



The Midcoast Inquirer

Midcoast Senior College's Triannual Newsletter • Dec 2021 • Vol. 16, No. 3

Once Again, For the Very First Time MSC's "New" Newsletter

This is the first issue of *The Midcoast Inquirer* under a new editor. It is another iteration of MSC's newsletter that has been edited by a number of our members since 2004.

David McKeith had the original idea for a MSC newsletter and chose to use the word "Inquirer" for the newsletter name to reflect MSC students' curiosity and commitment to learning. David edited the newsletter from 2004 until 2012.

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Heads Up! MSC's Annual Fund Drive

It is that time of year again when we ask the MSC community to donate to our annual fund. The Development Committee takes the lead on this appeal, which consists of a letter sent to 1,500+ households in late November. We send this letter to current MSC members as well as people who have taken a course or supported the College in another way in the past.

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Letter from the President

Lynn Lockwood, *MSC President*

Hello MSC members and welcome to the new *Inquirer*!

The Midcoast Inquirer is one of many changes you will discover at Midcoast Senior College this year as we welcome new Board members and continue to adjust to new realities.

- **Newsletter:** The retirement of eminent historian Bob Williams, previous editor of *The Midcoast Inquirer*, necessitated appointment of a new editor. Susan Michael, an MSC Board Member, experienced journalist, and Chair of the new Community Outreach Committee, graciously accepted the post. Susan will bring a community focus to the newsletter, which will now be published three times a year instead of two.
- **Board of Directors:** The Midcoast Senior College Board welcomed six new Board Members in July: Freda Bernotavicz, Leona Dufour, Bruce Hauptli, Jay Kuder, Craig Snapp, and Bill VanderWolk. This group brings an impressive diversity of knowledge and experience that will enrich the Board in the coming years. In order for you to get to know our new Board members, we have profiled Freda, Leona, and Bruce in this issue of the *Inquirer*, and will profile Jay, Craig, and Bill in the next issue.
- **Planning for the Future:** As you know, MSC made many changes in response to the pandemic. Although the future is unpredictable, we must create an outline for moving forward that incorporates the lessons we have learned, accommodates uncertainty, and considers the best interests of our students. A planning committee has been created and assigned the challenging task of making recommendations to the Board in a number of areas by the end of the 2021. Committee members are Janet Kehl, Kelly Matzen, Susan Michael, Erv Snyder, and Jay Kuder, Chair.
- **Me:** When Doug Bates, our President for the past four years, termed off the Board, a new president was required. The Board accepted the recommendation of the Executive Committee to elect an interim president for one year, since the majority of the Board will be new by 2022. I'm honored to have been elected your President and will do my best to help maintain MSC's excellence as we carefully navigate into the future.
- **MSC's Annual Fund Drive:** The Development Committee is launching our annual fund drive as you read this. This annual appeal is one of our major sources of income and helps pay our day-to-day expenses. We thank you for your generous donations in the past and hope you will give again this year.

Thank you for all you do for MSC,
Lynn Lockwood

Follow us on 

The next editor was Lois Lamdin, an MSC board member and former professor of the Victorian novel and Jewish-American literature and writing, who edited the newsletter from 2012-2013. The third editor was Harpswell resident Joyce Bessen, a long-standing MSC member who steered the newsletter from 2013-2015.

Bob Williams, *Inquirer* editor from 2016-2021, brought another editing approach to the newsletter that reflected a strong commitment to inquiry. Bob is a retired professor and dean and has published numerous books and articles on Russian history. He has been active with MSC since 2014 and serves on the Board of Directors.

As the new editor, I bring a different perspective to the newsletter. Since I joined the MSC Board in 2019, I have been impressed by how many people volunteer for MSC

in various positions. In this and future newsletters you will read about what different volunteers and committees actually do, why they support MSC, and the community spirit they demonstrate. In fact, there are so many hard-working MSC members that they constitute a community of their own.

I sometimes think of MSC as a concentric circle that constitutes its own community and expands out to the Midcoast community that we serve. Beyond this, with our courses on Zoom, we are now welcoming new MSC students from other parts of the country. What a future we have in store!

