project title: Speedy Raft

# Reactions on an Amazing Career

By Doug Kranich



I never intended to be a teacher.

As June and the end of my teaching career nears, I felt compelled to think back and savor some highlights of my experience. Despite my original intentions of not teaching, I have enjoyed an amazing, fulfilling teaching career in the Millinocket School System. Below are some memorable career highlights.

**Teaching my own three kids....and more.** I loved teaching all three of my children in my 7th grade science classrooms. I have been the sole 7th grade science teacher in Millinocket since 1995, so the only science option was their father. They got to see their dad at work and I remember that they all earned 'A's' in every quarter. No one ever questioned it.

Teaching in a small school district containing my own children had one surprise I never had thought about before. Two of my previous students are now my son and daughter in law! In addition, I have surely taught several hundred children whose parents I also taught. I've even taught three GRANDCHILDREN of previous students!

**Teaching next to my son Greg for two years (2009 & 2010).** The two Kranich's worked together in the 'Kranich Wing' of Stearns Jr High. It was my son's first teaching job and it was in the classroom next to mine. Every day, we communicated about teaching. Hopefully I helped him along the way and I know he helped me, especially with technology.

**Living close to two schools.** As a child growing up in Illinois, I enjoyed living within easy walking distance of all my schools. It is a simple pleasure that I have also enjoyed living and teaching in Millinocket. The first thirteen years of teaching, I lived four blocks from the Millinocket Middle School (original Stearns High School). When we vacated that building in the summer of 1998, operations moved to Stearns High School, so it cut my commute in half!!!! I can't tell you how many times I've run home from school to retrieve something I forgot, simply because I could.

**Togue Pond 7th grade field trips.** During my first year of teaching (1986-87), fellow 7th grade teachers (including our previous supt. Frank Boynton) were organizing the first ever field trip to Lower Togue Pond and I was included. Since then, I have been fortunate to be a part of those 7th grade field trips every year since, 35 years in a row. Those field trips were awesome days in an awesome place. Ask any past 7th grader to remember a 7th grade highlight and they will probably tell you about the "Togue Pond field trips."

**Teaching with Iguanas and animals in the classroom.** In spring of 1992, I obtained a pair of yearling iguanas from a UMaine student for my science classroom. Never could I have imagined what was going to happen and that they were going to have an impact upon the rest of my teaching career. I housed them together but I never expected them to breed. They had other ideas and produced fertile eggs that hatched in June 1994.

After deciding that it was truly 'story worthy,' I began a two-year process resulting in my first magazine article ever being published in the spring 1996. That began my interest in writing seriously and it led to the two books I published in the past few months. That event also helped inspire my Herpetology Lab.

**Herpetology lab.** In the spring of 2007, my Middle School principal Jed Petsinger approached me and asked if I would like to begin an 'exploration lab' the following fall. I responded "Sure.....what is it?" He answered with the following criteria: a) 'hands on', b) generate enthusiasm in math and science, and c) be totally contained in the classroom with no homework.

It sounded great but I had no idea what I would do. That summer, when my snake eggs were hatching at home from my own reptile breeding stock, it occurred to me that maybe this was a potential 'Exploration Lab'. Hmmmm. I could create a lab where the students raised hatchling snakes in my classroom. It seemed crazy,



# Reactions on an Amazing Career (Continued)

By Doug Kranich

to me but I had to give it a try. When I returned to school later that month, the first question Mr Petsinger asked me was “do you have an exploration lab planned?” I replied “yes! I’m going to have my students raise corn snakes in a herpetology lab.” There was an awkward silence, which he finally broke with “really.....?” And so Herpetology Lab was born and has been going strong for 15 years!

**Outdoor Education.** In the fall of 2004, our Middle School principal wrote an epic ‘after-school’ grant, which allowed us to purchase four canoes, twenty kayaks, and twenty sets of XC skis, boots and poles. Little did I know that it would change the course of my next twenty years.

