



# The Midcoast Inquirer

## Midcoast Senior College's Newsletter

**FALL 2023 Volume 18, No. 3**

### FALL AT MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE

Falling leaves, falling temperatures, harvest festivals. Fall is a wonderful time in Maine! As you begin to spend more time indoors please remember Midcoast Senior College. We have lots of stimulating classes to keep you intellectually active. Check us out. And while you are thinking about what classes to take, consider volunteering or making a donation. We can always use a helping hand! *Jay Kuder, President*



### MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE - HERE FOR YOU!



Fall classes are underway and with half of them in-person and half on-line, I can say that I feel a balance has been restored to our senior college. It is different than what many of our long-time members remember -- we hold class meetings in different places, we have adopted Zoom as a learning tool, and we have introduced workshops to our curriculum. Recorded single-topic lectures are gaining in popularity, and they're free! Yet, MSC is the same in its dedication to making sure that every senior in our community who wishes to take a class or attend a lecture is able to do so. When transportation is an issue, other students have generously offered a ride. If cost is an obstacle, a waiver is provided. It's the spirit of MSC that is the same and will continue as it always has. We are here for you. *Donna Marshall, Executive Director*

## MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE

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

**website:** [www.midcoastseniorcollege.org](http://www.midcoastseniorcollege.org)

**phone:** (207) 725-4900

**email:** [mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org](mailto:mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org)

**mail:** 18 Middle St., Suite 2, Brunswick ME 04011

**FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK** for even more



### IN THIS ISSUE - FALL 2023

From MSC President	Page 1
Here for You	Page 1
Annual Fund	Page 2
Pine Tree Power Forum	Page 2
Frances Perkins	Page 3
Student Writing	Page 4
Volunteering	Page 5
Classroom Locales	Page 6
Fall/Winter at MSC	Page 7
Sponsor Thanks	Page 8

**[www.midcoastseniorcollege.org](http://www.midcoastseniorcollege.org)**

### ANNUAL FUND IS UNDERWAY - MSC THANKS OUR DONORS!

Thank you to all who have responded to our Annual Fund! Letters were mailed in mid-September. Your donation brings ideas to life at MSC. We would not be able to present our array of courses and workshops, free topical lectures (in-person and recorded), excursions, and forums. A donation of any size helps.

**DONATE TODAY**



Bowdoin

Midcoast Senior College and Bowdoin College teamed up for a free forum on the Pine Tree Power referendum on October 16, 2023. Click the link below or visit our website at [midcoastseniorcollege.org](http://midcoastseniorcollege.org) to watch the recording of the forum.

**WATCH RECORDING OF FORUM**



## **WHO WAS FRANCES PERKINS?**

**by Sarah Peskin, Board Chair, Frances Perkins Center**



Frances Perkins (1880-1965) was the first woman to serve in a U.S. presidential cabinet. Secretary of Labor 1933-1945 for the entire tenure of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, she was the driving force behind groundbreaking programs Americans still rely on today -- Social Security, unemployment insurance and the minimum wage -- hallmarks of the New Deal.

A highly principled and effective public servant, Perkins made major contributions to laws prohibiting child labor and recognized the rights of workers to organize into unions for collective bargaining. She was a key figure in launching the Civilian Conservation Corps that employed 3 million unemployed workers to plant trees, restore lands, and build state and national park infrastructure, and also served on the panel allocating public works projects throughout the nation.

As head of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Perkins was a champion of refugees fleeing Nazism in Germany and Eastern Europe, fighting against the restrictive practices of many in the State Department and Congress.

Born in Boston, educated in the public schools of Worcester, Massachusetts, with a B.A. from Mount Holyoke College (1902) and an M.A. from Columbia University (1910), her character was shaped by her lifelong ties to the saltwater farm in Newcastle, Maine, which she considered home. Her home is now the Frances Perkins Homestead National Historic Landmark, where she spent childhood summers, and to which she returned every year of her life for respite and rejuvenation.

Witnessing the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire in 1911 where 146 young people died galvanized Perkins' commitment to correcting dangerous working conditions. First as a factory inspector and ultimately as labor commissioner for the State of New York, she lobbied successfully for the 54-hour work week and other workplace protections that later informed her efforts in Washington.

A wife and mother, Perkins was the sole support of her family after her husband Paul Wilson became unable to work due to mental illness early in their marriage. After her tenure as labor secretary Perkins sat on the U.S. Civil Service Commission and lectured at schools and colleges including Cornell University at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

Frances Perkins was a leader of moral strength who exemplified the best of American ideals and aspirations. To honor her legacy, the nonprofit, nonpartisan Frances Perkins Center teaches students of all ages about this remarkable woman whose work continues to improve the lives of ordinary Americans. Enroll in our upcoming course "The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins" to learn more about an iconic American and her deep roots in midcoast Maine.