Susan Michael

Special thanks to Nora Bishop and Bob Williams, who provided the information about former editors. ■

Midcoast Senior College

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022

Lynn Lockwood, President

Jay Kuder, Vice-president

Leona Dufour, Secretary

Karen Williams, Treasurer

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Freda Bernotavicz

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Janet Kehl

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Susan Michael

Craig Snapp

Erv Snyder

William VanderWolk

Bob Williams



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Development Chair Bruce Hauptli commented on the importance of this fund drive: "Because of generous donations from our supporters, we have been able to make investments in technology as we seek to continue to fulfill our mission in these challenging times. As we plan for the future, a priority is to provide a safe and accessible option for any senior who wishes to participate in MSC opportunities, whether remotely or in-person."

Our donors can be proud of their past support of MSC; their donations form the backbone of the College's operating budget. We hope this high level of support continues this year.

Note: For the tax year 2021, individuals can deduct up to \$300 (and married couples filing jointly can deduct up to \$600) of charitable contributions from their income without itemizing. Also, if individuals plan to donate some or all the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to a charitable organization, the funds need to be sent directly to the organization from their broker. In this case, the RMD is not taxable. This is called a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD). ■

Zoom Co-hosts and the Zoom/Classroom Hybrid Model

MSC is designing its future

By Susan Michael

In mid-March 2020, as the news of the Covid pandemic became dire, MSC closed down its in-person classes. The immediate challenge was huge: how could MSC reconstruct its traditional classroom structure in order to remain open?

Executive Director Donna Marshall took the first big step in this rebuilding process: she looked to Zoom, a video conferencing computer application founded in 2011. Zoom was the College's best option if it wanted to continue classes for the duration of the pandemic.

But most MSC teachers and students were not regular users of Zoom, which made the transition to teleconference classes even more daunting. What followed was an intense effort by MSC to teach all participants about Zoom and find tech-savvy assistants to help teachers and students navigate the technical aspects of remote classes.

Early in the planning to go to Zoom classes, Donna began to recruit MSC members as co-hosts and to develop a comprehensive training program for both teachers and co-hosts. Throughout spring of 2020, many meetings were held for teachers and the new co-hosts to go over every detail of a Zoom class: how to present oneself on camera, how to dress for the camera, how to set up "Zoom space" in your home, how to manage student discussion online, and, perhaps most important, how to provide students with hands-on assistance in navigating Zoom. Say what you will, teaching has always had a bit of show business attached to it; this aspect of teaching is even more important on Zoom.

Prior to each class the teacher, co-host, and Donna meet to discuss the checklist of details involved in digital presentations. "We still do this," Donna said. "We have a lot of meetings to discuss any changes in Zoom and other changes in how the classes are going. We pay attention to the protocols designed to help overcome the remoteness of Zoom."

The result today is 15 active co-hosts, whose only remuneration is free tuition to the class they help lead. Donna is always looking for more volunteers.

Co-hosts facilitate and de-mystify

The Inquirer interviewed two current co-hosts who are also involved in the planning of Zoom/in-person classes in the future.

Harry Hopcroft is a retired Navy pilot who moved to Brunswick in 1977. He is also a computer tech expert, having worked on Apple II technology in the late 70s. He was recruited by former MSC president Tony Belmont for his technical expertise. "I had taken some MSC courses and also trained instructors in computer equipment before Covid." Having been active on the technical side of MSC for years, he now finds himself helping to plan MSC's technical future.



Our job as co-hosts is to run professors through the Zoom process in a way that they can get it and work with it.

—Harry Hopcroft
Zoom Co-host

Judy Fiterman was a television news video editor and technical director for 38 years at a television station in the Washington, D.C. area. She trains instructors for teaching on-camera and troubleshoots with students in the classes she co-hosts. "I like meeting with teachers to talk about how to connect with their students by looking at the camera, how to choose optimal locations for their computers, use of correct lighting, how to make use of printed articles, photos or videos, even selecting the most flattering clothing and makeup," she said. "Sometimes it is as simple as reminding teachers to look at their camera rather than at students' faces on their screen to make good eye contact." Judy is also actively planning the future use of Zoom.



I like meeting with teachers to talk about how to make contact with their students on Zoom.

—Judy Fiterman
Zoom Co-host

Both Harry and Judy recognize the variety of MSC's teachers' technical expertise. "Some professors are pros in tech issues, some are uncomfortable with technology, even disinterested in learning about it," Harry said. "But most of them want to know how to do it. Our job (as co-hosts) is to run them through the Zoom process in a way that they can get it and work with it."

