



The Midcoast Inquirer

Midcoast Senior College's Newsletter

SPRING 2023 *Volume 18, No. 1*

MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE - THE HEALTH OF THE MIND

As Spring approaches (it *will* get here!) our thoughts turn to Midcoast Senior College (of course). Emerging from the pandemic has challenged us to be creative in how we present our stimulating classes, lecture series, and fulfil our mission to the health of the mind. Our Spring newsletter showcases student poetry and photography, a teacher's journey into the deep, and a conversation with our three Curriculum Committee chairpersons. I hope you enjoy it while waiting for the snow to end and the flowers to bloom! *Jay Kuder, MSC President*



MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE SPONSORS - A WIN/WIN

Community sponsors play a large role in the success of Midcoast Senior College. Without financial support from our sponsors, MSC would fall short of its budgetary requirements needed to stay afloat. Likewise, our senior college adds to a vital midcoast community. Our free lecture series, excursions, classes, and workshops bring value to area seniors. Learn more about sponsorship opportunities at MSC and make it a win/win for your customers! Thanks to: **Atlantic Federal Credit Union, Bath Savings**

Institution, The Highlands, Joane Tait Realtor, Just Framing, Maine Pines Racquet & Fitness, MW Sewall, Norway Savings Bank, Now You're Cooking, Rhumbline Advisers, Sunnybrook Village, Thornton Oaks

MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE

Midcoast Senior College (MSC) is a non-profit, 501c3 organization, founded in 2000.

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UPCOMING EVENTS AT MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE

Tickets for the following events will be on sale in May/June for MSC members!

Members' Social - June 13 at Maine Maritime Museum, Bath

An afternoon of music from MSC Singers and Jud Caswell plus appetizers from Mae's Cafe plus socializing with MSC friends, and our hugely popular raffle!

Something Rotten! - August 20 at Maine State Music Theater, Brunswick

Matinee performance with pre-performance guided tour of MSMT Creative Studios and post-show talk led by Curt Dale Clark and Morgan Rodgers. Advance talk by MSC's Mort Achter.

Gilbert & Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore September 17 at Theater at Monmouth, Monmouth

Matinee performance with post-show discussion. Advance talk by MSC's Mort Achter.

SUMMER WISDOM FREE LECTURE SERIES

Tuesdays, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Curtis Memorial Library

Sponsored by Thornton Oaks, Brunswick

- **MAY 16: Death with Dignity Law - Medical, Legal and Ethical Considerations, Part I with Jon ("Jim") Oxman and Ned Claxton**
- **MAY 23: Part II of Death With Dignity Law with Oxman and Claxton**
- **MAY 30: Fifty Years' Worth of Observation on the Local Area, the State, and the Nation with James Tierney**
- **JUNE 6: Healthcare Transitions—Leading through 40 Years of Change with Lois Skillings**

MAINE'S TRANSFORMING ECONOMY

This year, Midcoast Senior College offered a series of free webinars to increase awareness of Maine's transforming economy. The series launched on January 11 with John Dorrer, former Acting Commissioner of the Maine Department of Labor. Four monthly webinars followed. In January, Betsy Biemann, CEO of CEL; in February, Michael Dubyak, former chairman, Wex; in March, Amanda Beal, Maine Dept Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry; and upcoming in April, Don Littlefield, President, Brews Cruise Inc. The series will end with an in-person colloquium on May 16 at 6 pm at Unitarian Universalist Church, Brunswick. Visit our website for more details.

Moments in the Life of a Wayward Marine Biologist: Time Travel by Vincent Capone

I hit the water inverted and plunged deep into the cold water. Bubbles rushed past my facemask as I struggled to right myself while cold water seeped into my ill-fitting wet suit. The rest of the team was already kicking to the anchor line.

A couple of months back, we had located a large but unusually shaped shipwreck. On sonar it looked like a pointed barge with the stern open like the bed of a pickup truck. It was just one of many “finds” by Bateaux Below Inc., a nonprofit group specializing in underwater archaeological search and documentation of shipwrecks in Lake George, New York.



Hand over hand, I pulled myself down the anchor line. At 15 feet below the surface, the water temperature dropped sharply and again even colder at 42 feet. The lake was cold. Very cold, and would be some 36 degrees on the bottom. But I didn't know that yet. Hand over hand, down the anchor line and deeper into murky darkness. Out of the gloom appeared an intact shipwreck, as perfect as the day she sank. I was looking at a vessel that was the only remaining example of its class in perfect condition, like the day it sank over two hundred years ago. I had descended over one hundred feet and arrived at the bottom in 1758. Time travel was possible.



