



# Gardiner at a Glance: The way summer should be

## Main Street plans full program of events

BY JULIE SENK  
Main Street Gardiner  
Special to Gardiner at a Glance

From the moment one enters Maine, it's clear, "this is the way life should be." And with its amazing food scene, spectacular outdoor festivals and endless scenery, summer in Maine is the way summer should be.

With the temperature rising steadily, one can practically taste the beach-side barbecues, envision lakeside sunsets from the porch and hear the crackling of a campfire and the laughter of friends late into the night.

Like the rest of us, Gardiner is also gearing up for the summer season.

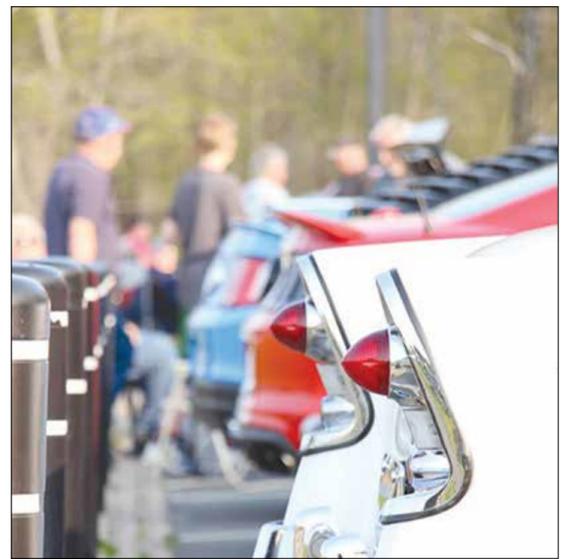
Tucked between the mountains and the coast, Gardiner is a small city with a purpose — one of revitalizing the downtown area through the efforts of the city and the creation of the Gardiner Main Street. Formed in the early 2000s, the organization's main goal is to strengthen the cultural and economic livelihood of the town.

Gardiner is now kicking off a series of events that celebrate what lies at the heart of every thriving small town: a strong and vibrant community.

And like every community, the Gardiner River Festival, brought to you by U.S. Cellular, on June 18, is an event that contains multitudes — live music throughout the day, a craft fair situated on historic Water Street and interactive "field day" activities for all ages. Maybe you wish to see what your future holds? Get your tarot cards read at the



Some of the events planned for this summer at the Gardiner Waterfront are free waterfront concerts, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., June 17 through August 26, and the Classic Car Cruise Ins, from 5 to 7 p.m., Thursdays May through September.



Gardiner River Festival. Still feeling sluggish after a long Maine winter? Stretch out with some yoga at the Waterfront. Do you love Twister but wish your entire extended family could get in on the fun? Bring them all to the Giant Lawn Twister Game.

The event extends to the Gardiner Waterfront Park, so don't miss the free boat rides on the Kennebec River, as well as a variety of tasty food vendors and plenty of crafts and games. Be sure to stick around for the Gardiner Federal Credit Union

Fireworks show, which will get the summer started with a literal bang.

And the band will play on. With a starting lineup of Muddy Ruckus at the Gardiner Waterfront Park on June 17, free concerts will be brought by Pyro City Fireworks & Johnson Hall every Friday evening from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. through the end of August. Come see Maine's very own Pete Kilpatrick Band on July 8, or listen to some bluegrass and watch the boats go by with Jerks of Grass on July 15. Re-

member to check the calendar of events to see some of the other great musicians who will be stopping by the waterfront this summer.

Have an interest in vintage cars? Gardiner does too. Paired with local food and music, the Gardiner Waterfront Park is once again the place to be every Thursday night from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Classic Car Cruise-In. This is a great time for car enthusiasts to marvel at Thunderbirds or Studebakers while also enjoying tasty provisions contributed by

Central Maine Meats, one of the Cruise-In's sponsors.

