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Sun Journal

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Creative ways to get your TV, movies
Demystifying the new ways to entertain yourself. **Page b1**

Santa arrives in South Paris
State's largest holiday parade kicks off season. **Page C1**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2011

Connecting you with your community

\$2.00

CENTREVILLE COMMONS



A half-century ago, the federal Section 8 housing program financed new construction of low-income housing units, including Centreville Commons. All of the apartments in this facility are federally-subsidized rental units under Section 8 contract.

BIRCH HILL APARTMENTS



Beginning in 1983, the focus of the Section 8 program shifted from financing new construction to providing rental vouchers to qualified, low-income residents. Birch Hill Apartments, which opened in 2010, was not built with Section 8 funding but Section 8 vouchers support its existence through rental payments.

BATES MILL LOFTS



Next month, the \$9.2 million Bates Mill Lofts project is expected to close, and construction will soon begin on 48 new apartments. Of those apartments, 33 units will be subsidized by Section 8 vouchers and the remaining 15 units will be rented at market-rate cost, creating a mixed-use facility of private and public rental payments.

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
Staff Writer

LEWISTON — When Bob Macdonald said he wanted to do away with subsidized housing in the city's downtown, it got a lot of attention.

Macdonald, one of two candidates for mayor in a Dec. 13 runoff, made the federal housing program a key part of his mayoral campaign. He believes his vow to pass a moratorium on new Section 8 housing in the downtown helped him win a runoff spot in the Nov. 8 election.

"People are angry," Macdonald said. "They see people down there and they expect other people to work for them, that are not willing to help themselves. People are

tired of it."

But the Section 8 may not be what Macdonald is talking about — not by itself, at least. The 74-year-old program, a federal

housing program that grew out of the Great Depression, isn't what it once was.

"People often talk about affordable housing using names or terms

that in context represent a specific program but may not be what the speaker is referring to," said Jim Dowling, executive director of the Lewiston Housing Authority.

"They may be generalizing."

Targeting subsidized housing projects is one way to fix Lewiston's downtown and bring it back to life, Macdonald said. If you eliminate subsidized housing, you eliminate places for a permanent underclass to live. People would have to get jobs and survive on their own or go somewhere else.

"But we continue to get more and more of these people," Macdonald said. "Why? These developers come in and they put some of their money down, but they take our tax money and they create these apartments — and we fill them with people. That's what I object to."

Macdonald isn't the first to

SEE SECTION 8 PAGE A5

SECTION 8

Making sense of subsidized housing and calls for a moratorium

A Sun Journal reader project: The future of Bates Mill No. 5:



A view of Bates Mill No. 5 from the Professional Building, at the corner of Lisbon and Ash streets, in Lewiston.

RUSS DILLINGHAM/SUN JOURNAL

What's your vote?

BY KATHRYN SKELTON
Staff Writer

Should it be home to a new hydro-powered trolley?

Or Universal Studios East?
Or Lewiston Middle School?
Just some of your ideas.

With Bates Mill No. 5's future in flux, two weeks ago the Sun Journal asked readers for ideas on what ought to become of the building and the land beneath it. The fate of the almost 100-year-old, city-owned mill is once again uncertain after a referendum earlier this month that would have approved a casino for the spot failed to win statewide support.

More than 70 readers, ages 10 to 81,

sent in suggestions: Some amazingly creative, some perfect in their simplicity, only one illegal (brothel, anyone?) and one too colorful to print (think angry political potshot). We intended to winnow the suggestions down to 12, but, we couldn't: Too many ideas were good — or downright interesting. For space reasons and ease in voting, we pared down duplicates, giving credit to first responders. Ideas for a science center, fun park, indoor yard sale and business incubator were popular. We edited the rest for clarity and space. (Whether credited or not, many thanks to everyone who sent in a suggestion.)

Now it's up to you.

Please pick your five favorites among the list of 38. We'll take the top vote-getters to a panel of economic development experts for their thoughts: Could that work here? Why or why not?

