

Midcoast Region

Northport: Young VFW supporter plans prom

By [Tom Groening](#)

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NORTHPORT, Maine — Tracy Evans isn't content to put a yellow-ribbon magnet on a car to show support for troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Evans, a 19-year-old University of Maine sophomore whose family lives in Waldo, joined the Ladies Auxiliary of the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6131 when she was 17. Her mother asked her to join, and she agreed and has enjoyed working with the other women who support veterans and raise money for causes that assist them.

Evans is the youngest member of the auxiliary group, and while she supports the post's public suppers and other fundraising events, she brought a more youthful — and creative — approach to the effort.

"Being the youngest member, I thought we should have a prom," she said.

A 2006 graduate of Mount View High School in

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Tracy Evans, 19, a student at the University of Maine in Orono, is organizing a "Prom Night Revisited" to raise money for the Northport VFW. Evans is the youngest member of the VFW's Ladies Auxiliary. (Bangor Daily News/Tom Groening) [Buy this photo](#)

Thorndike, Evans had fun at her school prom, and realized she would never attend another, so the idea of putting on a "community prom," open to people of all ages, seemed like a winner.

The prom is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 3, at the Blue Goose dance hall on U.S. Route 1 in Northport. All proceeds from ticket sales will go toward the post's causes. Most of the funds will be used to install a handicapped-accessible bathroom in the Northport post's hall, Evans said, which is needed as many veterans age or deal with war-related disabilities.

Most of Evans' fellow college students probably know little about an organization like the VFW.

"It's not a political statement," Evans said of her membership, and the organization should not be seen as affiliated with Republicans, Democrats or any other political stripe.

And the Northport post does not serve alcohol, as some posts do.

"It's about the people. The veterans, and the troops. It's about them," she said.

To join, a veteran must have served in a war. Members of the local post served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Vietnam veterans, in particular, seem to need the camaraderie that an organization like the VFW offers, Evans believes.

"They didn't get a lot of support" when they returned home, she said.

But Evans has found that all the veterans need a friendly ear.

"I think they feel they need to be understood," she said, and if they achieve that with others, it eases the burdens many have carried since serving.

Evans' father served in Germany, though not in wartime, so he is an auxiliary member. But both of her grandfathers served in World War II, and one also served during the Korean War. An aunt is the vice president of the Ladies Auxiliary, she added.

The VFW provides funds for many veterans services, and assists Togus V.A. Medical Center in Augusta, a paralyzed veterans group, active duty vets, troops currently serving overseas, senior citizens and cancer research.

Evans likes the idea of raising funds to send food and gift packages to soldiers now in Iraq and Afghanistan, and recently discovered a Web site, anysoldier.com, devoted to this goal.

"It's more personal," she said, and she hopes subsequent proms will raise money for such efforts.

While home during the summer break, the idea of hosting a prom came to her, and Evans has run with it. She has persuaded a DJ to volunteer his services, and lined up a couple of bands to perform for free and a woman who plays World War II-era songs on a keyboard. She also has gotten local businesses to donate all kinds of goods and services, and plans to give away a door prize every hour.

There also will be food and nonalcoholic drinks available free of charge.

"We really want the community to be a part of this," she said, and she hopes to see as many people in their 20s as those over 50.

Evans wants to see women wear somewhat formal attire, such as dresses and skirts, and hopes the men wear ties, if not tuxedos.

"I'm going to wear my prom dress," she said.

At the university, Evans is working on a double major in international affairs and communications, media and journalism. She spent her junior year in high school as an exchange student in Belgium, where she improved her French speaking skills.

"I think most people should do an exchange," she said. "You just see the world in a different way."

Tickets for the prom, which will be from 7 to 11 p.m., are \$10 per person and \$15 per couple in advance, and \$15 per person and \$20 per couple at the door. Advance tickets are available at the Belfast Army-Navy Store on lower Main Street, or can be purchased by contacting VFW Auxiliary's treasurer Merleen Palmer at 338-2414, or by e-mailing sunshinecircle@hotmail.com.

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