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The biggest issue for MSC teachers is their fear of losing contact with their students. “There are certainly drawbacks to Zoom,” Judy said. “Teachers are used to the classroom, and you just don’t get the same student interaction on Zoom.” Harry noted that the key to successful Zoom classes is the teacher’s enthusiasm: “Successful Zoom classes depend on the professors’ ability to use the technology to establish a comfort level among the students.”

Co-hosts perform a number of tasks for each class. They establish communications with students by sending weekly emails with the link to Zoom, and by chatting with them before the Zoom class begins. They monitor meeting details and may provide screen sharing of the teacher’s information. Some co-hosts also talk to students on the phone who are having trouble getting on Zoom and activating their audio and video functions. “You have to be able to understand what the students are looking at on their screens,” Judy said. “Co-hosts need to be patient and anticipate issues; they need to think about what students will need before the class begins. Students are getting faster at working with Zoom, but we still need to be there for them, no matter what the problem is.”

The hybrid class model

Early in MSC’s experience with Zoom, MSC realized that there was an untapped group of students who sign up for Zoom classes. While many students still prefer in-person classes, a good percentage of current students report that Zoom allows them to participate because of their physical difficulty attending in-person classes, and Zoom can eliminate bad weather as a barrier to attending a class. The future of MSC could include both in-person and Zoom classes, and/or hybrid classes.

Donna, the MSC Long-Range Planning Committee, and the members of the Technical Advisory Committee, which includes Judy, Harry, Board member Craig Snapp, and Clare Durst, are now researching the feasibility of simultaneous Zoom/in-person classes. Meetings are now being held with public institutions in the area who have experience with and the capacity to hold hybrid classes. Harry and Judy attended a conference in October organized by Tidemill Institute where

Harry presented the hybrid model, and Board member Erv Snyder facilitated MSC Long-Range Planning Committee discussions in November with local school districts who have experience in remote learning.

The options available to the MSC Board range from separate Zoom and in-person classes, simultaneous Zoom/in-person classes, and, depending upon the status of Covid, all Zoom classes. The biggest challenges of simultaneous Zoom/in-person classes are, as Harry put it, “a very high-speed internet, two computers in the classroom, and knowledgeable co-hosts.” Two other challenges are camera placement in the classroom and effective sound management.

“Co-hosts need to be patient and anticipate issues, they need to think about what students will need before the class begins.”

-Co-host Judy Fiterman

A final decision on the Zoom/in-person hybrid model has not been made yet. MSC may eventually decide on separate Zoom and in-person classes. In the meantime, MSC courses continue to be held exclusively on Zoom. But two things are already clear: co-hosts are now a permanent fixture in MSC’s future and Zoom in some form is here to stay.

The story of how MSC transitioned to classes on Zoom suggests two strengths of the College that made this transition so successful. First,

MSC leadership was willing to take a leap into the relative unknown, knowing that the majority of teachers and students were not familiar with or tech-savvy enough to acclimate easily to Zoom. This was not a rash decision, but it was bold. Another non-profit organization might have decided to remain closed until the pandemic ended, which we now know would have meant months of no classes, possible damage to MSC-student relationships, and reduced income.

Second, the expertise that MSC volunteers bring to the College apparently knows no bounds. MSC members often ask Donna for a volunteer with a particular skill or talent. She responds immediately: one volunteer spent years in broadcasting...another is an early childhood education expert...yet another taught creative writing. The co-host position reflects the depth of MSC’s volunteers’ experiences and their willingness to sink their teeth into a complex challenge. It is safe to say that the Zoom classes and the research into future Zoom/in-person classes would not be so successful and informed without these volunteers. ■

Our Sponsors

MSC thrives with the help of its friends

By Susan Michael



THE HIGHLANDS

A GRACE MGMT COMMUNITY

*MSC benefits from the generosity of **The Highlands**, a retirement community that has been one of our sponsors for over 10 years. We will profile each of our sponsors in future issues.*

The Highlands has been a fixture in the Midcoast region retirement community for over 30 years. It encompasses 100 acres in Topsham and consists of a mix of 180 homes (2 bedrooms/2 baths), 80 apartments (studio and 1 and 2 bedrooms), and 70 assisted living and 25 memory care apartments. The Highlands's 450 residents range from totally independent seniors to those who require daily, professional attention. There are over 140 staff members.