For a relaxing and informative cultural stroll, the historic Water Street will be hosting ArtWalk Gardiner on Friday, Aug. 5. This event showcases the cultural and artistic integrity that thrives in Gardiner and will feature exhibitions by prominent local artists. And don't forget to take a moment between appreciating hand-crafted ceramics and fine art prints to marvel at the stunning 19th century architecture that lines Water Street.

Some might say with all the events happening in Gardiner, summer here is an embarrassment of riches. But we're OK with that. After all, it's the way summer should be! Gardiner Main Street's calendar of events will carry into the fall, straight through to 2017, offering everyone a chance to take part in the culture and spirit of a small town that continues to make history. For more information about these and other events coming up in Gardiner, visit [www.gardiner-mainstreet.org](http://www.gardiner-mainstreet.org).

### GARDINER 2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**June 1: FaceTime Social Networking**, 5 to 7 p.m., Crooked Halo Cider House, 46 Church St.

**June 4: Maine Event Comedy**, 7:30 p.m., Johnson Hall, 280 Water St.

**June 17: Free Waterfront Concert:** Muddy Ruckus, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Followed by fireworks, Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**June 18: Greater Gardiner River Festival**, all day downtown event on Water Street & Waterfront Park.

**July 1: Free Waterfront Concert:** Lexi James, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**July 6: FaceTime Social Networking**, 5 to 7 p.m. Johnson Hall, 280 Water St.

**July 8: Free Waterfront Concert:** Pete Kilpatrick Band, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**July 15: Free Waterfront Concert:** Jerks of Grass, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**July 22: Free Waterfront Concert:** Inanna, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**July 29: Free Waterfront Concert:** Ale House String Band, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**Aug. 3: FaceTime Social Networking**, 5 to 7 p.m., Zardus Art Of Massage & Wellness Spa, 1 Lincoln Ave.

**Aug.5: Gardiner Artwalk** – Inside downtown Gardiner businesses, 5:30 to 8 p.m.

**Aug. 5: Free Waterfront Concert**, The Gawler Family, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**Aug. 12: Free Waterfront Concert**, Bishop Avenue, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**Aug. 19: Free Waterfront Concert**, Sassquatch, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**Aug. 26: Free Waterfront Concert**, Half Moon Jug Band, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**Sept. 7: FaceTime Social Networking**, 5:00 to 7:00 pm, Spruce It Up Services, 307 Water St.

**Sept. 10: Barks in the Park**, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**Oct. 5: FaceTime Social Networking**, 5 to 7 p.m., The Stone Turret Bed & Breakfast, 17 Lincoln Ave.

**Oct. 8: Swine & Stein Oktoberfest** 11:30 am to 6:30 p.m., Water Street.

**Oct. 28: Children's Downtown Trick Or Treating** 3 to 5 p.m., along Water Street.

**Nov. 2: FaceTime Social Networking**, 5 to 7 p.m., Gardiner Federal Credit Union, 420 Brunswick Ave.

**Nov. 5: Early Bird Sale in Downtown Gardiner**, 6 to 10 a.m.

**Nov. 26: Small Business Saturday.**

**Dec. 1: Downtown Tree Lighting**, Johnson Park, next to Johnson Hall, 5 to 6 p.m.

**Dec. 3: Parade Of Lights**, along Water Street through downtown, 4:30 p.m.

**Dec. 7: FaceTime Social Networking**, 5 to 7 p.m., Location TBA.

### ONGOING

**Open Mic: Every Tuesday**, 5 to 8 p.m., Niche Inc., 289 Water St.

**Classic Car Cruise In:** Thursdays May – September from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Gardiner Waterfront Park.

**Gardiner Summer Farmers Market:** Wednesdays June -October from 3 to 6:30 p.m. at the Gardiner Common.

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In its downtown Gardiner storefront windows, Pooch's 2nd Hand Shop volunteers display a rotating sample of the assortment of vintage, antique and unique items for sale, with 100 percent of the proceeds to benefit animals in need at local shelters and rescue organizations.