After that? Well, all good ideas start with a dream. As soon as we hear about plans to make one of the ideas a reality, we'll let you know.

Vote in one of three ways: 1) Write the numbers of your five favorites on a postcard or, 2) clip page A4 and circle your five favorite picks — and mail either one to staff writer Kathryn Skelton at the Sun Journal, P.O. Box 4400, Lewiston, ME 04243. Or, 3) vote online at sunjournal.com/millfuture. Votes are due by Dec. 7.

Please turn to Page A4 and pick your favorites from the list of suggestions.

Iraq war leaves muddy legacy

U.S. troops depart fledgling democracy after eight years

BY DAVID GOLDSTEIN
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — Think for a moment about the emotional seesaw of someone who has lost a loved one in Iraq and hears that the war is about to end.

At first, there is relief. Americans will finally stop dying in a distant desert. Then an indescribable sadness, because it comes too late.

Ami Neiberger-Miller was on a plane to Colorado filled with soldiers on the day before President Barack Obama's October announcement that all remaining troops would leave Iraq by the end of the year.

They were familiar company. She works for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, known as TAPS, which aids the families of fallen members of the military.

The troops were on their way back from the war. They were dusty and tired. A home-

coming with family and friends awaited them at the gate.

As they exited the plane, the other passengers and crew applauded. Quietly, Neiberger-Miller began to weep.

"Do you know someone in the military?" the passenger in the adjacent seat said gently.

She nodded. Her younger brother, Army Spec. Christopher Neiberger, was killed in 2007 by a roadside bomb, three days before his 22nd birthday.

"Our homecoming was a ca-

sketch," she said.

The war began on the night of March 19, 2003. It was just past 9:30 in Washington, near dawn in Baghdad.

Millions watched it unfold. It was supposed to be quick, surgical and decisive.

"This will not be a campaign of half measures and we will accept no outcome but victory," President George W. Bush told the nation that night as the bombs began to fall.

But it became a slog; messier than anticipated, more costly in lives and treasure.

SEE IRAQ PAGE A5

1965 shooting in Mississippi shows pitfalls of closing old cases

BY ALLEN G. BREED AND HOLBROOK MOHR
Associated Press

PELAHATCHIE, Miss. — On a late-fall evening 46 years ago, gunfire shattered the revelry at a nameless juke joint in this ru-

ral crossroads. When the smoke cleared, Joseph Robert McNair, a black father of six, lay at the feet of the community's white constable.

That McNair was dead, and that Luther Stevenson had killed him are about the only details on

which folks around here agree.

Five months ago, the U.S. Department of Justice — which has been looking into scores of civil rights-era deaths — closed a reinvestigation of McNair's shooting and informed family members that there was nothing to pros-

ecute. But The Associated Press has found a number of people whose eyewitness accounts conflict with the official finding that Stevenson fired just once in self-defense.

In response, the FBI made some more inquiries, but the

agency insists that the witness accounts it has are "irreconcilably inconsistent," and that the case remains unprosecutable. Local authorities, saying they trust the bureau's judgment, consider the case closed.

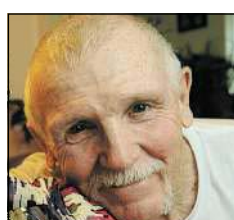
But it's far from solved, say

others, including McNair's three surviving children.

In their minds, crucial questions — such as exactly where McNair was hit, and by how many bullets — remain

SEE COLD CASE PAGE A9

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MAINE

Nothing left

Auburn man struggles to care for his wife after someone stole their nest egg. **Page C1**

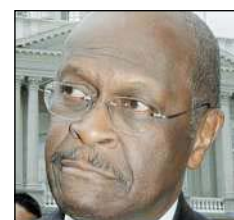
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PERSPECTIVE

Is he for real?

