Happy Holidays to all from the Midcoast Senior College Board of Directors.
With peace, joy and good will to everyone.

Letter from the President:

As I begin service as President of Midcoast Senior College, I want to convey to everyone my perceptions of the health of the College and my vision for our future. I am enthusiastic about the College and feel that we have a strong organization that is continuing to provide a wide spectrum of educational opportunities to senior members of the Midcoast community.

Our course offerings remain outstanding. The Midcoast area contains a large contingent of retired academics, and we have successfully recruited many of them to join our faculty. Thanks to their strong voluntary participation, the College has grown in depth and breadth. Feedback from stu-

Continued on Page 2: President

Important: Withdrawal And Course Refunds Policy Change.

“after being assigned a course, a student may withdraw before the first class. Students will receive a full refund of the tuition fee, but not the membership fee. They must return any books for that course unused and unmarked. Students withdrawing from a class after its first class will not receive a refund.
Students assigned to a course that is filled or cancelled may apply that tuition to an open course of their choosing or receive a refund of the tuition fee and, if not registered for another course, of the membership fee.”

Mission Statement of The Midcoast Inquirer:

The Midcoast Inquirer articulates the academic spirit and educational mission of Midcoast Senior College to offer lifelong learning for older adults. To this end, we provide a bulletin board that announces course offerings, lectures and special events, and a literary forum (or virtual classroom) of essays, reviews, interviews and commentaries written by faculty and students.

--Robert C. Williams, Editor

A small taste of what is coming,
Midcoast Senior College is one of seventeen Senior Colleges in the State of Maine. We serve the area from Freeport to Waldoboro and inland up to Augusta. Most of our classes are held at 10 Tibbets Drive, Brunswick, Maine. This past Fall we offered 26 courses and enrolled 540 students. Class schedules and The Midcoast Inquirer are available on our web site for each semester. Students may also register on line at www.midcoastseniorcollege.org.

The Inquirer extends its sympathies to the friends and family of Al Prest of West Bath who died recently at the age of 73.

Al was a career pilot for TWA, and aviation administrator, and a longtime board member and supporter of Midcoast Senior College.
All right, I’ll admit it. On a balmy autumn day in 2004, during an Executive Board retreat, I surely appeared to be gathering wool, as my mother would say of someone who was daydreaming.

Actually my thoughts were serious. I was thinking that Midcoast Senior College had come through its first four years without a vehicle to announce its mission, elaborate on its vision, and further stimulate the minds of its growing community of adult learners.

With a sudden twist, I sat up and volunteered to take this on because I could imagine a thought provoking publication, three or four times a year, that would offer essays and information to stimulate readers’ thinking and encourage discussion: e.g., faculty observations on their courses, essays on topics of current interest, recommendations for recreational reading, notes on coming cultural events within reach, pleasant readings from known or unknown poets, and so forth.

This publication would need a catchy title, and subsequently I thought about what noteworthy people have said about the process of learning. The English essayist Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) wrote: “Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect.” Marie von Ebner- Eschenbach, the Austrian novelist (1830-1916), said: “In youth we learn; in age we understand.” And from Malcolm Forbes, American publisher (1917-1990), “The purpose of education is to replace an empty mind with an open one.”
What happens to our voices as we grow older.
by Stuart Gillespie

“Older”- what a nasty word ...But over the years I have had the pleasure of directing choirs that have had voices that we might classify as being “older.” Because the art of singing in a choir is a complex physical activity, for choir directors these older voices can present some special considerations as well as challenges. All voices change with age, whether that person sings or not. This is because the voice is a fiber-muscular mechanism. It is called the thyroarytenoid muscle and it is subject to the same state of maturing as other parts of our bodies.

What do we mean when we say “singing is a complex physical activity?” There are three physical steps to making a sound when singing:

- First of all, in order to make a sound we must breath. This may seem obvious but you won’t believe how many times I have stopped a choir to instruct them to breathe before they begin to make a sound. For all singers this should be a quick efficient diaphragmatic inhalation.
- Part two is letting the air back out. One main difference between everyday breathing and singing is that for singing we must release the air slowly in a measured way. If one doesn’t get a good breath prior to phonation, the sound weak and go flat. The older one gets the harder it is to grab that big breathe to begin singing.
- Part three is the phonation process or getting the sound to begin. As we release a measured amount of air through the thyroarytenoid muscle, a sound will result. This is just a beginning raw sound, not unlike that of a violin string, a tiny sound which then becomes amplified and enhanced as it resonates through our head and body cavities. After the sound is produced, we impose the articulation of words over this phonation process.