Chelsie Mitchell, Executive Director of The Highlands, describes the community's role as one of an active partner with residents to help them establish their own goals for their older years. "When a new resident moves here," she said, "they meet with a Wellness Coordinator who discusses with them what they want their time at The Highlands to look like. Residents set goals for the kind of life they want to lead here."

The Highlands emphasis on active living

Over time, The Highlands has established a full complement of social and physical activities for its residents. The complex has a swimming pool and a fitness center headed by two full-time fitness instructors; over 40% of the residents use the fitness center regularly.

The community's calendar is always full: it includes regular community events such as barbeques, van rides to interesting venues in the area, and even "beer tours" to local breweries. There is a well-used library and clubs that reflect residents' interests, including gardening, books, knitting and

needlework, Go Green projects, Friends of Highlands Trails, and the Highlands Chorale. Residents embrace new activities enthusiastically: a new line dancing class begun last summer attracted 17 residents for its first gathering. Outdoor activities are important at The Highlands; for example, Chelsie and her husband, Igor, began constructing a bocce court last summer.

The Highlands consists of six co-operatives, each with a Board of Directors. The six Cooperatives are composed of almost 140 individual homes and two apartment buildings. When residents "purchase" a home they are actually buying a share in the Cooperative which owns the individual homes. All shareholders pay a monthly fee to the Cooperative covering community upkeep including landscaping, snowplowing, and bi-weekly housekeeping. In addition to the Co-operative homes, the Highlands includes two buildings featuring rental apartments (Maine Lodge and Old Town Hall Apartments).

Chelsie said that The Highlands is particularly proud of their assisted living and memory care programs. "Assisted living care includes help with bathing and dressing, queuing (organizing residents for an activity), medication management, mobility, and personal care. Assisted care usually extends to the end of a resident's life. Our memory care professionals are trained in dementia and Alzheimer's care. Many of our memory care staff are licensed dementia practitioners. They are wonderful caregivers."



Chelsie Mitchell, Executive Director of The Highlands, describes the level of care offered by The Highlands as "comprehensive and caring."

The Highlands prides itself on being flexible. Like many organizations, it has faced a number of challenges during the pandemic. Given that the community consists of an at-risk age group, many residents were reluctant to shop for groceries during the worst months of Covid. The Highlands staff responded to this need by grocery shopping for any resident who wanted the help. As Chelsie put it, "We respond to every challenge, it is just who we are and what we do."

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A diverse social scene

For John Trumper, a retired pediatrician who has been a resident of The Highlands for over 10 years, living at the Highlands means that “I can be as pro-active in my activities as I want to be.”

Another benefit John enjoys about The Highlands is its location. When he and his late wife Nina began to research retirement communities in Vermont and New Hampshire, John noted that unlike many such communities, the Highlands’s location near the woods yet in a small town offers different opportunities for its residents. There are many paths for walking in the woods located just outside his door, and Highlands’s residents can easily be involved in area churches, libraries, and local clubs.

John is also impressed by the variety of residents at The Highlands. “It’s a nice mixture of retired nurses, teachers, college faculty and other backgrounds,” he said. “This diversity is not always present in other retirement communities. There isn’t any clique that dominates the social life here.”

“All of our efforts
at The Highlands
have to do with
treating our
residents as family.”

-Chelsie Mitchell,
Executive Director of
The Highlands

John has benefitted from the professional care offered by The Highlands’s memory care unit when his wife’s health declined. He appreciates the care the unit provided Nina, and learned about how to cope with Alzheimer’s by attending seminars sponsored by the memory unit. Also, unlike other relatives

of Alzheimer’s patients who endure 20-minute trip from home to a nursing home, “I also appreciated the fact that the memory care unit was a 4-minute walk from my home.”