Herman Cain uses skills from other arenas as unlikely presidential candidate. **Page C10**



WEATHER



Today: 47/33
Tomorrow: 50/40



MAINE

Send us your top five picks for what to do with Bates Mill No. 5

1. Back to the future

Science Center that includes: IMAX theater, Star Watch, Robotic Center, Science Arcade, music playing on a fountain of water, exhibit halls, hands-on experience areas and kids' park. **Mary Story, Auburn**

2. A new home

For homeless veterans: living quarters, social area, small medical office, learning center and even a day care/preschool classroom for the people who will work and/or volunteer there. **Charlotte M. Blier, Auburn**

3. Making land

Demolish it. Seed it over. List it for sale. Use proceeds to offset cost of demolition. If it doesn't sell, garden lots can be made available to Lewiston residents and the land will be productive again. **Bob Stone, Lewiston**

4. Mother of invention

An incubator hub for technology (math, science, emerging technologies, etc.) and social advancement (education, arts, economics, etc.). Seed money could come from USDA's Rural Business Enterprise Grant, a portion of Auburn municipal forest proceeds and private donations. **John L. Painter, Lewiston**

5. Ice, ice baby

An ice complex for hockey, figure skating and curling. A heated snack bar, licensed cafe and bar with comfy seats and a fireplace for parents watching games! L-A could be a nice destination! **Sarah Alto, Lisbon**

6. Pure luxury

Tear it down. Build a nice luxury hotel, convention center and an IMAX movie theater! **Paul Lacasse**

7. Veggies and fish

A giant hydroponic vegetable farm or aquaponics (a combination of aquaculture and hydroponic farming). The water from the fish being raised is used as a nutrient source for the plants, thus reducing the cost of needed nutrients to grow the plants and you have fish to sell, too. **Leigh Stevens, Livermore Falls**

8. Dive on in

An Olympic Swimming and Diving Center in the mill. One engineer I spoke with said the mill could handle it if the column supports in the mill are not in the way for an eight-lane pool or can be repositioned. **Jim Horn, Lewiston**

9. Bikes 'R' Us

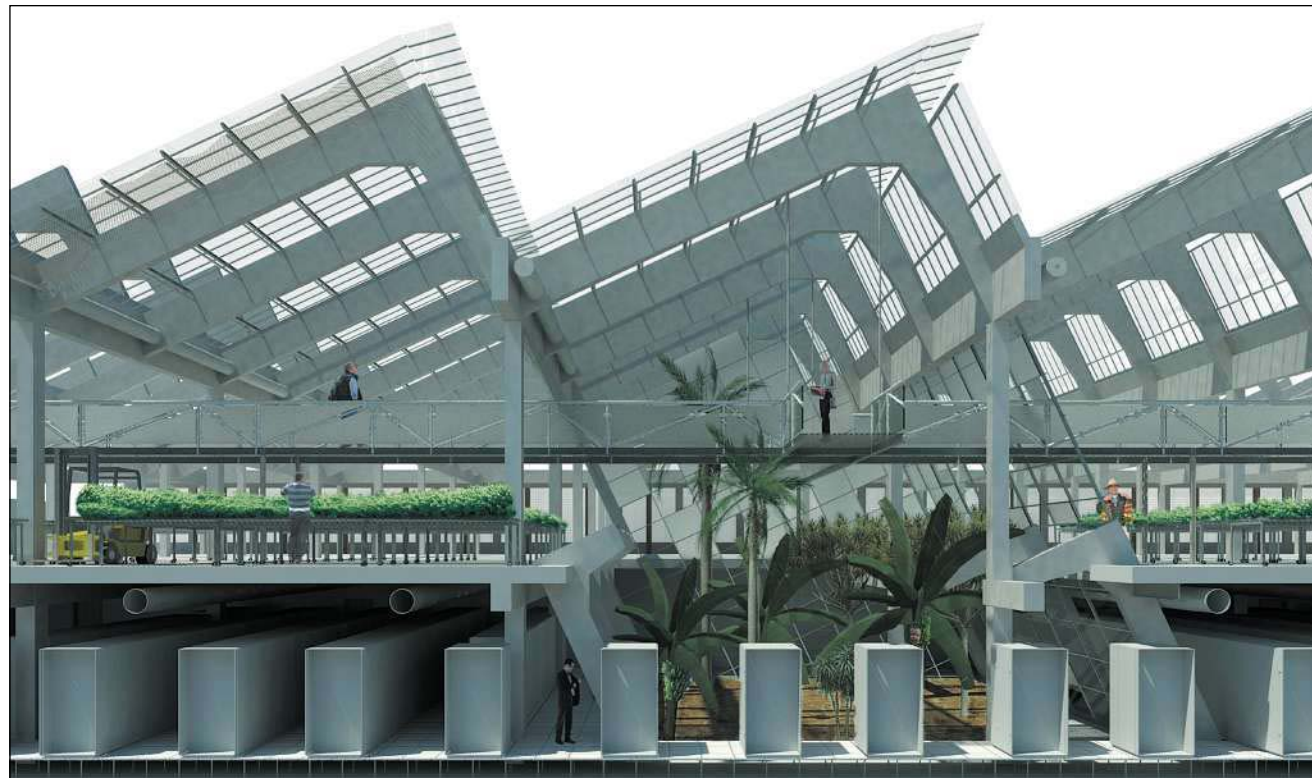
A velodrome, an indoor cycling track. It could support several other businesses such as bike rental and repair, a gift shop, coffee shop, concessions, etc., not to mention all the hotel rooms sold since competitors would come from all over. **Jim Witherell, Lewiston**