As I said in the beginning, the voice is a physical part of our body, so it makes sense that over time we will all encounter changes in our sound as we get older. As an example, one can hear the difference over the phone between a younger persons voice as opposed to an older person voice. Some of these changes in our sound are as follows:

- The range between the highest and lowest notes gets smaller
- The range of the voice in older woman gets lower. Men’s voices tend to get higher.
- The tone quality (timber) of the voice will change

Continued on Page 5: Voice
• Good posture and the ability to stand for a length of time is reduced
• The older voice can develop a larger, slower, vibrato. This can become a wobble
• The older voice will develop less ability to get louder resulting in a softer tone
• The older voice will have reduced breathing support as the abdominal muscles weaken
• The result is increased vocal fatigue

Ouch! This is a pretty bleak picture. And add to this the fact that most of us start to lose our hearing and our sight as we get older. It’s a wonder we can sing at all. But there is good news! Just like when we exercise our bodies and because singing is a “Complex physical activity, there are vocal exercises that we can do at home and in a choir to improve the quality and strength of our voices. These exercises and the reasons for these exercises are the subject of another article. Stay tuned -

Stuart Gillespie is a choral director, professor of music and long-time Midcoast Senior College teacher. Among his sources for this article were Victoria Meredith, Singing Better as You Age, and the Choral Journal, October 2015.

Where in the Midcoast?

Do you recognize this place?

An occasional feature of the Inquirer will be a picture from somewhere in our area of a place you might like to visit, if you haven’t already.

The answer is elsewhere in this newsletter.

Article: Greeks in Crisis

A Senior College faculty and board member takes a look at the mind-bewildering Greek debt crisis and its effect on us all.

by Victor Papacosma

The origins of the current economic and political crisis in Greece are many, long-term, complex, and subject to debate. In turn, what transpired in the first nine months of 2015 followed no standardized political scripting.

The fall 2008 nosedive of the US economy had a delayed impact on other economies, but they too started displaying their own weaknesses, some shared, some quite singular. The dire condition of Greece’s budgetary deficit first became public in October 2009. Debt levels reached the point where Athens, no longer in the position to repay its loans, was forced to ask for help from its European Union (EU) partners. In May 2010 the EU and International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided $140 billion in loans to help the Greek government pay its creditors. A memorandum of understanding accompanied the loan, specifying in great detail (and with target dates for completion) around 200 measures aimed at making Greece’s economy more competitive. If the memorandum were to be implemented, then Greece might be transformed from a faltering state with a chronically weak economy into a viable and more competitive polity. From the start, however, it was evident that this memorandum offered the stringent framework for the most rigorous austerity program in post-1945 Europe—-with accompanying hardships for the Greek people. This also translated into contentious politics: successive Greek governments were forced to pass highly unpopular measures in parliament.

A second bailout was soon deemed necessary. After considerable pressures from the EU and IMF, a new coalition government agreed to the terms

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of a second bailout of $170 billion in March 2012. Banks and private-sector bondholders were to accept a 53.5 percent “haircut,” or loss, on the value of their Greek government bonds. In return the Greek government was compelled to accept another harsh list of austerity measures. The need for widespread reform was evident, but the resulting depression-level conditions aroused deep resentment and resistance among Greeks. Greece’s GDP had plummeted by 25 percent, unemployment hovered around 25 percent, and for youth under 25 it exceeded 50 percent.