# Pooch's Second Hand Shop gives back

## Profits support animals in need

BY NANCY P. MCGINNIS  
Correspondent

What's better than finding antique, vintage and/or unique items for your own home or a gift, all at a great price — it could be knowing that your purchase supports animals in need in your own community or one nearby.

Since opening its doors in November of 2012, Pooch's 2nd Hand Shop has donated more than \$33,000 to local animal shelters and rescue agencies.

"It's all because of our customers, and we couldn't do it without our volunteers," said Bethany Rackliff, owner of the shop located at 307 Water Street in downtown Gardiner. "After we pay our rent, insurance and the electric bill, every penny taken in is turned over to organizations like the Kennebec Valley Humane Society and PALS, and others in central Maine and beyond."

Pooch's ever-changing inventory — mostly donated, some on consignment — includes furniture, home décor, kitchen items, linens, jewelry, accessories, toys, tools, books and artwork.

"We look for high-end items and price everything fairly," said Rackliff, who depends on a handful of animal-loving volunteers, including her own parents, Charlene and Paul Rackliff, to keep the shop operating. To maximize the potential contribution to animals in need, no one, including Bethany Rackliff, is



Nancy P. McGinnis photos

On a recent visit to the shop, Pooch's volunteers Phyllis Doyle and Gail Schroeder (in blue) show off a maple dining table and a set of Queen Anne chairs.

Left, Chia, a neighbor dog, often volunteers as the store greeter.

on the payroll.

The business actually started in 2010 "out of my parents' garage in Vassalboro," said Rackliff, who makes a living as director of Wholistic Home Care of Maine, a Gardiner-based, state-licensed home care agency for the elderly and disabled.

Paul and Charlene Rackliff have encouraged and supported their daughter's efforts from the start.

"I got the idea while I was volunteering for rescues and (became) very aware of their ongoing struggles for operating funds to stay afloat," she explained. "I knew I couldn't personally take in any more than the six rescued pets I already had, and I already gave as much money as I could, so I wanted to find another way to help."

Bethany Rackliff realized there were many others who shared her

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BETHANY RACKLIFF, OWNER OF POOCH'S 2ND HAND SHOP



love of thrift-shopping, recycling and repurposing, as well as animal lovers and simply folks with limited budgets. When the former Henry Penny shop became available with its large storefront display space, and the City of Gardiner offered assistance, Rackliff seized the opportunity.

In addition to its retail sales, the shop distributes information on adoptable animals and occasionally hosts special rescue/shelter events. They participate each year at Gardiner's Barks in the Park gathering, offering refreshments for sale with all proceeds benefiting local shelters. Pooch's 2nd

Hand Shop has a Facebook page that announces upcoming events, and also spotlights some new arrivals offered for sale; it also shares clever ideas for repurposing and DIY projects.

Pooch's is named in honor of the memory of a little stray Corgi-Chihuahua mix who "showed up in my life just when I needed him," Rackliff said. He wandered up to her in a parking lot a decade ago, two days before she was set to head out of state on her own. "I think we were both feeling scared and lonely. Since no one claimed him, he traveled with me to Florida and became my best

friend for life." Animals are important, according to Rackliff.

"It's so important to build awareness of animals in need in our community," said Rackliff, currently a "foster failure" mom to five rescued dogs and two cats. "I really want to spread the word that all of our proceeds go to the shelters."

Rackliff is proud of Pooch's volunteers and thankful to all her clientele, many of them loyal repeat customers who have helped her transform her personal mission into a continuing community success story.

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# Johnson Hall continues to undergo renovations

## Patrons come from as far away as Canada

BY NANCY P. MCGINNIS  
Correspondent

Officially, the mission of Johnson Hall is “to promote, create and inspire artistic excellence through the presentation of world-class entertainment and professional performing arts education,” driving cultural and economic growth for the greater Gardiner community in the process.

What this means to audiences is “you won’t want to miss this!”