The first fall we had the equipment, I took the lead and immediately began to coordinate use of the boats after school. It was popular and many students enjoyed float time on Millinocket Stream, right out our school’s door. I did that for several years. In 2010, another teacher and I were assigned to team teach an 8th grade outdoor ed class during school, a first. After that year, I was assigned outdoor ed as a regularly-scheduled elective for 8th graders. Getting hundreds of students on skis, bikes, and kayaks has been the absolute joy of my job.

**Expeditions to Peru and a Symposium in Costa Rica.** In 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016, the unimaginable happened. In each of those years, my school system granted professional time for me to leave my classroom and travel the world.

The first three years represented three separate, two-week Amazon expeditions in Peru during January. The last represents attending a 5-day International Herpetological Symposium in Costa Rica during September.

For the three Amazon expeditions, I cruised the Amazon River and explored the rainforest with some world-renowned reptile experts. Each time I returned, I was able to write newspaper articles describing my experiences. My classes came alive with jungle stories and pictures.

The Costa Rica trip was the result of an invitation by a Reptiles magazine representative to be a symposium presenter. I was honored to share the story of how my 7th grade Herpetology Lab came about, to describe the curriculum I’d created, and to show samples of student work.

**Great administration support.** In addition to my regular core class assignments, I have been allowed to pursue my personal passions, (mainly my loves of the outdoors and reptiles) throughout my career. I am thankful for having an administration that has always been supportive.

**Great teaching colleagues.** The same could be said for the several dozen great teachers I have worked with over my career. I am thankful for the opportunity to teach with so many great individuals. My skills and teaching roles have been treated with respect. I have felt valued as a team member, which has always been a great motivator to do my best. I benefitted greatly from teaching side by side with teachers of great skill, especially during our two COVID years. For the past five years, our 7-8 team of Mr Leathers, Ms. Girsu and Ms. Loomer has been the best group I have ever worked with.

**Great students.** It is safe to say that being associated with several thousand great 7th and 8th graders has been the ‘best.’ I have had many opportunities to move into the high school teaching ranks but have always stayed with my middle school/junior high assignment. It has been great to watch my previous students mature in high school and continue to higher education. I always take a little credit when I hear about former students that have chosen careers in the science field.

As I reflected on this writing, it was amazing to realize all that my school district had done for me over the years. It has been an honor to teach in Millinocket. I am thankful for the many opportunities I have been given to pursue my passions at school. I’m glad I decided to teach.



# Togue Pond 7th & 8th Grade 2022 Field Trip!

Oh the places we will go! By Anonymous



Photo Mr. Kranich - Fishing with Mr Graham Goulette and Jeff Murphy devoted fishery biologist volunteers who shared their time and expertise with the groups.



Photo Mr. Leathers - A couple of savvy Kayakers enjoying the day as they approach the island.



Photo Mr. Kranich - Students take a moment to pose for a photo before embarking on their return trip.



Photo Mr. Kranich - Students examining possible river monsters hoping to out catch Jeremy Wade!



Photo Ms. Dwyer - Team building challenge; now that's thinking out of the box!



Photo Mr. Leathers - Students listening *intently* to instructions for their challenge from Barry Dana former Penobscot Chief.





(Photo by: Getty Images)

## Historical Theater Class Remembers Anne Frank

By Ms. Dwyer

**MILLINOCKET** - The Historical Theater class has been working on a One-Act interpretation of The Diary of Anne Frank for the past four months. Their original intention was to perform the play live; however, due to time restraints, they decided to use their newfound podcasting skills to produce the play in a Podcast format. The cast is Anne Frank - Ariana Brittin, Mr. Frank - Clay Brittin, Narrator - Kevlin Goulet, Miep Geis - Kevlin Goulet, Mr. Van Daan - Michael Bragdon, Peter and Mr. Dussel - Bentley Fortune, Margot Frank - Rylee Davis, Mrs. Van Daan - Lily Archibald - Mrs. Frank - Lelia Brown, and sound effects were done by Aleah Wilcox.

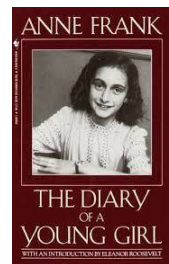
Anne Frank was a young Jewish girl who went into hiding with her family and four others during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. Adolf Hitler led this totalitarian regime. During this time, Jewish and other groups of not German people were targeted and placed in concentration camps. They were eventually worked to death, starved, or killed. This horrific event is called the Holocaust.