Syriza, the Coalition of the Radical Left, under the youthful Alexis Tsipras, roundly criticized the ruling coalition government for being too submissive to the repressive dictates of the EU and IMF lenders. The leftist party received the largest number of votes in the May 2014 Europarliamentary elections. Tsipras effectively exploited Greek opposition to austerity policies in the elections of January 25, 2015. His party received the most votes and was able to head a coalition government. Syriza’s electoral platform, among other controversial points, called for a reversal of reforms and mandated privatizations, increasing wages and pensions, and enlarging the state sector—all aimed to undercut the impact of harsh austerity policies on the Greeks. The new government, however, found scant empathy from EU members, foreign investors, and banks that demanded still more reforms before implementing measures to help Greece out of its money crunch and deepening debt levels. Weeks of disputatious and deadlocked negotiations followed, and the Greek economy sputtered even more. Debt payments were falling due, and Greece, excluded from capital markets, had no resources from which to draw funds. Creditors continued to demand reforms and budget cuts as condition for any new loans. Talk increased of GREXIT, Greece’s formal exit from the Eurozone.

After walking out of negotiations, bizarre developments ensued as Tsipras on June 26 dramatically announced a rushed referendum for July 5 that would call on Greeks to vote “Yes” or “No” on the austerity package of the creditors. The young prime minister proclaimed that a No vote would strengthen Greece’s negotiating position and not push the country out of the Eurozone. Supporters of the package said that premise was faulty to disastrous in its projection, arguing for a Yes vote. Flying in the face of pending realities, Greek voters responded in what seems to have been an emotionally therapeutic exercise, albeit quite short-term in its positive returns. 61.3 percent voted No, but the psychic income withered quickly.

Eurozone states and creditors did not react gracefully to this Greek rebuff and quickly responded with a hardening of their austerity and reform demands, the acceptance of which was required for any bailout relief. Capital controls, bank closures, pending default, and the imminence of GREXIT, among other disastrous prospects, literally forced the Syriza leader to reject earlier platforms and promises and to yield to the demands of Greece’s creditors on July 13. Many Greek citizens, more than 70 percent of whom wanted to keep the euro, reluctantly conceded that such would be the bitter price for doing so. An implicit irony is that a leftist-led government swallowed a truly harsh package that a center-right one could not have dared to accept for this third bailout totaling €86 billion over 3 years. Despite non-support from far-left members of Syriza, the mandatory pieces of legislation passed with healthy majorities after stormy parliamentary proceedings and with the backing of the pro-Europe parties in the political opposition. In response, Greece received the first disbursement of the initial tranche of the third bailout on August 20. That same day Tsipras submitted his government’s resignation because of the non-accepting of 43 Syriza deputies who undermined his government’s majority. The snap elections, the third time since January 2015 that Greeks would be called on to vote, were set for September 20.

The final results proved surprising and went against the projections of pre-election polling that had pointed to a close election between Syriza and the center-right New Democracy party: Syriza achieved a comfortable lead over New Democracy and formed a new coalition government. Revealingly, the disgruntled mood of many Greeks at this third election in nine months manifested itself in
the record low voter turnout of 56 percent.

That Tsipras’s popularity had not declined in the period since the July referendum is intriguing. Many Greeks had responded positively to his straightforward delivery. He conceded that he could not agree with the demands imposed upon Greece, adding, however, that he and the Greeks had no choice but to accept them if Greece were to remain within the Eurozone and a true partner in the European Union. Greeks in their voting breakdown had supported with a commanding majority the parties advocating ongoing Eurozone membership. With its altered leftist credentials, Syriza continued to reflect a freshness that was not associated with the old establishment parties tainted by corruption and fault-ridden policies. In his pragmatism Tsipras had become a flip-flop survivor!

Having received the mandate that he required, Tspiras tweeted on September 20: “The road is open before us for work and struggle.” Indeed, it is, and there are many obstacles on this road that must be cleared away. Thus, harsh pension reforms and tax code policies to increase revenues and fight evasion must be implemented and enforced. Value Added Tax (VAT) rates are to be raised with the elimination of many exemptions. Privatization of publically owned or managed industries is to be enacted in an expeditious fashion. And so on goes a very long list of painful policy demands on a Greece that has been placed in an economic straightjacket. It is argued that these structural reforms will assure the flow of bailout funds and that the shorter-term pain of austerity will lead to longer-term growth. Unfortunately, at this critical juncture with seemingly no viable options, the true believers in a positive outcome are few.