Built in 1864, hotelier Benjamin Johnson’s converted livery stable, now known as Johnson Hall, is billed as the oldest Opera House in Maine. Michael Miclon, the executive/artistic director of the nonprofit organization by the same name, is enthusiastically and strategically fostering its current evolution into the leading theatrical force in the Kennebec Valley, while also overseeing the ongoing renovation of the historic premises.

Miclon, himself a professional entertainer who began his career as an apprentice of Benny and Denise Reehl of the New England New Vaudeville Revue, said he is thrilled to report that the number of performances as well as the sizes of the audience have soared in the past three years since he joined the organization.

“And our audiences are coming not just from central Maine but all over — Brunswick, Portland, Lewiston-Auburn, Bangor, even out of state and Canada,” Miclon said. He projects that a total of 3,000 people will attend 42 Johnson Hall shows over the course of 2016.

Currently, indoor performances are held in Johnson Hall’s 110-seat “black box” studio theater and multi-use space on the ground floor. Meanwhile, extensive and meticulous renovations will culminate in 2019 with the reopening of the historic, grand upstairs performance venue with an audience capacity of 400.

By 2021, Miclon said he looks forward to offering an impressive 70 to 80 shows a year at Johnson Hall. Miclon is always happy to answer questions and to entertain ideas and suggestions for entertainment and performing arts events at Johnson Hall.

“Any time our box office is open, (from noon to 3 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday) feel free to stop by for an informal tour of the building.”

While the future for Johnson Hall looks promising indeed, exciting events are taking place right now.

During the school year, Johnson Hall’s Artists in the Schools outreach initiative has been instrumental in bringing performing arts to students in local schools while eliminating barriers such as transportation logistics and expenses. As a result, Johnson Hall is attracting a new generation of aficionados; new young fans are rekindling their parents’ and

“And our audiences are coming not just from central Maine but all over — Brunswick, Portland, Lewiston-Auburn, Bangor, even out of state and Canada.”

MICHAEL MICLON, EXECUTIVE/  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF JOHNSON HALL



Nancy P. McGinnis photos

Michael Miclon, a well-known Maine performer who is also the executive/artistic director of Johnson Hall, on the third floor of the historic landmark building where extensive renovation is taking place. Varied Johnson Hall programming for all ages continues to take shape on the ground floor and at the Gardiner Waterfront.

grandparents’ interest in Johnson Hall at the family dinner table.

“We encourage whole families to attend our family-friendly theater events,” Miclon said, citing new reduced ticket pricing for youngsters: “It’s cheaper to bring your kids to the theater than to pay for a babysitter.” Johnson Hall also offers live music concerts and stand-up shows, geared for adult audiences.

Registration is now open for Johnson Hall’s SPARK, a theater day camp for young people. The former Shenigans program has been revamped, now focusing on professional performing arts education offered in four, one-week sessions for kids ranging in age from 8 to 14.

“We’re hiring full-time performers and theater educators to work with our campers, who will have a chance to master the critical fundamentals, such as developing stage presence and how to project on stage,” he said. “We’ll help each youngster find what sparks his or her own interest, from circus arts to improv, ensemble, voice, juggling or magic — and participate in a variety show at the end of each session to show what they have mastered.”

This year, all summer long from July 1-Aug. 26 — by the river where cool breezes drift off the Kennebec at Gardiner’s Waterfront Park — Johnson Hall will host free weekly