“The Highlands is home”

Many retirements communities, medical clinics and businesses use the term “we are family” to describe their approach to their clients. Truth to tell, this slogan sometimes rings hollow. However, The Highlands, Chelsie said, practices this slogan seriously. “We use the term ‘family’ in the sense that we never say, ‘that’s not my job.’ Every bit

of the care we give and the new ideas for activities we come up with, for example, have to do with treating our residents as family members.” As The Highlands’s own slogan puts it, “it is not *like* home, it *is* home.” ■

Have MSC Cap, Will Travel

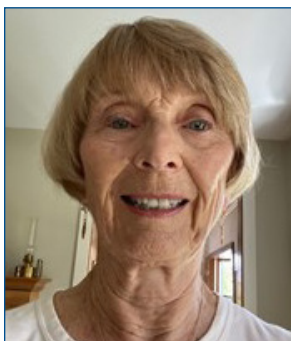
Long-time MSC member and current Board member Erv Snyder travelled to Patra, Jordan, earlier this year and sent us this photograph, complete with his MSC cap. We would like to begin a new tradition: please send a photo of you in your own MSC cap taken in out-of-the-ordinary places to msoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org for publication in our next newsletter. To purchase a monogrammed MSC cap (or fleece vest), visit our website at <https://midcoastseniorcollege.org/msc-cap/>.



Meet Our New MSC Board Members

As Lynn Lockwood noted in her Letter from the President, the MSC Board welcomed six new Board members this year: Freda Bernotavicz, Leona Dufour, Bruce Hauptli, Jay Kuder, Craig Snapp, and Bill VanderWolk. The Midcoast Inquirer sent a short questionnaire to Freda, Leona, and Bruce, asking them to tell us a bit about themselves. Here are their stories. We will ask Jay, Craig, and Bill to contribute their stories to the next issue of The Midcoast Inquirer. Editor

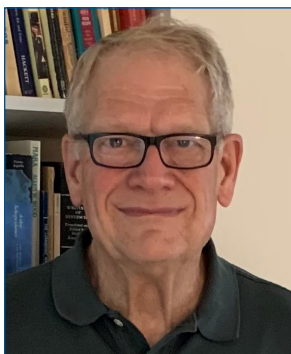
Where did you spend your childhood? Where did you receive your college/university education?



Freda Bernotavicz: I was born on a farm in a small village called Sunnyside in the north of England. I graduated from Nottingham University and then came to the United States to go to graduate school. I received an MS in Instructional Communications from Syracuse University in 1966.



Leona Dufour: I was born and raised in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. I received a BA in English from Wilkes University and a Master's degree in English from the University of Maryland. While at Maryland I was a graduate teaching assistant instructing two sections per semester of freshmen English. I was part of a program that emphasized writing, where my classes studied various prose examples, examining the techniques these writers used. Grading those student essays proved valuable when I later became a secondary school teacher.



Bruce Hauptli: I was born in Dubuque, Iowa and lived there through eighth grade (except for two years in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan). We moved to Palo Alto, CA where I went to high school and graduated in 1966. I attended Lawrence University in Appleton, WI

where I met and married Laurie in 1968. I graduated with a BA in Mathematics in 1970 and did my graduate work at Washington University in St. Louis, MO, where I received a MA and PhD in Philosophy (1973, 1974).

Please describe your major professional work experience, including educational or business affiliations.

Freda: Instead of returning to England as planned after graduate school, I worked in Washington D.C. for the National Education Association and the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. The focus of my work was improving college teaching, designing instructional programs and using job analysis to develop job-related training programs. After we moved to Maine in 1974, I was hired by the University of Southern Maine and worked there until I retired in 2017. During that time, I directed a number of applied research projects in education, training, and organizational development and founded the Institute for Public Sector Innovation, which grew into a multi-faceted organization with over 60 projects, 150 staff and a budget of \$1.5 million.

From 2008-2017, I was USM's Team Leader on a national leadership and workforce development institute using remote technology to provide continuing education programs. From 1990 to 2017, I served on the Board and as Chair of the Standards Committee of the National Staff Development and Training Association. I designed national standards for training programs and developed competency models for roles in the field. I also wrote or co-wrote a book on educational systems design, peer-reviewed journal articles, project reports, and curricula on leadership, competency and workforce development, and instructional design. I was also on the faculty of USM's Muskie School where I taught Human Resource Management. From 1996-2008, I served on the Maine Governor's Children's Cabinet.

