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To Whom it Concerns:

In Wiscasset, the Maine Art Gallery is our cultural center, the heartbeat of our community—we have no theatre, no concert hall, no cultural life thread other than the gallery. What an invaluable contribution MAG makes to this community. In fact, that value is priceless, as we found out last year.

When the MAG building lease came up for renewal by the Board of Selectmen, there was true concern by many of us that the board would be tempted to take the highest bidder, which would have turned the historic building into, basically, a retail shop. Town Hall was packed for that meeting, and every citizen who spoke was in favor of maintaining the Maine Art Gallery ... at a dollar a year. We were against any consideration of the far more generous business offer. The board agreed. The MAG is the pride of this village.

It is also the jewel of the Mid Coast. The MAG has produced some of the finest art shows and textile exhibits seen anywhere on the Maine coast. It has done so in spite of the fact that this is a small rural town, and there is not the wealth to maintain the building at the level required because maintenance of a historic building is costly—and constant. If we were to lose this gallery due to maintenance concerns, it would take the heart out of us. The gallery's board of directors and the volunteer effort that has gone into supporting the MAG has been magnificent. With increased support for maintenance, the funds we raise here for this jewel of Wiscasset, the Maine Art Gallery, could be used totally to support the artworks we need to feed our cultural soul—and likely rival any gallery in Maine.

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