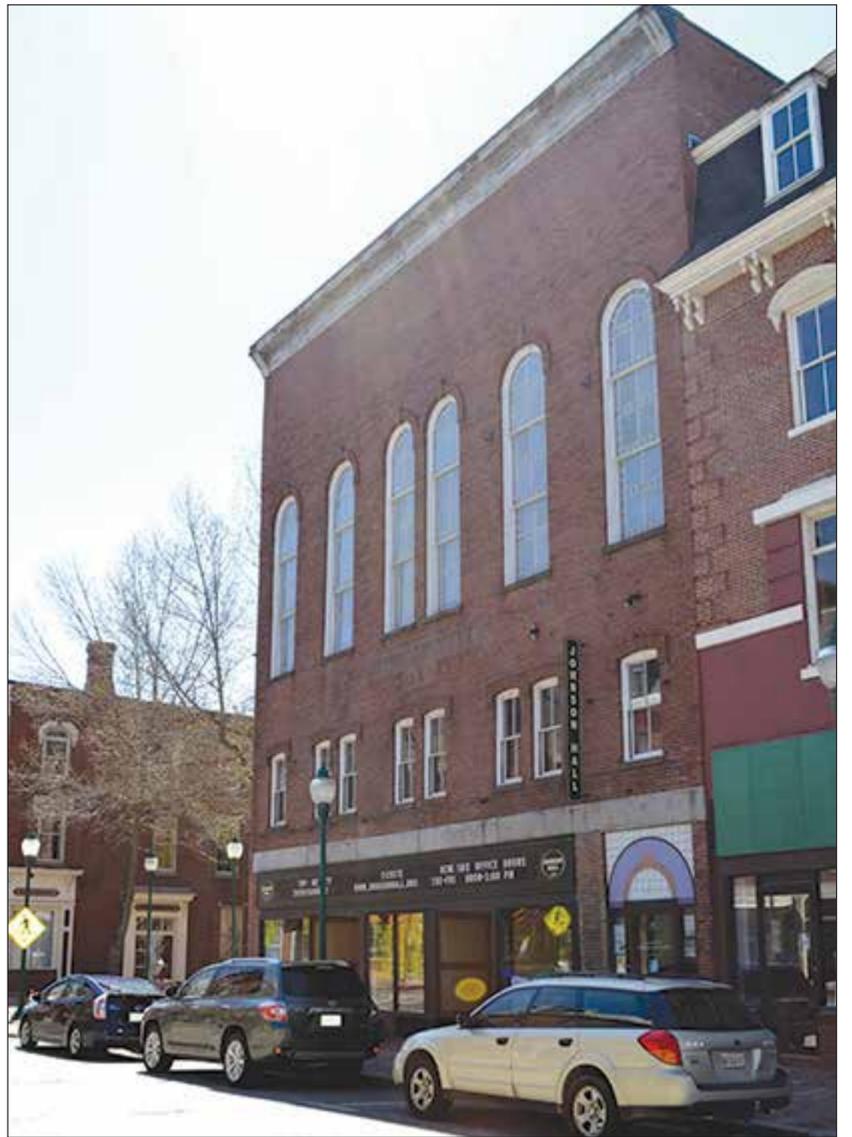
Friday evening concerts from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Miclon invites folks to “come for the music, and stay for the party.” Food vendors will be on hand, or bring a picnic. Plan to arrive early to claim a scenic spot to relax and enjoy the live music, ranging from country-pop to bluegrass to folk and fusion rock.

As part of the Gardiner Riverfest, which kicks off the Kennebec Valley’s “Whatever Family Festival,” Johnson Hall will present a free Waterfront Concert performance at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, June 17, featuring Muddy Ruckus, a darkly inventive Americana, indie folk, rock duo. And on Saturday, Johnson Hall will offer four more live waterfront performances — plan to stay afterward for the fireworks, both evenings.

On July 6, Johnson Hall will be partnering with Gardiner Main Street to host the latter’s monthly FaceTime, gathering for interested members of the business community, local residents, and anyone who would like to take part.

“We’re planning our season release party that evening, in honor of the occasion,” Miclon said. The public is invited to attend this informal event at Johnson Hall, where the entire upcoming season line-up will be announced, tickets will be available for purchase, and special, one-night-only opportunities and promotions will be presented.



The impressive façade of Johnson Hall, now a vibrant performing arts venue, and a Water Street landmark in downtown Gardiner since 1864.

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# Randolph Hardware celebrates first anniversary

## Shop offers myriad supplies, services

BY WANDA CURTIS  
Correspondent

Randolph Hardware is celebrating its first anniversary this month at 244 Water Street.