Professor Victor Papacosma is a retired historian of modern Greece and Europe who teaches in Midcoast Senior College.

News of the Board of Directors

Each year we recognize board members who are completing their terms and welcome our new board members.

--We would like to thank the following for their contributions to MSC:

Joyce Bessen for her dedicated work for the past two years as editor of The Midcoast Inquirer and as member of the board.

Richard Neiman, who serves as Past President of MSC, and continues as the director of the Summer Wisdom and Current Events Forum series.

--We are pleased to welcome the following new board members:

Clare Durst, a graduate of Rice University, was responsible for many years at Brown University for administrative computing. She resides at The Highlands and is currently active in the Monhegan Island Association and MSC activities.

Reg Elwell graduated from Harvard College with a B.A. in History and received his M.A. from the Yale School of Forestry. He has worked in the forest products industry of Maine, and as a fund-raiser for Boston University and the Massachusetts General Hospital.

Victor Papacosma graduated from Bowdoin College and received his Ph.D. from Indiana University. He was professor of history and served as director of the Lemnitzer Center for NATO and European Union Studies at Kent State University. At MSC he has taught courses in Greek politics and modern Balkan history.

Robert C. Williams, a graduate of Wesleyan and Harvard Universities, taught history at Williams, Davidson and Bates colleges, and at Washington University in St. Louis. The author of numerous books, he serves on the MSC administrative committee, edits this newsletter, and resides at The Highlands of Topsham.

Third-year board member Anthony Belmont is now President of MSC and serves on the executive committee.

Volunteer Recognition and Thanks!!

BRAVO! COURSE LIAISONS, FALL, 2015

Douglas Bates, Joyce Bessen, Nora Bishop, Dean Clark, Jane Colby, Lincoln Colby, Julianna Cliffe, Deborah Cravey, Joyce Devito, Richard Devito, Marnie Hackenberg, Joan Hardy, Marnie Kalkstein, Jo-Jean Keller, Frisca Kenison, Eileen Kleinkopf, Phyllis Lisi, Joseph Lisi, David McKeith, Josephine Mussomeli, Charles (Skip) Orem, Gerry Orem, Mary Swain, Deborah Showalter, Bonnie Studiford, Karen Tilbor, Kelly Watt, David Wiggin, Phyllis Wolfe, Jean Wood.

BraVo! Bulk Mailing Volunteers, June, 2015

Joyce Bessen, Nora Bishop, Bianca Chambers, Miriam Charette, Joyce Devito, Richard Devito, Clare Durst, Dave Fluharty, Jan Leavitt, Judy Rouillard.
Midcoast Senior College ~ New Faculty for Spring Semester ~ 2016

The Midcoast Senior College is fortunate to again have six new faculty members who will be joining our veteran teachers this coming spring semester which begins March 14, 2016.

**Pilar Tirado** has a doctorate in Hispanic Studies from Brown University and has taught at undergraduate and graduate levels including at Bates and Bowdoin. Pilar lives in Brunswick and offers private and small group instruction in Spanish. Her passion is Cervante’s masterpiece Don Quixote. Pilar’s course will offer a close reading and discussion of this work which is considered to be the world’s first novel and one of the funniest and most tragic books ever written.

**Ron Carroll** is a retired Portland Oncologist. Ron was Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Vermont Medical School and founder and president of the Maine Center for Cancer Medicine and Blood Disorders. Since his retirement he has taught for 15 years at the OLLI senior college at USM. He will be offering a course titled “Know Thyself, Human Biology and the Sexual Ethics of the Schools of Athens”. Ron’s course involves both science and philosophy and will include readings of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as well as an introduction to some fundamental concepts of biochemistry.

**Bill VanderWolk** holds a doctorate in Romance Languages from the University of North Carolina and has taught French at Bowdoin College for the last 29 year years. His particular area of interest is the 19th and 20th century French novel and its intersections with history and memory. Bill lives in Brunswick will be teaching a course on Patrick Modiano, a French writer who was recently awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Students will read 3 novels and see one film by Modiano who is credited with sparking the late 1960’s re-examination of France’s collaboration with her Nazi occupiers.