Research would show that we had discovered America's oldest intact warship, the Lake George radeau. Its formal name, as known by the colonists who had constructed her, was the *Land Tortoise*. This unusual seven-sided vessel was a floating gun battery built by American provincials and the British military during the French and Indian War (1755-1763).

The Bateaux Below team made over one hundred dives documenting the vessel, which is now designated a National Historic Landmark. This volunteer group also produced a photographic mosaic from 183 individual color images merged into a single picture of the ship. This was most likely the first seamless, color photo mosaic of a shipwreck, even before well-funded groups such as National Geographic would commonly publish such imagery.

I am proud to have been a member of Bateaux Below and participated in a historic effort that played a larger-than-life role in my transition from marine biology to underwater technology. All the credit should go to the team leader Joseph Zarzynski, author and archaeologist, and the team members, as without the effort of these volunteers, the radeau may still lie undiscovered, undocumented, and unprotected in the depths of Lake George.

Vincent Capone has over 30 years of marine search, underwater technology, and diving experience in locating over 100 shipwrecks and aircraft. In the Spring Term 2023, he taught a course titled "Lost and Found in the Deep Blue Sea" for Midcoast Senior College.

POETRY FROM THREE MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Several years ago, Barbara Snapp, Mark Smith, and David McKeith were students in a poetry course led by Gary Lawless. Students were encouraged to write and read their work, and to continue to experiment with their expressions in poetry. The following poems were selected for *The Midcoast Inquirer*.



Mark Smith oversaw MSC's tenth anniversary celebration, founded the Wheeler Thompson Award, and was President of the Board spearheading the transition to become an independent 501©(3) tax exempt organization. In 2018, he co-taught with Barbara Snapp a course titled "Exploring Poetic Form: A Writing Workshop."

Something About Stone Walls

by Mark Smith
October 2015

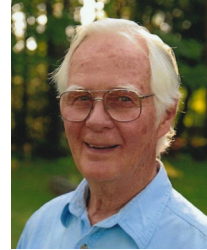
What about old New England
stone walls intrigues me so ?
Is it the shape of the stones
and how they fit to last ?
Is it the shades of grey, specks
of mica and patches of moss ?
Is it the way they follow the
contour of the land ?

Or, — is it the memories of the walls
that surrounded my family farm;
guarded the entrance to the barn
that blew down in Forty-Eight;
lined the cow run to a pasture
now a fully-grown woods;
enclosed the cow corral where
later Lloyd pitched horseshoes;
and protected a wild meadow
and poison ivy patch from the
mown lawn and lilac bush
outside the kitchen door,
where chipmunks ran about
with no regard for keeping in or out.





Barbara Snapp has in retirement blended her devotion to the sciences with her passions for the arts. She was awarded MSC's Bill Brown Award for Teaching Excellence, a reflection of MSC students' recognition of appreciation.



David McKeith founded and for 7 years edited, *The Midcoast Inquirer*, named to reflect a passion for lifelong learning. He served on MSC's Board while exploring a passion for painting and poetry.

Flight

by Barbara Snapp

I am jealous of birds
who without effort leap heavenward
and escape the surly bonds of earth.
Circling high above wild pastures

Hawks rise on gentle thermals of air
to heights where the horizon curves
and the treetops look like clumps of moss
along the stream below.

Hummingbirds hover motionless
peering down into a deep well of vibrant colors
sipping the sweet nectar,
assisting flowers in a long-distance mating ritual.

Swallows twist and turn
cutting through layers of air
with slender, agile wings
snatching insects above summer-fragrant fields.

Heavy-bodied ducks glide down feet first
toes spread into digital surfboards
that skip and skim across the surface of the lake
then sink into a wet cushion less giving than air

Aaahh, birds! – cousins one million times removed.
You soar majestically to magnificent vistas,
tumble with acrobatic ease to snatch the fruit of the air,
glide effortlessly between the realms of sky and water.

I plod, anchored to the earth – trapped.
What twist of evolutionary fate left me with only dreams of
what it would be to fly, to soar,
to feel the wind beneath my wings?

