
The Midcoast Inquirer

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Nora Bishop

We Are All Volunteers

by Nora Bishop

On June 10, 2015 Nora Bishop was awarded the Wheeler-Thompson Founders Award at the annual meeting of Midcoast Senior College. Her acceptance speech follows:

Nancy Wheeler and Jack Thompson began with the premise that a few people in our age group were not yet done. "If they build it, He will come."*

Midcoast Senior College most definitely required leadership. It also needed perseverance and grit, or in other words, volunteers.

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Journey To A New And Different Earth

by Bruce MacDougal and Barbara Snapp

The Gulf of Maine experienced the highest sea levels ever recorded there during 2009 and 2010 (Portland Press Herald, February 26, 2015). In fact the sea level in the Gulf of Maine and off the mid-Atlantic coast is rising faster and higher than in other areas of the world. The reasons for this rise are complicated, and involve thermal expansion, shifts in sea water density, and an ocean conveyor belt.

Thermal expansion

As the earth's temperature increases most of that heat is stored in the oceans. It takes much more thermal energy to warm water than it does to warm an equal volume of air or soil. That's the reason our coastal climate is so moderate compared to inland areas. As the oceans warm, the sea water expands. This expansion accounts for about 80% of the rise in the oceans; melting of glaciers and other sources account for the rest.

Changes in the density of seawater

Seawater flows from the Pacific Ocean into the Arctic Ocean through the Bering Strait between Alaska and Russia, and then flows out around the northeast Canadian islands, Greenland and Iceland. As Pacific Ocean seawater flows north into the Arctic Ocean, it loses energy to the cold air, freezes and forms sea ice. Sea water contains a lot of dissolved salts and is much heavier than fresh water. That's why we float much better in salt water. When ice forms there's no room in its crystalline structure for these salts. Ice contains only fresh water and floats above the heavy brine left underneath. The frozen fresh water, the ice, gradually makes its way out of the Arctic and into the Atlantic.

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How many of you have taken a course, given up those precious hours to expand your horizons, and say "I'm interested"? You also volunteered. You committed your time and energy to affirm that these classes are valuable. Without you, we would not be here.

How many of you have worked on our newsletters, public relations or information services? You have kept us informed, introduced us to like-minded neighbors, applauded the offshoots of our classes and recognized the very real benefit that Senior College fosters friendships.

How many of you have served as liaisons all these many years, assisted with the bulk mailings, offered assistance in the office or been at the beck and call of Dorothy Bell? Please grab a cookie and understand that Senior College so, so depends on you.

How many of you who have served on the board of directors or its subcommittees have pledged to maintain the direction which Nancy and Jack envisioned? You signed up for three years of endless meetings and discussions. You steered our organization into a 501(c)(3), set the standards, fostered our relations with the community, found the instructors and courses and brought this all to fruition.

And then there are the instructors. The one group, the core, the overriding reason we are here: those men and women who commit to challenge us, to tear us away from our grandkids, to remind us we still have minds, who excite our hearts and souls. They make us want to read more, learn more, and question more. They are the same ones who have engaged us throughout our lives. They are the teachers: the Bill Browns, the Barbara Snapps, the David McKeiths, the Niles Schores, the John Bradfords, the Anne Kimmages, the Ted Reeses, the Bud Warrens, and of course the Howard Whitcombs and Jack Thompsons. They are the teachers! They spend countless hours, weeks and months so they may present to us in the brief span of four to eight weeks a vision of their passion. My goodness, do they succeed! And they volunteer!

To them and to all the volunteers, thank you.

*From the film, *Field of Dreams*, 1989, based on W. P. Kinsella's book, *Shoeless Joe*.