**Steve Piker** is an anthropologist who taught for 44 years at Swarthmore College before retiring to Yarmouth in 2009. He has taught several courses at OLLI at USM, Portland. Steve also does volunteer work at the Portland Boys and Girls Club and at the Riverton Elementary School in Portland. Steve’s course, “The Gods and Us: Religion and the Human Career” will investigate questions such as: What is religion? Why has religion been so important in lives and history? How does religion change? Religion case materials will be emphasized.

**Ed Lovely** had a full career in the chemical industry before returning to graduate school at Drew University in New Jersey where he received a PhD in the Philosophy of Religion. He taught philosophy and religion at Fairleigh Dickenson and Drew University before retiring to Topsham in 2012. Ed will teach an 8 week course, “An Authentic Life – Philosophies of Aging”. Participants will engage in a dialogue based on selected readings and ideas relating to living an authentic life as we age.

**Doug Bennett** received his PhD in Political Science from Yale University after graduating magna cum laude from Haverford College. He has taught Political Science at Temple University, Swarthmore and Earlham College. Before retiring in 2011, Doug served as president of Earlham College for 4 years. Doug lives in Topsham and is very active as a board member of the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust. He will be teaching a course titled, “Promoting the Common Welfare: National Public Policy Today”. The US Constitution begins, “We the People, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity…” These goals are largely accomplished through public policy. Doug’s course will be a rapid excursion through some of the most important areas of national public policy today.

The **Mystery Picture** (page 5) is of the yard at the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath showing the outline of the ship *Wyoming*. *Wyoming* was a wooden six-masted schooner, the largest wooden schooner ever built. She was built and completed in 1909 by the firm of Percy & Small in Bath, Maine. *Wyoming* was also one of the largest wooden ships ever built, 450 ft (140 m) from jib-boom tip to spanker boom tip, and the last six-masted schooner built on the east coast of the US. *Wikipedia*
**Winter Wisdom Storm Warning System**

Just a friendly reminder that Winter Wisdom lectures are cancelled when the Brunswick School District is closed for snow or ice.

In such cases, the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick is also closed. Senior College normally schedules a snow make-up date for the cancelled lecture.

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**Historical Nuggets from the Midcoast Past**

Everyone knows that *Joshua Chamberlain* of Brunswick was the hero of Little Round Top at the Battle of Gettysburg. Chamberlain, a former Bowdoin faculty member, accepted Confederate surrender at Appomattox and went on to become Governor of Maine. But how many have heard of *Holman Melcher* (1842-1905), the first officer down the hill for the 20th Maine on July 3, 1863, when the fate of the nation seemed to hang in the balance?

Melcher was from Topsham, not Brunswick, and attended Bates, not Bowdoin. Chamberlain gave the order to charge downhill without ammunition, but Melcher actually carried the order out. The president of the 20th Maine Regimental Association was not Chamberlain, but Melcher, who went on to become Mayor of Portland.

The two heroes argued for the rest of their lives about who did what on one of the most fateful days in American history. But Chamberlain of Brunswick won the Congressional Medal of Honor, and Melcher of Topsham dropped into the memory hole. They are two Midcoast heroes, one remembered, the other forgotten, from opposite sides of the Androscoggin. We celebrate them both. –RCW

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**20th Maine Volunteer Reunion, Gettysburg, 1889.**

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**1st Lt. Holman Melcher of the 20th Maine Infantry**
Mark Your Calendar

Winter Wisdom 2016 at Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick, 12:15-1:45 pm

Jan 6 .... The Musical Duo, Castlebay – The music and poetry of Robert Burns
Jan 13 .... Leonard Meiselman - A Protest Artist on Monhegan
Jan 20 .... Susan Beegel - The Bodleian Library and Its Treasures: An illustrated History
Jan 27 .... Carolyn Bryant - Pedaling from Amsterdam to Bruges: Bicycle Culture in the Low Countries

Feb 3 ..... Bob Bunselmeyer - The British poet and artist David Jones and his epic prose poem In Parenthesis
Feb 10 .... Dr. Tony Belmont - Why Don’t Submariners Get the Bends?
Feb 17 .... Longfellow Days
Feb 24 .... Snow make-up day