Leona: After substitute teaching for a couple of years in my local school district, I was offered a position in the English department at Carmel (New York) High School. I taught all levels of Regents English and later for several years an AP course in grammar and composition. I also taught creative writing courses. I loved teaching my AP students. One of my fondest memories of that group was the trial we put on to determine whether Richard III was guilty of ordering the murders of his nephews. By a slim majority the jurors

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determined his guilt. Another memory concerns a student who practically devoured his copy of Crime and Punishment, as it was so well-thumbed when he turned it in. I don't think he became another Rasloknikov, however. Years later a chance encounter with another student made me realize that teachers never know what small comment can open up a world for a young person. After greeting each other, this student recalled a quick chalk note I'd made about Dostoyevsky's other novels. He had made a note of the titles, and was prompted by that note to go on and read most of Dostoyevsky's other works. He wanted to make sure years later that what I thought was an offhand comment had generated his enthusiasm for the Russian novelist.

Bruce: Beginning in 1976 I began a 39-year career teaching philosophy at Florida International University in Miami, FL. It is the largest minority-serving institution in the State of Florida and the largest Hispanic-serving educational institution in the United States. Throughout my career I taught undergraduate courses in philosophy, and I served on way too many committees. I also taught a course in the University's Masters in Liberal Studies program, lectured regularly in courses for the Graduate Program in Educational Leadership, and team-taught a course as a Faculty Fellow in our Honors College each semester for five years.

I was very active in collegial governance and served at various times as the Chairperson of the Faculty Senate, Departmental Chairperson, the First Faculty Fellow in the Provost's Office, and was very active in the Faculty Union (the United Faculty of Florida). When I began my career FIU, I taught mostly upper-division undergraduate courses (juniors and seniors) and "urban Masters' programs" (nursing, business, social work, etc.). When I retired FIU was a 55,000- student Research I university with the full panoply of programs from an Honors College to a Medical School.

When and why did you move to Maine?

Freda: When my husband and I started our family, we decided we wanted to raise our children in a quieter, more child-friendly environment than a big city. We moved from a town house on Capitol Hill to an old farmhouse in Litchfield in 1974. I now spend my winters living in Brunswick and summers at the farm where I enjoy gardening and being outdoors.

Leona: I retired in 2004; after building our log home in Georgetown, we moved here permanently in 2005. When our son was nine months old, we packed up our yellow MGB/GT and left White Plains for Prince Edward Island. On our return trip we stopped at Bailey Island, and I was so impressed with the light of the midcoast. At that time, I fervently hoped we would eventually live in Maine, renewing that hope during the many vacations we had on Bailey Island over the next 30 years. As we pursued our careers in New York and raised our two children, that hope was always in the back of our minds.

Bruce: We retired to Bath in the summer of 2015.

What is it about Midcoast Senior College that piqued your interest?

Freda: I enjoy learning and have taken some post graduate courses related to my work, but the shorter offerings of Senior Colleges meet my need to explore a variety of subjects taught by experts in their fields. When I started spending winters in Brunswick in 2010, I found MSC offerings to be a wonderful way to learn new subjects.

Leona: About two years after we'd settled into our home, I received a list of MSC course offerings and I was impressed by its literary and historical offerings. I was also impressed by the variety as it seemed the College offered something for everyone. I've mostly taken courses in literature and history.

Bruce: After my first year of retirement, I began to miss teaching, but didn't want to read and grade papers again. Laurie convinced me to try teaching at MSC and I was hooked. I've taught six courses for MSC and repeated my "Plato's "Aristocratic and Authoritarian" Republic vs. Dewey's "Pragmatic" Democracy" in the Fall term.

What specific skills or experience do you bring to MSC?

Freda: I have good organizational and management skills and knowledge of instructional design. For a number of years I was involved in a project to provide leadership training through distance learning. But by no means do I describe myself as an expert in the technical aspects of distance learning. But in my role as director of an applied research institute, I encouraged the development of a community of learners and promoted team building and working together to achieve a common goal.

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Leona: Teaching on the secondary school level requires a variety of skills. I've always been bored witless by examinations of pedagogical techniques, but I do believe that one skill generates the others, and it is the teacher's enthusiasm for her subject. Probably my most important role model was a professor I had for a late 17th century English prose and poetry class. We mostly read Anglican sermons (supporting Charles II) and John Dryden. Almost no one cut a single class. We never looked at our watches as he went through the rhetorical gymnastics of Dryden's "A Song for Saint Cecilia's Day." Such was his enthusiasm! I still remember the energy of that professor driving me to do the work for an A in his class.