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jewish men, women, and children by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. The Nazis, who

came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed Germans were "racially superior" and wanted to create a "racially pure" state. Jews, deemed "inferior," were considered an alien threat to the so-called German racial community (The Holocaust Museum, 2022).

Mr. Frank, Anne's father, was the only survivor of the eight people who hid in the Secret Annex. Miep Gies and Bep Voskuijl, who worked in the factory below the Secret Annex and helped the members in hiding, found Anne's diary. Anne kept her diary during her two years in hiding, chronicling the groups' daily events, her thoughts, and dreams. Miep gave it to Mr. Frank after the war when the two met at the Secret Annex. Mr. Frank allowed for its publication in 1947.

*The Diary of Anne Frank* has sold more than 30 million copies and is required reading in many schools. Anne's diary has been translated into more than 70 languages. The Historical Theater class embarked on this journey into the past as part of their studies. They studied the Holocaust and the German government's manipulation and creation of laws designed to persecute and exterminate the Jewish people and other groups that Hitler deemed unworthy. It was a difficult journey into the past; however, remembering allows for all those who perished not to be forgotten. Anne's words, "In spite of everything, I still believe people are truly good at heart" (Frank, Anne, 1967). It reminds us that there is good in the world; however, we must choose to see it. Please use this link to listen to the Historical Theater's One Act Podcast.



Thanks to Mrs. Loomer for teaching Podcasting and Cody Clinton for purchasing the Podcasting equipment. Together we will not forget those who suffered the atrocities of the Holocaust. Their voices will live on through us as we remember them.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Anne-Frank>



# WORLD NEWS

## SILENT CROSSES

By Isaac Hakes

**Uvalde Texas** - "I was scared of what my last words would be." This statement came from 10-year-old Khloe Torres, a survivor of the Robb Elementary school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, on May 24th, 2022, when an 18-year-old, Salvador Rolando Ramos, fatally shot 19 elementary students and two teachers two days before the end of their school year. Sadly, this school shooting is only 1 of the 22 in 2022 alone. Police arrived on the scene, and after an hour, they shot and killed Salvador Ramos, ending the active threat.

Since this shooting has taken place, many Americans have been in an uproar about school safety and gun laws; asking how an 18-year-old could legally buy a large amount of assault rifles and ammunition without anyone batting an eye. Congress has claimed that they are looking into possible solutions to this tragic recurring problem for the past 23 years. However mass shootings at schools continue; since the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, 311,000 students at 331 schools have experienced school violence, and irreversible trauma. According to the *Washington Post*, children who witness the violence or cower behind locked doors to hide from it can be profoundly and irreversibly traumatized" (Cox, Rich, Chiu, Thacker, Chong, and Muyskens, 2022).

Unfortunately, questions that plague today's American students are "Am I safe at school?" or "What would I do if someone started shooting at my school?" Sadly, this is what students have to worry about when they step into their school buildings, which are supposed to be safe spaces.

However, schools can be safe spaces. Many different safety additions can be added to the school systems in America. A few of these additions are metal detectors that can locate guns or bombs in students' backpacks, safety teams on the school grounds or campuses, intense lock-down preparation to better prepare students for intruders, and armed resource officers are a few proactive steps that some schools are implementing. It is frightening that we now have to take such drastic measures to ensure that our schools are safe, and if these measures are working, why are school shootings still occurring?

The argument is guns don't kill people, people kill



Photo The Washington Post

people, and for 23 years, we have abided by this school of thought, and the death toll has risen. Perhaps it is time to revisit our gun laws.

Does an 18-year-old need to own assault weapons? Body armor? Enough ammunition to kill hundreds? Raising the age to purchase a gun from 18 to 21 would be an effective way to counter this violence, as the median age of a school shooter is 16, according to an article in the *Washington Post* (Cox et al., 2022).

So, how safe is your school system? If you don't know the answer to this question, it's probably not safe enough.