Hear My Country Song *On the Farm 1853*

by David McKeith

I do not wish to see the sun
to make its slow descending run
onto the darkening land that waits
beyond horizon's twilight gates.

I've loved this day so filled with light
upon this farmland within my sight;
a farmer swings his scythe to mow
as back and forth his rhythm slow.

I wander 'cross this meadow green
where crickets chirp from place unseen;
sun gives each flower face its glow
and glistens on the brook's soft flow.

See working children two, three, four,
an elder man sits by the door
unable now to do his tasks —
the countless chores a farmstead asks.

And there's a lad who tosses hay
down to the fillies, I hear their neigh.
The corn is tall, the weeds are hoed,
while daisies nod along the road.

This vale before me lies in peace
where family bonds are centerpiece,
where generations do come and go,
and hands on mantle clock are slow.

Oh, hasten not the sun to
flow into the twilight's golden show;
hold back each day and keep it long.
Come, sing with me my country song.

Midcoast Senior College courses originate at the committee level--an 11-person Curriculum Committee which is chaired by Janet Kehl, Victor Papacosma, and Bill VanderWolk. I recently had a chance to pose a few questions to the three chairpersons. ~ Donna Marshall, MSC Executive Director



From left to right: Bill VanderWolk, Janet Kehl, Victor Papacosma

You have all taken and taught courses at MSC. How did you learn about and come to teach at MSC?

JANET: When I retired from teaching in NYC and moved to Maine I looked for programs to keep my brain working and discovered in the local paper that MSC was offering courses in Bath. I immediately enrolled in a course on Faust. So began a wonderful life-giving experience both as a student and an instructor. I wasn't expecting to teach but ended up doing so when a classmate in Paul Kalkstein's

rollicking humor class, Richard Neiman (a delightfully quick wit who also happened to be a longstanding member of the board and Curriculum Committee), suggested that Leona Dufour, another student in the class, and I team up to offer a course. I didn't know Leona at the time but have since spent many memorable hours with her as a gifted teaching partner and cherished friend.

VICTOR: On retiring and moving to Brunswick I had occasion to meet with Jack Thompson, one of MSC's founders. Jack was a great and very popular teacher for MSC, as he was when I served as a history teaching assistant for him in the spring semester of 1967 during my graduate studies at Indiana University. The rest is history.

BILL: I honestly don't remember how I first heard about Midcoast Senior College, but I do remember the first class I took: Victor Papacosma's course on the history of Europe in the first half of the 20th century. It was a very stimulating class, and I enjoyed getting to know Victor before and after each class. When Victor learned that I had written a book on the French Nobel Prize winning novelist, Patrick Modiano, he asked me if I would be willing to teach a course on him. I did so and loved the experience.

What is the process for becoming a teacher?

ALL: Anyone who expresses an interest in offering a course is invited to submit a CV and course proposal. Candidates meet first with the three co-chairs of the Curriculum Committee. Then they meet with the entire Committee to introduce themselves, present an outline of the course they are proposing to teach, and answer questions from Committee members.

JANET: I must admit that Leona and I initially found this process a bit daunting until we actually appeared in the meetings where the exchange of ideas was most helpful and enjoyable.

VICTOR: Although the vetting process might seem formal, its delivery system emphasizes the casual, and most instructors find it a rewarding experience.

You all come from careers in teaching, Janet at the secondary level, Bill at both secondary and college levels, and Victor at the college level. At MSC your students range in age from 50 to the nineties. What have you found especially challenging or rewarding in working with MSC's seniors?

JANET: I will always have fond memories of all my years working with adolescents. That said, I found my experience teaching at MSC one of the most rewarding of my career and a perfect finale. Teaching adults, I found, is a highly collaborative venture. First, it helps that as a teacher or student you can rely in your own observations on the fact that you all share basically the same chapter of world history and stages of life. At the same time, students in MSC classes come from such diverse backgrounds and careers and bring such an enriching range of perspectives and insights that, as a teacher or student, one is constantly learning from them. MSC students also expect to do whatever homework might be assigned and enjoy contributing to discussions. Some even bring to class or recommend materials relating to the topic at hand. A class at MSC is consequently likely to be an ever-expanding adventure and invitation to continue learning for both the teacher and the students.