One of the owners, Rob Gardiner, said recently that the business has done well this past year and that it's been well received by locals. He attributes the success of the new business to friendly and knowledgeable staff, as well as the faithful support of the local community.

"The store has been well received in the area and we've been overwhelmed with positive comments from local folks," Gardiner said. "We've appreciated their patience as we've experienced growing pains."

The Gardiners aren't new to the hardware business. Rob's father, Bob Gardiner, opened Damariscotta Hardware more than 50 years ago.

Like the Damariscotta store, Randolph Hardware is a family-run business where each customer is counted as important. Rob Gardiner said they've listened to requests and comments from their Randolph customers during the past year and adjusted their inventory to match many of those requests.

According to *RandolphHardware.com*, the warehouse contains more than 67,000 products. Two fully-loaded trucks drop off products each week and they can also order directly from vendors. The store offers a large selection of paint, plumb-

"We've been overwhelmed with positive comments from local folks."

ROB GARDINER, AN OWNER OF RANDOLPH HARDWARE

ing, electrical and gardening supplies. They also have a rental center, factory-authorized power equipment repair and an extensive tool selection. They're offering a brand new line of Channel Lock mechanic's tools. They stock Stihl outdoor power equipment and Milwaukee tools.

Meanwhile, they also offer myriad other sales and services. They provide screen repair, lamp repair, glass cutting, shade cutting, handle replacement, key cutting, chip key duplication, propane refills, pipe cutting and threading, vacuum sales and service, computerized custom color paint match, sharpening, and lock rekeying. They also repair small engines and space heaters.

The equipment rental program at Randolph Hardware allows customers to try out a piece of equipment before purchasing it. If a customer decides to purchase the equipment within 24 hours of renting it, the customer won't be charged any rental fee. The store promises on its website to answer the phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to questions and offer advice regarding the equipment.

The store rents a variety of equipment for both homeowners and contractors. They recom-

mend making a reservation — especially during high demand season — for equipment such as log splitters, pressure washers and tillers. They will deliver and pick up everything from wallpaper steamers to excavators to job sites within a 10-mile radius of the rental center for a \$50 fee.

"The rental center is improving," Gardiner said. "It started slow but the numbers are continuing to improve each month."

Each month, certain items in the store are featured on sale. June sale items include a number of Milwaukee tools, RV supplies and Best Look paints.

Randolph Hardware is open for business from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. For more information call 582-3428.

# SpinOff Studio assembles new benches for main street

Sawdust has been flying at SpinOff Studio in Gardiner for the past month. SpinOff, a nonprofit program for adults with developmental disabilities, has partnered with a team of Gardiner Main Street volunteers to construct sturdy benches for the city's main street.

Spinoff's director, Jonathan Price, has hosted regular Thursday afternoon work sessions in the small wood shop area of the studio. Two of Spinoff's regulars, Charles Holt and Jessica Prime, have applied their woodworking skills each week and will have produced eight benches when the sawdust settles.

Each of these benches will be personalized by the artists at SpinOff, so that when they hit the street, their talent can be recognized.

Gardiner Main Street volunteers included Bill Pond, Ed Allen and Kurt Shoener who lent their considerable carpentry skills, time and tools to help the work along. Holt and Prime were at the ready, eager to complete the benches and employ their skills in construction. All the high quality wood for this project was generously donated by Lapointe Lumber, one of Gardiner's 'good neighbor' businesses.

SpinOff Studio is an important member of Gardiner's downtown and hosts a large number of productive, talented artists every day. The Gardiner location is part of Independence Association of Brunswick, which opened this new location in 2014.

Representing some 30 artists from Brunswick to Madison, SpinOff offers drawing, painting, weaving, sewing, print making, sculpture, woodworking and theater — the talented SpinOff



Submitted photo

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folks recently presented an original drama, "Into Clear Waters" to an enthusiastic audience. (They were able to use their new benches as seating for the play!)

For more information on SpinOff Studio, check out their webpage at [spinoffstudio.org](http://spinoffstudio.org). Visitors are welcome any day, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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