10. Indoor market

Think Pike Place Market in Seattle and Faneuil Hall in Boston: Thoughtful renovation, parking/handicap access and a blend of vendors, shops, restaurants, take-away food stands and cultural attractions. **Victor R. Leclerc, Lewiston**

11. Help center

Training center for the unemployed. Homeless shelter. Low-income housing. Youth center. **Mike Bourget, Lewiston**



SUBMITTED ARTWORK

Above is James Mangrum of Providence, R.I.'s conception of the mill as a server farm, with a second floor for a productive farm and public space. (Suggestion No. 34.)

12. Retail and the big 'O'

Olive Garden and a small courtyard with a special gift shop, a women's shop and men's shop, a card store and then several townhouses (open concept with two or three bedrooms with their own laundry rooms). **Louise Samson**

13. More brew for ME

Turn Bates Mill No. 5 into a brewery. Demand for bottlers, farmers, labelers, truck drivers: All of these would go up. **Josh White, Turner**

14. Manufacturing jobs

Let's go back to the old days and get this place going with manufacturing of some type and create lots of jobs for the people that live in Lewiston first and teach them skills for it. **Paul Roy, Lewiston**

15. New nonprofit

The Trinity Foundation would be a three-part community service project. It would entail a short-term residential/reintegration unit, a career and educational center and a rehabilitation unit for the homeless. **Danylle M. Carson, Leeds**

16. Arts mecca

Artists' lofts, small galleries and reception space on the upper level with a balcony effect looking down. On the lower level: multi-functional space to include locally owned shops, restaurants and entertainment facilities. **Jan Barrett, Lewiston**

17. Aqua land

An indoor water park in Lewiston that would be open year-round (It would be weather-proof!). Just think: The name "Lewiston" would be associated with great memories of a fun family weekend destination! Maggie (age 12) and Leila (age 10) Chirayath, and mom. **Heidi Taylor, Auburn**

18. Movie land

Market Bates Mill No. 5 to Sony, Universal, Fox, etc. as a giant sound-stage or multiple sound-stages for TV and movie production. Let's push for a Universal Studios "east" based here in Lewiston! **Jeff Mayerson, Lewiston**

19. Cultural home

A true cultural center honoring not only Lewiston's French-Canadian heritage but also recognizing the strong Greek community that is an important part

of our city and the Irish who fled their country to find a better life in Lewiston. **Jane A. Lindholm, Brunswick**

20. Hydro-trolley hub

Build a trolley that is hydropowered from the Androscoggin River and Lewiston's canal system with sophisticated underground cables and wiring throughout the five counties (or all of Maine) starting at Bates Mill No. 5 and ending back here. The mill windows would be unbreakable Plexiglas and its roof would have solar powered panels housing the trolley terminal with a small trolley museum, a diner or whatever is desired. **Rita Jean, Lewiston**