VICTOR: After 42 years of teaching (mostly undergraduates), I had become in my closing years rather jaded, summed up by my bellowing “free at last!” after recording my final grades at 10:50 p.m. on May 6, 2011. It was then such a pleasurable reincarnation when, during my first course for MSC in the spring of 2013, I found my dormant interest in teaching quickly regenerated. MSC’s students are interested, diverse, and savvy, intelligently drawing on their lifetime experiences. They add so much to any course with their involvement. Unlike most undergraduates, it’s pretty hard to find cookie-cutter students in our classes.

BILL: When I taught my first course at MSC, I had never taught anyone over the age of 22, I had never had more than eighteen people in a class, and I had never taught a class in English. I was petrified to learn that I would have thirty-two students “of a certain age” and that we would be speaking English instead of French. These fears turned out to be groundless, as the class was delightful. The students did the suggested reading and were ready to discuss the novels in each class period. Their life experience added to the understanding and discussion of the themes and historical context of the novels.

What support does Midcoast Senior College provide for instructors?

ALL: MSC provides faculty with an amazing amount of support, especially considering that virtually everyone associated with the college is a volunteer. Each instructor gets a co-host assigned to their course who provides technical support, emails the students, and so on. Each course has a dedicated website where course materials can be accessed. It is also possible to include an online forum where students and the instructor can spontaneously exchange ideas and complementary information out of class. A faculty luncheon at the beginning of each semester allows instructors to meet each other and to learn what others are teaching. MSC fosters the most important relationship, between instructor and students, by providing inviting classrooms and easy Zoom access. And the students get the last word through constructive on-line feedback that goes directly to the instructor. Finally, in addition to all of this support for the teaching faculty, the College is most fortunate to have in its administrative staff, in you, Donna, and in Sue Kingsland, two invaluable resources always ready to answer any and all questions, to provide creative solutions to problems, and to lend a helping hand whenever needed.

Describe your experience as co-chairs of the Curriculum Committee - your work, goals, satisfactions.

JANET: It has been a privilege to work with Victor, Bill, and the other members of the Committee, all of whom clearly take their responsibility as custodians of MSC’s academic program very seriously. That they bring conviviality and humor to the process makes the work all the more enjoyable and a lot of fun. It has also been inspiring to meet so many talented and dedicated teachers who are so willing to give of their time and knowledge to their students. It has been especially reassuring to see that at MSC the life of the mind is alive and well and still matters.

VICTOR: It has been a rewarding experience working with Janet and Bill. Our interactions manifest consistently reasonable minds confronting demanding situations along with more mundane activities. The Covid pandemic posed many challenges for the execution of MSC’s mission that had the three co-chairs with its committee members and, of course, others combining to reconfigure operations. Many serious discussions led to, generally with consensus, important decisions. Few are those who have endured years of university/faculty committees that can express such a positive judgment. How so? We are all volunteers with no evident self-interests to protect in trying to advance the positive goals and idealistic mission of MSC. This dynamic is reflected at all levels of MSC’s operations. We want more individuals to partake in the rewards of volunteerism with MSC. There are many ways to do so.

BILL: Working with Janet and Victor has been a lot of fun. A lot of work, but a lot of fun. From interviewing prospective instructors to organizing each term’s classes to scouring the bushes for new instructors with exciting courses, we certainly have a lot to do, but we have a wonderful committee, some of whom have been on the committee much longer than we have. So please join us. Try something new . . . as a student, an instructor, a co-host, a committee member or a college volunteer. You won’t regret it.

Interested in teaching for MSC? Contact our office at
info@midcoastseniorcollege.org

IPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP LED BY CRAIG SNAPP

iPhone Photography for Motivated Novices was an experimental workshop during MSC's 2023 Winter Intersession. It was designed for a small group of folks wanting to capture and edit great images with their ever-ready iPhone cameras. Planning shots, basic composition, image management, and editing were all touched upon. Students were encouraged to become better photographers by opening their eyes (and brains!), looking up, down and all around, answering the questions: What is the subject? Is there a story to tell? Will the photo tell it?, clicking the shutter often, and editing the very best few! Below are a few of the images that resulted from this fun workshop.



Sukey Heard nicely captured a flower and leaves backlit by the Winter scene outside.



Jane Littlefield's image brings out a sunrise behind the trees.



Lorraine Ring's photo highlighted the icy path leading to the Curtis Memorial Library.



Instructor Craig Snapp focused on a snow encrusted sculpture.