

The Magazine of Maine  EST. 1954

Down East

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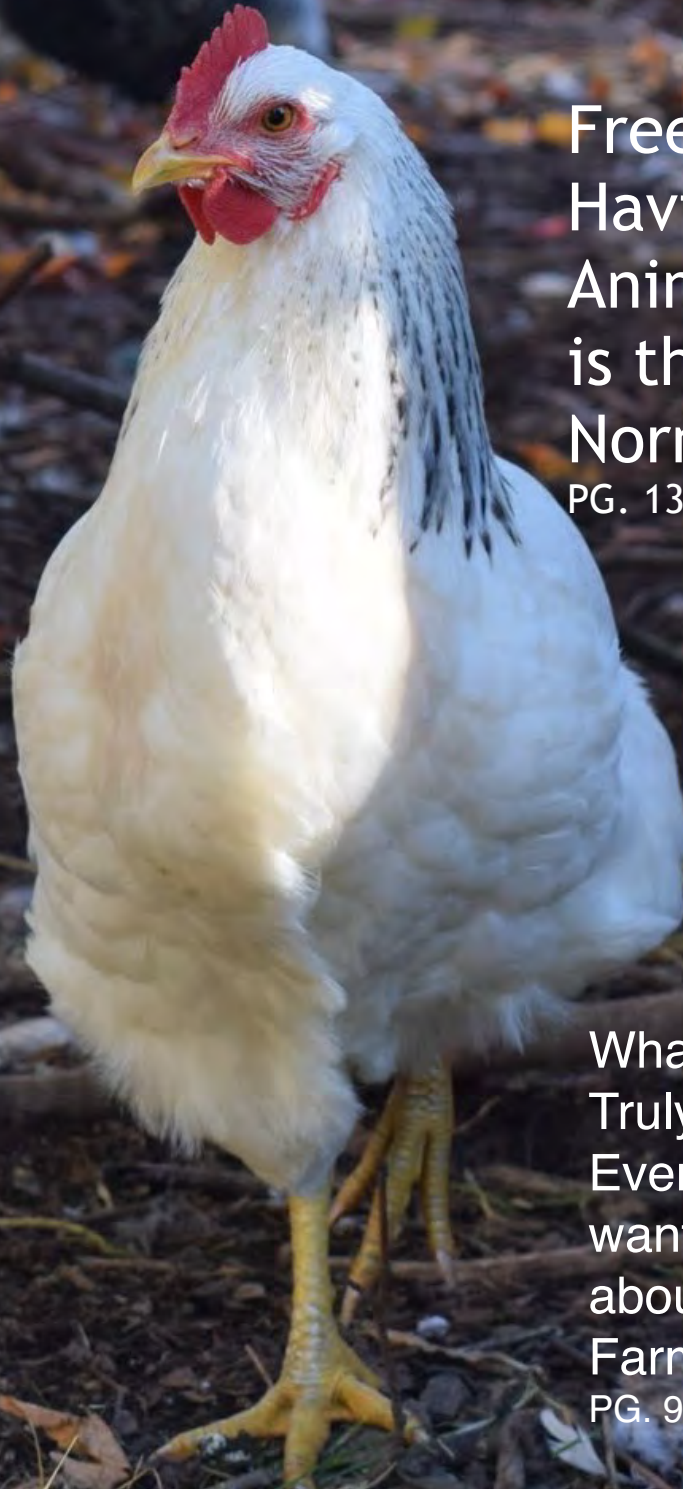


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About The Authors



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Audrey is another freshman at CHRMS. She lives in Camden and she wrote the service Article on Aldemere farm. She also put together the photo essay, and helped give feedback on the other articles.

Finding Hope

It isn't actually that hard, all you have to do is take a ten minute drive from Camden

By Emma Jordan



I pause my music and stop running to take a breath, surprised about how much progress I've made. With the ground I've cleared, I'll be fine with the excessive running that this year's basketball season has in store for me. Feeling like I've earned a break, I collapse to the ground and reach for one of the bright red freshly fallen leaves.