21. Year-round indoors

A four-season inside dome that would include a water park/pools, sandy beach, ice skating, snow, leaves, an inside forest to picnic, see animals, fish, rock climb, golf and volleyball. **Shauna Schade, Lewiston**

22. Sew nice

An updated, energy efficient, fabric producing garment — and accessory-making factory. Green ideas would be welcomed. Rebuilt and operated with Lewiston-Auburn workers. From pot holders to quilts to designer dresses. Could "L-A MADE" work here? **Susan Brown, Auburn**

23. New school

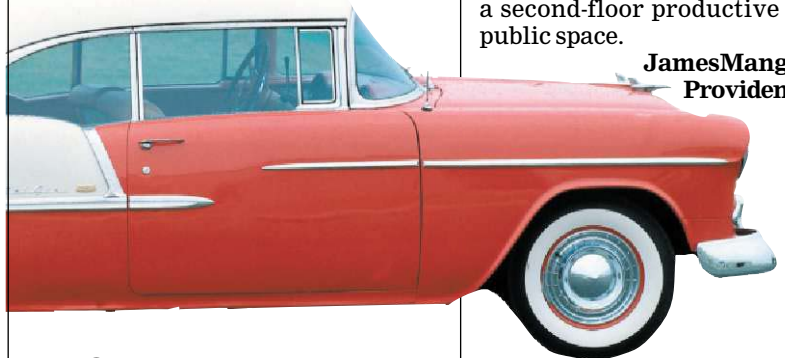
Make the mill a new middle school and the old middle school can be used as another elementary school to alleviate the terrible overcrowding problems this city has. **Adrienne Rochon, Lewiston**

24. Think paddle boats

A mix of restaurants leading to a river walk around the canal and paddle boat rides in the canal for \$3/hour. **Theresa James, Lewiston**

25. Play time

Multi-use sports arena: Batting cages, archery, indoor soccer/lacrosse, extreme trampoline, virtual 3D gaming. Plus classroom space for floral arranging, wreath-making, stained glass and quilting. **Joe and Lisa Eli-chaa, Auburn**



James Mangrum, Providence, R.I.

26. Car heaven

Something like Deer Lodge in Montana: A restored prison that now houses antique autos. **Gary Jordan, Greene**

27. Extra rec

Expand on the Multi-Purpose Center: pool, table tennis, exercise room, indoor track or a few bowling lanes if the budget allows it. **Bert Godin, Lewiston**

28. Next Fisher kings?

A spot for manufacturing Fisher plows. **Sylvia Thibodeau, Auburn**

29. Flea market 'n' more

A huge flea market containing usual flea market items, made-in-Maine products, a fresh vegetable section and possibly fun indoor stuff like golf, tennis, bumper cars, video games, rock climbing and a small convention center. **Claire Gamache, Lewiston**

30. Senior living

Elderly housing with a barber shop and beauty parlor, drug store, grocery store, lunch counter, thrift shop,

clothing store or Marden's, a religious center, health clinic and meeting room. **Cecilia Harkins, Lewiston**

31. Working museum

A museum with live displays of the old factories that have gone out of business or out of the country showing how Bates bedspreads were made, how paper is made, how sardines were canned, etc. It would keep the knowledge alive just in case it is ever needed again. **Ann M. Blais, Turner**

32. Kayak hotbed

Partly demolish the mill, create a park with water access for kayaks, a controlled white-water practice area and a circular paddle route featuring a canal lock. Renovate another section of the mill for lodging run by the Appalachian Mountain Club and the only indoor kayak launch ramp in the world. **Bill Webster, Lewiston**

33. Organic growth

An organic produce biodome. Each level would have specific vegetables or fruits growing, for example, a tropical level with oranges. **Scott Theriault, Lewiston**

34. Two farms in one

Retool the mill into a server farm. Computers take in electricity and data, then put out information and heat. Combine waste heat with the south-facing sawtooth roof, making a second-floor productive farm and public space.