And that outcome—appreciation at the minimum, passion at the extreme—became the goal of my own teaching.

Summing up, I've gladly learned and gladly wanted to share what I've learned—thank you, Clerk of Oxford! I've also been fortunate to co-teach four courses with Janet Kehl where we've found the most enthusiastic students—those taking courses at Midcoast Senior College.

Bruce: I have a wealth of experience fostering the development of educational programs and working collegially to foster educational communities. ■

MSC's Events Committee

Unsung Heroines

By Susan Michael

MSC's Events Committee was probably the committee most effected by the pandemic. During this difficult time, other committees, after some re-organization relating to the use of Zoom, operated smoothly. The Curriculum Committee still developed its course lists, the Development Committee still spearheaded the annual fund drive, the Treasurer still produced monthly financial reports, and the Board of Directors still met every month. But the Events Committee had lost its venues: its live events, including special meetings, luncheons, and summer excursions, had to be cancelled for the duration of the heavy Covid months. MSC remains on Zoom, at least for the winter months.

However, the Committee has remained intact. Its Chair, Janet Kehl, was succeeded by Freda Bernotavicz at MSC's Annual Meeting last June, and Committee members Bonnie Studdiford, Sally Broderick, and Deb Showalter are standing by for MSC to return to its full event schedule. Evie Papascoma, a long-standing enthusiastic member of the committee, has recently stepped back from her active involvement.

An opportunity for MSC to participate in the Brunswick Downtown Association's Barbeque occurred in September. The Events Committee swung into action without a hitch. It met to devise an MSC table at the event, collect information



*The Events Committee prepares handouts for the MSC table at September's Brunswick Downtown Association Barbeque. **Left to right:** Freda Bernotavicz, Sally Broderick, Deb Showalter, and Bonnie Studdiford. **Photo by Nate Bennett.***

to distribute to the public, and arrange a schedule for volunteers to staff the table. All this came naturally to the committee, and the result was a table that attracted people interested in becoming involved in MSC.

Special Events was originally a subcommittee of the former Administrative Committee. Kelly Watt was the Chair of the subcommittee; Nora Bishop, Dorothy Bell, and Bianca Chambers were members. (MSC students would recognize Dorothy. She organized and hosted the coffee and snacks table next to our old classrooms on Burbank Avenue, which was her own version of a continuous special event.)

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In 2018, when Kelly Watt stepped down, the late Jim Wilkes, then President, asked Janet to chair the Events subcommittee. Under Janet's leadership, the subcommittee continued organizing the annual meeting and luncheon, a faculty luncheon held before each term, and excursions usually held in August. Past excursions have included a cruise of the Kennebec River, a play at Monmouth Theater, and a trip to Monhegan Island.

Janet noted that this is a good time for Freda, her successor as Chair of Events (now designated a Committee), to take over. "This is a good time for new leadership. We have restructured our course terms. This means that the committee is going to have to think about the number of faculty lunches we should have and also think about how we are going to structure the annual meeting and luncheon." She also complimented committee members for their hard work – "every event involves a lot of details."

Bonnie was one of the committee members recruited by Donna. She and her late husband Linton, who was an ordained Episcopalian priest, moved to Maine in 1973. They lived in a number of towns until moving to Brunswick in 1999 and became involved in MSC eight years ago. Linton was the chairperson of the Curriculum Committee for a time and co-chair with Victor Papascoma until 2020, and taught a number of courses. Bonnie is an idea person; she is at the center of creating ideas for every event. Janet credits Bonnie as having a "great sense of the festive."

Deb Showalter, a retired teacher, is another committee member. She moved to Maine in 2014 and lives in Bath. One reason she enjoys the Events Committee is the creative ideas that people come up with at planning meetings. "We all come from different backgrounds and life experiences, and we use

"We all come from different backgrounds and life experiences, and we use them to come up with great ideas."