As I look around, I notice the trees are all tinted with the colors of fall. When I was little, I always thought that the trees on our road would be the best setting for a painting; however, over the several years of teenage cynicism and travels to places much more beautiful, thoughts like that don't come up much. It's on days like this, when the leaves are rusted just enough to brighten up the early morning sky, or in peak of winter, when the frosted snow makes the branches appear to be covered in glitter, that I look back to

to those days when I was younger and I took the time to enjoy the amazing world around me.

Most people would call me crazy for not enjoying my environment. The choruses of "that's so awesome" and "you're so lucky" that friends from summer camp give me after finding out that my house is five minutes away is something that I've grown accustomed to over the years. I live in a small town near Camden called Hope. I rarely meet someone from another state who knows where I live, unless they went to summer camp here, or lived here when they were little. The residents that I have met mostly consist of older people, who have already lived their life and want to settle down somewhere peaceful. However, even despite the small population, our K - 8 school, and the need to travel at least 10 minutes to get anywhere; the town has a

and steady way of life, with people respecting each other without laws saying that they have to. As children we picked up this habit, with the exception of, of course, the middle school children and their drama. We're cautious of other people's property and we know also how to respect nature and do our part to keep it stable.

In Hope, most people own animals such as chickens, and the others own small local farms and fields of yellow-ish green wheatgrass that we were told not to wander into when we were young because of the snakes and bugs that could be lurking behind the tall strands. I'm often surprised of some people's lack of knowledge about simple rules like this, and it bewilders me how they can get by without it. There's a summer camp about two minutes from where I live, it's purpose is for kids from New York to get out of the city and experience the wilderness. Even while knowing that they came from the city, I can't help but find it weird that they didn't know how to swim or start a fire, things that seem to be second nature to us.

I put my earbuds back on, and count the beat of my steps as I run past another one of those yellow-green fields for what seems like eternity. I try not to concentrate on my burning muscles, and instead I focus on the cracks in the road. The old worn down tar is a dirty grey, I can see the holes that I used to fall off my bike on when I still had a hard time keeping my balance, and the huge cracks that feel like have been there since I was born. I know that once I arrive at the bottom of the hill, the road will become more paved, and I will have to turn my music down so I can hear the oncoming cars, but for now I can probably navigate off of pure memory. I get tired again and rest where I catch the bus in the morning. The sun is almost covered by the trees, all that's left is the shine through the branches and the pattern it makes on the ground. Making a quick judgement of time, I decide to turn back towards my house.

I reach my lawn just as the last bits of sunlight shrink away, and the sky is changing to grey. I collapse onto the grass and ignore the swarm of bugs that form a cloud above me. Birds chirp and flap their wings in the breeze, and the crinkling of little feet intensifies as my kitten pitterme. After the bugs start to become too much to handle, I pick myself up off the grass and walk towards the huge tree in our front lawn, the one that is always strung with poorly organized Christmas lights, and the main place for our pets to climb and get stuck in. I sit by it, and pick at the paint of the small fence that borders the trunk.

"Emma, are you ready?" my mother calls out to me. We are about to take the two hour drive to my grandmother's house in Rumford.

"Yes!" I call back as I run past her to grab my stuff inside. We all check to make sure we have everything, and as soon as the trunk of the car closes, we pull out of our driveway and start our journey.

The car bumps and tumbles over the cracks in the road, with a small dip in the front as we roll off of a small hill. I watch the pines, the only trees that are still green, and I try

"As much as I talk down about my small or 'boring' town, every second I'm away from it, I long to return."

to count them until it gets to the point that it's making me sick. Although Hope is small, when you drive through on the roads mixed with dirt and tar, it seems like it could go on forever. After about five minutes of driving, the car slowly rides to a stop at the general store to get my sister a calzone. I climb out of the car and lean against it. The time of day makes it seem like everything I see has a filter that makes everything look colder. I take a breath in and out to watch the small puff that takes its place in the air. Where I stand, I can see that the general store is one section of a cross road, along with the town office and library that are planted right beside it. The town office has a strategically placed playground behind it, it's an old faded pink that suggests that its had its fair share of children playing on it while their parents vote. Across the street is the Hope Orchards, a huge apple farm that grows and sells fresh apple products like apple cider and apple vinegar. The trees are bare now, and they glisten slightly with the fall frost. The whole corner is almost taken up by these trees, except for the small iron shop by the road, with beautiful fences and sculptures in the lawn, halfway surrounded by the Orchard's fences. I know that If I were to walk down the street on the other side of the road, I would come to the huge barn that used to hold Hope's big attraction, the elephants. They were there for almost two years, which resulted with about six trips to visit them with the members of my family. Unfortunately, the owner died about two years ago, and our new elephant town members, Rosie and Opal, were shipped away.