35. Highlight the canals

Build retail space along the canal facing Ash Street and a hotel adjacent to the canal. An office building could be leased for a Post Office and other federal agencies. Make the canal and Lewiston a destination. **Richard and Diane Grandmaison, Lewiston**

36. Y not?

YMCA: Please reconsider the new site in Auburn and build here. The future of the Twin Cities needs to center on facilities that are within walking distance of one another to restore a sense of community. **Elizabeth Dube, Lewiston**

37. Temporary fix

For a minimal investment, repair the mill's roof, windows and facade, and just generally make the building not look like an eyesore anymore. It would improve the downtown area and the subject of what to do with all that space could be discussed over time. **Matt Darlington, Auburn**

38. The RuMor Mill

A greenhouse, farmer's market, rent-a-plot, local grocer and cafe. Food is a revolution! And BM5 City Center is here!!! Come see the ways farming can boost the economy in downtown. Support your local community or blaze your own path. **Gabrielle Russell and Kevin Morissette, Lewiston**

To vote: Write the numbers of your five favorites on a postcard or, clip this page and circle your five favorite picks — and mail either to staff writer Kathryn Skelton at the Sun Journal, P.O. Box 4400, Lewiston, ME 04243 or vote online at sunjournal.com/millfuture. Votes are due by Dec. 7.

Is conservative media the Grinch that stole tree growers' Christmas?

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
Bangor Daily News

BELFAST—In a world crowded with advertisements and promotion boards for agricultural commodities such as beef, potatoes, pork and even watermelon, the Christmas tree stands alone.

And a recent attempt by Christmas tree farmers to create their own industry marketing and research program was derailed earlier this month by conservative critics, according to one tree grower in Maine, who decried the situation as "discrimination."

"The other commodities have their programs. Ours has been taken away," said Jim Corliss of Piper Mountain Christmas Trees in Newburgh. "After all our hard work, it felt like a body blow."

On Friday, his snowy, 30-acre tree farm was alive with activity as families picked their Christmas trees, nibbled fresh doughnuts and enjoyed rides in a horse-drawn wagon.

But all the smiles and Christmas cheer belie the harsh reality that fewer and fewer people are choosing live trees each year, he said. And that is bad news for

Christmas tree farmers, most of whom run small, family businesses.

Corliss said that marketing is needed to combat negative ideas about Christmas trees, such as the idea they're a fire hazard and purchasing a real tree hurts the environment. But such marketing efforts are hard to sustain on a voluntary basis.

Enter the industry "checkoff" program. As proposed, Christmas tree farmers who sell more than 500 trees would pay a mandatory assessment of 15 cents a tree toward a new marketing and promotion program. This would

be overseen by USDA, but by design would not involve taxpayer or government funds.

This year, the USDA held a long open comment period for the proposed checkoff program, which growers supported 3-to-1, according to Corliss.

On Nov. 8, the final ruling to establish a Christmas tree checkoff program was published in the Federal Register, just in time for the farmers' selling season.

"Everybody was ecstatic," Corliss said.

But they had reckoned without David Addington, who writes for The Foundry, a policy news blog

for The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank.

In a Nov. 8 post titled "Obama Couldn't Wait: His New Christmas Tree Tax," Addington wrote that the president would impose a 15 cent tax on all fresh Christmas trees to support a new federal image and marketing program.

"The economy is barely growing and nine percent of the American people have no jobs. Is a new tax on Christmas trees the best President Obama can do?" Addington wrote. "And, by the way, the American Christmas tree has a great image that

doesn't need any help from the government."

His post, and the idea of an "Obama Christmas Tree Tax," burned across the blogosphere like a forest fire. Almost 3,000 people commented on Addington's blog. More than 180,000 people "liked" it on Facebook.

"Without checking with anybody in our industry, Fox News and Rush Limbaugh picked it up, started blasting it across the country," Corliss said.

On Nov. 10, the Obama administration announced that it would delay and re-evaluate the assessment.