-Events Committee member
Deb Showalter

them to come up with great ideas." Sally Broderick, another committee member, was a hospice nurse in Connecticut before moving to Brunswick in 2000 and continued her work here at CHANS. She heard about MSC from some of her patients, who had taken courses. "MSC gives me the elective courses that I never got a chance to take in nursing

school," she said. As for the Events Committee, "it's fun to get together and get to know other people. We have a job to do, we plan events, but we have a good time doing it."

Freda and the Committee have already developed a tentative schedule for next year. "We are making ourselves available to organize events in 2022 if the decision is made to host in-person events. We have made a tentative reservation for a faculty luncheon at the Topsham Library in March and are looking at a Merrymeeting Bay excursion in June, an event involving the Maine Maritime Museum." In

the longer term, Freda would like the Committee and the Board to consider hosting more excursions, as they have proved to be very popular.

Freda considers herself lucky to have succeeded Janet. "What Janet did in organizing the transition to me as Chair was extraordinary. She developed files with the information on events that I needed, making the transition for me as Chair as easy as possible."

The Committee's work on the September Brunswick Downtown Association event was only a taste of more in-person events in the future. The Events Committee is waiting for MSC to reinstate such events, as are we all. And Bonnie, Deb, Sally, and Freda are looking forward to the work and the fun to begin again. ■

A Winter Wisdom Schedule for Everyone

MSC's annual Winter Wisdom lecture schedule begins in early January 2022. All one-hour programs take place on Zoom on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. and are free of charge. Winter Wisdom is sponsored by The Highlands Retirement Community in Topsham. For more information about these programs and to register to attend, please visit our website at www.midcoastseniorcollege.org.

January 6: Musical Narrative and the 4 Chopin Ballads

George Lopez, Beckwith Artist-in-Residence at Bowdoin College, opens Winter Wisdom with a lecture/performance of Frédéric Chopin ballads.

January 12: Maine's First Ship: Reconstruction of the *Virginia* of Sagadahoc

Jim Parmentier, a research scientist and lifetime sailor, will discuss the current *Virginia* building project and the history of the ship, as well as plans for the "new" *Virginia*.

January 19: Maritime Maine and Hawaii

Mainers played a pivotal role in the U.S. annexation of Hawaii and shipbuilding families were at the forefront of this effort. **Christopher Timm**, Interim Executive Director of Maine Maritime Museum, will explore the connections between these two states, all told through the lens of the Museum's collections.

January 26: Recent Congressional Action and What It Means for Maine Seniors

Maine's Senator and former Governor Angus King will speak on recent legislation passed in Congress and its implications for Maine's seniors.

February 2: Microplastic Pollution in Aquatic Environments

This discussion of a critical environmental problem will be led by **Abby Barrows**, a native of Stonington who has traveled the world to study both marine and terrestrial environments and has directed global microplastic pollution research from her Deer Isle oyster farm.

February 9: CRISPR Therapy

In 2020, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna who pioneered the use of CRISPR/Cas to edit DNA. This session will illustrate the basics of how this technology works and the potential applications to modern medicine. Lecturer **Lucy Liaw** is a Faculty Scientist at MaineHealth where she heads a biomedical research laboratory focused on cardiometabolic disease.

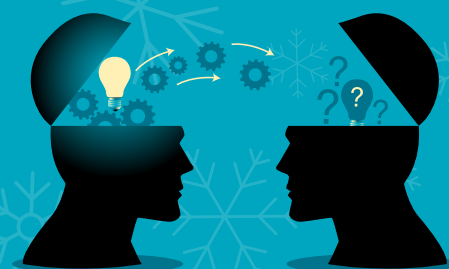
February 16: Longfellow Days

Longfellow Days events, programmed by the Brunswick Downtown Association, are open to the public at no charge. Visit www.brunswickdowntown.org for more information. ■

What Do You Think?

MSC's Winter Wisdom and Summer Wisdom programs present knowledgeable people who discuss a range of historical, literary, political, musical, and environmental topics. Winter Wisdom chairs Reg Ewell and Stu Gillespie and Summer Wisdom chairs Mort Achter and Kelly Matzen perform the difficult task of arranging the various programs and they would like to hear from you.

Is there a discipline, subject, or issue that you would like to see presented in a Wisdom program? Please send an email with your ideas to Donna at mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org, and she will forward your ideas to the two Wisdom committees. Thank you!



About *The Midcoast Inquirer*

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