I climb back into the car and we drive past the final corner, the corner that holds all of the Sweet Tree Arts buildings, where I used to go for lessons on drawing, and helped plant the community garden. I give the building a slight smile as the trees start to move in front of it and the car bumps slowly in the road. Where we're going, the noises of a small city are bustling around us, and the lampposts shine through our windows at night. Quite a difference than the silence and moonlit sky that I'm used to. As much as I talk down about my small or "boring" town, every second I'm away from it, I long to return. A smile crosses my face and just like that, we roll down the road that will lead us away from our small part of Maine.



WHAT DOES A SHOVEL TRULY HOLD?

**Great opportunities lay in the pastures and barnyard of the small farm
operation of Aldermere Farm.**

By Audrey Bowman

Pearl Benjamin, a former city girl,

immediately fell in love with the foreign, odd smell of cow muck. The stench of manure doesn't stop her from working with them. Most people find the scents of a farm disgusting. But what many people need to understand is the importance and opportunities in these small operation farmsteads that preserve the stone walls, wooden gates, and rusty red barns from decades before.

Over an expanse of one hundred acres lays the lush pastures of the Belted Galloways of Aldermere Farm in Rockport, Maine. Dating back to the 1900s the farm was owned by Albert Chatfield, Jr. who then later passed the farm into the hands of Maine Coast Heritage Trust, an organization that preserves the alluring land of Maine. What attracts the eyes of many people is the sights of Lily Pond on one side, and on the opposite sits the shimmering sea of the Camden-Rockport Coast. Located on a backroad, the sprawling pastures of trees and tall grass allow the magnificent Belted Galloways to aimlessly roam in their natural environment. Heidi Baker, the farm manager states, "I think benefits range from a beautiful scene, to educational programs and a relationship with your food." Aldermere's goal is to inform people about agriculture at its finest, and connect our community through sharing the love and care for the Belted Galloways.

When first entering the aging gates of the barnyard, a sense of work is evident. Shovels and pitchforks all line the edges of the barn's wooden shingles, offering the only option to scrape up the insides of the cattle's homes. The work that is done has countless hours and drops of sweat put in from each person. Days are spent picking up numerous amounts of rocks in order to replenish the pasture with fresh grass. But what astonishes tourists the most is when a young kid marches their cow or lamb to the wash rack, then to the blow drier, then at last to the clippers. Many people assume that livestock is just to be watched, but with Aldermere an increased amount of connection between the cattle and employees is apparent.

Year round, there are many opportunities for youth to get involved. Many of the workers at Aldermere are 4H members of the Aldermere Achievers Beef Club. A 4H club in general focuses on activities involving the four H's(hands,

heart, head, and health). The members are allowed to own a steer or lease(not owning, but caring for) a heifer. Together the club helps each other out building leadership, teamwork, and many other skills. Leadership is a big part in helping out the younger Clover Bud participants and the Farm Hands program. Clover Buds is a mini 4H club for younger kids who hope to be in 4H when they are older. Farm Hands is an after school program for students who would like learn agricultural skills. Baker explains, "We work hard to be a 'real' farm that has educational farm programs,



Photo by Audrey Bowman

Greta Bishop and Pearl Benjamin walk their steers back to their pasture. Benjamin proudly states, "4H is a program in which youth have an opportunity to put their skills to the test by leasing or owning an animal of their own and showing it at fairs throughout the year to make a profit out of them."

not just a petting zoo." Many large operation farms don't have the time to care or engage with their cattle.

What makes this farm so open is its involvement with the community. It doesn't stay concealed, hiding behind the gates. Instead it allows programs and events for kids, teens, adults, and tourists. Family events are Beltie Holiday and Calf Unveiling Day. At Beltie Holiday two heifers are always available to take pictures with. Around the barn are crafts, gifts, and hot drinks. Many local craftsmen have booths set up with all of their Maine-related treasures.

Calf Unveiling Day is a more demonstrative event. Anyone's allowed into the barnyard to look at the newborn calves, steers, cows, and 4H lambs. Sometimes other farms have alpacas and pigs that they showcase for additional fun. In the spring, the one day event lets the 4Hers bring out their animals and show the community how to walk, brush, wash, blow dry, and clip. The event

is accompanied by local pizza makers, florists, and ice cream booths. Both events are free of costs and are a time when Aldermere opens up their opportunities.

During the summer, tours are available for anyone who would like to visit the farm in an up-close perspective. Many tourists and the kids enjoy watching the cows in their daily routines. Pearl Benjamin, a 4Her on her fifth year remarks, "Aldermere is so special because it provides an



Photo by Audrey Bowman

The Aldermere Farm sign stands tall on a fall day.

agriculturally educational environment for locals and visitors."

Aldermere Farm is greatly appreciated by the Camden-Rockport community. The towns' land is known to be inhabited by wealthy homes. But instead of transforming Aldermere land into expensive elegant houses, people show their appreciation by agreeing that the land can be treasured by much more than those living there. The farm with fresh beef, spectacular views, and opportunities is gratefully shared by the community. Try driving by to simply look at the scenery, get some local beef or come to this year's Beltie Holiday on December 3rd from 9-12am.



Photo by Audrey Bowman

Greta Bishop combs her 4H steer. She trains his hair in preparation for the show season in the spring and summer.

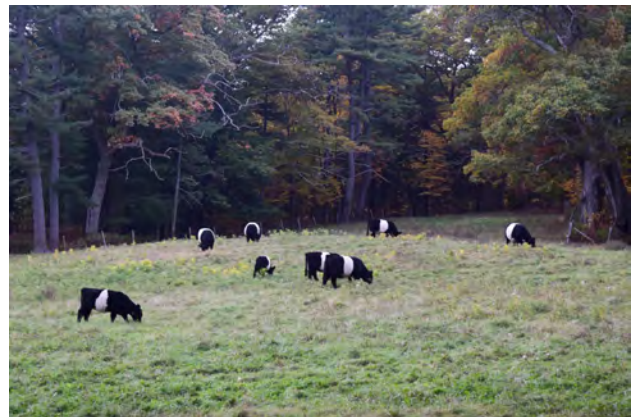


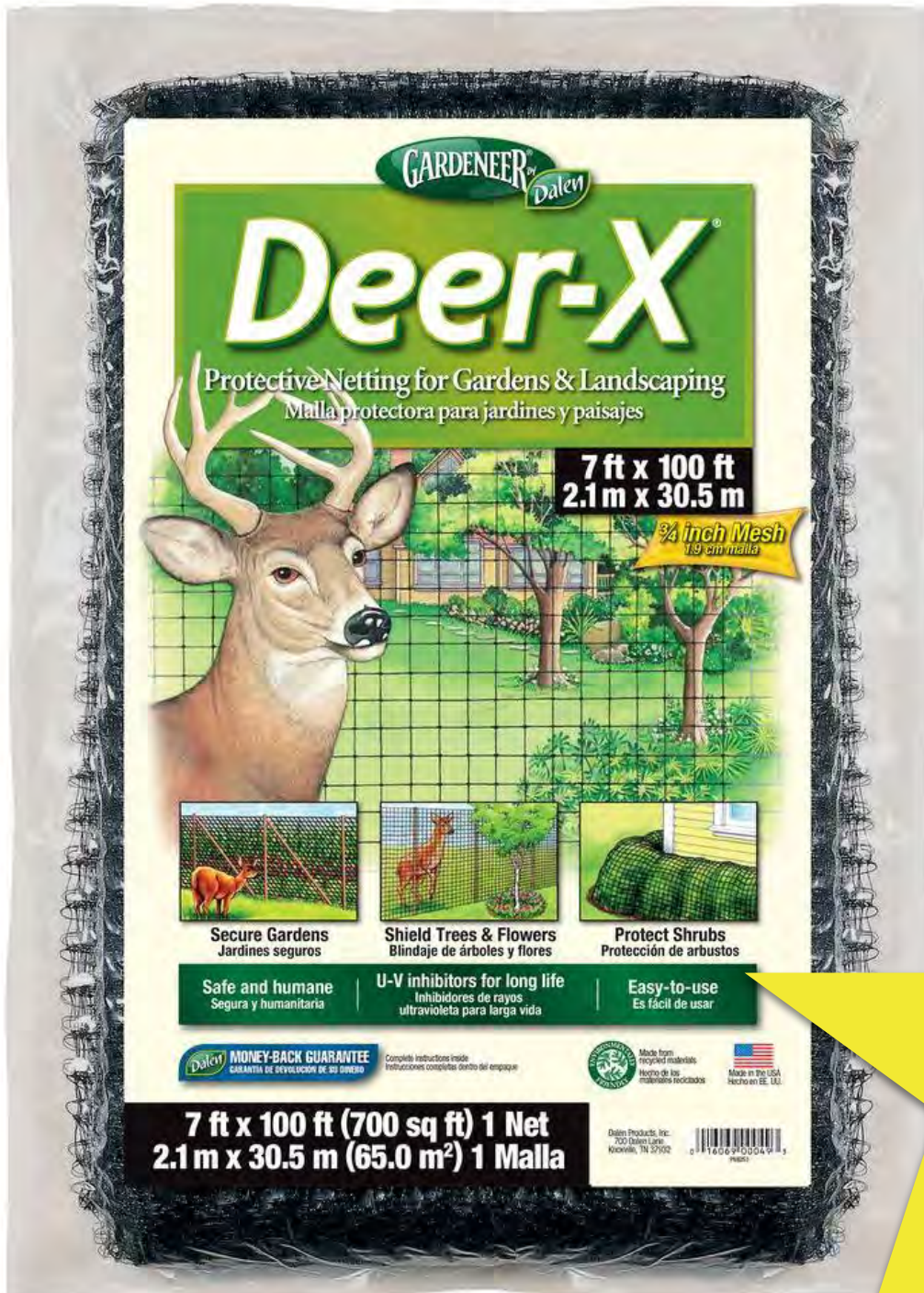
Photo by Audrey Bowman

The Belted Galloways graze in their pasture after a long week at the Fryeburg Fair.

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Free Bird!

Roaming Chickens are the Norm in Maine.

By Audrey Bowman, Emma Jordan,
and Ian Henderson

In almost every town that's encountered in Maine, chickens are bound to be strolling around people's yards. The chickens can be so friendly as to walking into a public school, or following strangers down the street.





At the end of the day the chickens always find their way back to the pens to lay their eggs.

Photo by Audrey Bowman



The roaming chickens are always available for a game of tag.

Photo by Emma Jordan



Many of the wandering chickens don't mind an up close shot.

Photo by Audrey Bowman



The chickens learn to go into their pens in the evening to stay protected from predators.

Photo by Ian Henderson

Leaky ceilings, moldy interiors

Camden-Rockport community members question whether or not they should build a new middle school.

By: Ian Henderson



The red brick entrance leading into the slowly decaying Camden-Rockport middle school.

Picture taken by: Ian Henderson

In room number 81 (band room) of the Camden Rockport middle school if you look directly up at the dampened ceiling you can sometimes observe a leak in the center of the room. It slowly drops down and plunks onto the hardwood floor of what use to be the mini gym. Plunk. Plop. Plip. Plunk. It is the middle of a band lesson and Mr. Oullette is beginning to become frustrated with the constant dripping. He places an orange Home Depot bucket beneath the leak. The sound of falling water droplets increases and echoes around the room. This not only provides a difficult learning environment for the students of Mr. Craig Oullette, but is a safety hazard, and shows the terrible condition of the school.

About three years ago the idea of building a new school was presented by the school board to the voters of Camden, Maine. People want to build a new middle school in and demolish the current Camden-Rockport middle school. Many different people in the community have very diverse opinions and do not all agree on what to do with the school. Last year the two towns took a vote and voted building a new school down.

Many different community members had opinions on how they think this change would affect them. I interviewed a mother of two children who have both passed through the

school, Colleen Duggan. I talked to two current students of CRMS, William Yurek, and Brit LaFiura. I also interviewed a teacher who works at the school, Aaron Henderson, and the principal of CRMS Jaime Stone. All of these different people gave me their insights on the situation and what they thought about building the new school.

All of these people helped provide different views of the subject from different positions. For example students are going to think something completely different than another member of the community.

Jaime Stone had lots to say about the logistics of the project and what the groundwork would look like. If it was voted yes there would be three options for rebuilding the school. They could demolish it and build a new one across the field from it and build a parking lot on where the current one stands. They would destroy most of the school but the MET building on the end might not be demolished and they would keep it. They would keep it for nostalgic purposes and it also holds up fairly well and doesn't have many issues. They would probably turn this building into a bus barn or use it for administrative purposes. Other options involved patching up any problem the school has currently and hoping it improves, or renovating the entire school.

The Mary E. Taylor building is very important to community members all over Camden and Rockport because many grew up here and attended

school in that very building. It is a building on the end of the building made of red bricks. The original building was built in 1925 and many different generations have passed through that school. Community members would be very emotional if this building was destroyed.

William Yurek and Brit LaFiura both agreed that they believed in building a new school. They think that the overall condition of the school is lagging. They claim the ceiling has issues with water and is leaking in some places around the school. They believe that the bathrooms in parts of the building are not kept well and many things are not functioning well. Brit seemed to have similar views as William and agreed with him on almost everything he said. Brit also claims that the light bulbs in his home room seem to be cracked and giving off a extremely unpleasant odor. He agrees with his peer that water leaks are also a major issue. "In the band room they had a leak and it was dripping on kids and distracting them. So they had to put a bucket in the middle of the classroom." Brit says as he shares with us his thoughts on the issue that he has with the condition of the middle school.

Colleen Duggan a mother and community member did not have a similar view of the situation compared to the students I had spoken with. Colleen said that she was undecided what her position was on it at the moment but voted against it last time

the town voted on it. Although she says that she is currently leaning towards voting it down again. "I didn't feel like their reasons were very compelling and I felt it was very expensive.... And I don't think that a shinier fancier school is necessarily going to be a better education for our children." Colleen Duggan expresses to me when meeting with her. Colleen says that she believes it is too much money to be spending on a new school (especially because she doesn't feel like there is a good reason) and thinks it should be used elsewhere in education. "I question if we would be better off putting those financial resources into other things, teachers, smaller classrooms, other things that might have a big impact." This shows a lot about those people who voted no and why. It says that they still care about the educational program but don't believe that this is the thing we must accomplish in order to do that. They believe that spending all of this money on a new school would be a waste of taxpayer money because they could be spending it on other things to help create a better learning environment for students.

Aaron Henderson claims that he is not sure what he thinks of the issue at hand currently but had strong feelings about it in the past. "I was against building the school when it came out on referendum three years ago." He says that as a teacher he would love to have a new school and it would definitely improve the learning environment but at the same time as a

community member he asked himself “The question is, is it worth the money? Do you need it?” He said he felt that the condition of the school is much better than it was 10 years ago and they have already put a lot of money into that. “I feel that my own classroom is fantastic, and the facilities are great in general.” He believes that having a new school would be nice but the question is how much are you willing to sacrifice for it. He asks us, is it something that you really need? He speaks for a large population of Camden-Rockport voters who think that a new school would be lovely but not necessary.

Mrs. Stone went much more in depth than the others and I learned a lot

**"I am 100 %
behind building
a new school."**

more about the project itself. She thinks that it is the responsible thing to do because she does not believe that amount of money that we would spend on repairs or renovating it is as worth our while as building a new school. “The age of the building, the safety of the building, and the quality of the building and what it projects and offers to the faculty and students, I just don't

think are in line with the values of the community in terms of how we view education.” She speaks of water leaks in the band room And creates a compelling argument, that the students agree with, that the school is just not quite in good enough shape to provide a quality learning environment for students. The newer school that they want to build is supposed to be built in a way that's much more time efficient than the last. “It will be great because it will provide much more academic time due to less passing time for students.” Stone explains to us.

Camden and Rockport voted last year and it was voted down. There will probably be a new vote in the near future. Based on what you have heard what do you think about the issue, how do you feel about it and where do you think you stand. All sides have compelling and clever arguments to why you should vote their way. Some people have stronger opinions than others but everyone who has heard about should definitely have a say in it because it is a very important subject and could determine a lot about your taxes, or quite frankly your child's education.



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