**This story was submitted by Fred Cheney, member of MSC Senior Scribblers Writing Group**

## **Dry**

Dry. We'd seen dry before, some of us. Billy Latimer had travelled around, following the crops and the fruit. He said he had been to the southwest, and he told about farmers going to war with their neighbors over damming creeks or putting larger diameter pipes into the irrigation canals. One place where he was picking fruit, the owners suddenly started paying by the volume because it took about 25% more peaches to fill a bushel than the year before.

But around here, well, dry like this was something real new to our sleepy town in the woods. Dry, in this town, might mean someone would set up a sprinkler to keep a lawn green throughout August. Dry might mean someone with a dug well might have to drive to town to fill five-gallon buckets with water from the spigot outside the town hall for a short time. Dry might mean that some family gardens would be a bit slower and less productive than usual. But there was nothing usual about this dry spell.

All of the things that went with a dry spell arrived two months early, and it kept getting worse. Seemed like everybody had arrived at their own personal rationing plans. First thing to go were green lawns, and then bountiful family gardens. Everybody had their own plan. I know we did in our family; we talked about it lots.

The woods, which came right up to town and our backyard, were always like a lush carpet of green, but they were not lush and they were not rich in color this year. The green was muted like it had been dusted with something gray, something like gunpowder. And gunpowder made a good comparison because you could tell the woods were explosive when you were in them. Walking through, you just felt the dry under your feet and in your nostrils. You could feel the threat of fire on your skin. It made you aware and uncomfortable, sort of like a rough wool shirt.

Warnings of fire danger were part of every weather report. But just like the voluntary rationing, people came to their own forest protection strategies; they put off burning brush piles, they no longer flicked their cigarettes out their car windows, they took extra care with the grill.

Mid-August, a front moved in, and the sky darkened. After so many weeks of dry, the humid air felt almost like rain on your skin. Clouds hung low, they seemed to scrape the treetops, and everyone kept waiting for the sky to open up. The weather held like that for three days, and while we got reports of rain from places as close as 40 miles, nothing fell here, on us.

The last morning of it dawned as gray as ashes, but by eleven o'clock the sun was back fiercer than ever before. It beat down on the earth as though determined to dry up any moisture that might have stayed behind, and it kept hot right into the night. About midnight, all of us in town heard the sounds of dry lightning. It rumbled along, never giving up a sharp crash, only loud enough to wake the restless, which included all of us. Poppa got out of bed and went outside, walked around the house to see the direction, the closeness, the strength. When he came back in, Momma was up, coffee made, and sitting at the kitchen table ready to make plans. Poppa looked at me leaning on the doorway. At least he couldn't tell me to go back bed because I had school the next day.

I went outside and headed downtown. People were shuffling along in the streets, talking low to one another under the glow of streetlights that seemed to be sores on the night. Gradually we all made our way to the fire station where the news of any lightning strike would come in first. A few cars came in from outside of town. The fire chief, who had been sleeping on a cot in his office for weeks, pushed the window open wide by the short-wave radio, so we would hear any reports as they came in.

Talking in low tones, men pushed gravel back and forth with the toes of their boots with a concentration you usually see when they're pushing hash browns to the side of a breakfast plate. Conversations were about what was packed and what wasn't. No matter how impractical, you took what couldn't be replaced.

*Continued on next page*



## VOLUNTEERING AT MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE - THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE

- **Serve on our Board** - MSC board members serve 3-year terms. Trustees serve on or lead committees as well as oversee the general management of MSC. It's a collaborative and supportive environment.
- **On a Committee** - Committee work is a great way to engage in Midcoast Senior College. The time requirements vary depending on the committee. Committees plan events, boost awareness in the community, raise money to support our programs, help with technology, plan the lectures and courses, and oversee the administration and finances of the college.
- **In the Classroom** - Whether it's an on-line class on Zoom or an in-person class, we rely on volunteers to help teachers and students in class. There are no special skills required - we can teach you the technology, where it is required.
- **Helping another Student** - Offering a ride to students who cannot drive to class, helping someone troubleshoot a problem with their device or computer . . . extending an offer to help can make a huge difference in someone's life.
- **Thanking our Sponsors** - Sponsors are a silent supporter of MSC. Without their help we could not produce the high level of courses and special events that distinguish Midcoast Senior College. Take time to express your gratitude when you visit the business of one of our sponsors. See Page 8 for a listing.
- **Teaching a Class** - Our volunteer faculty is a valued resource. We are always looking for teachers who have a background in a subject, are passionate about lifelong learning, and enjoy teaching seniors.
- **Spread the Word** - Tell your friends, neighbors, family members, and others about MSC!



If you wish to learn more, please reach out to us at [info@midcoastseniorcollege.org](mailto:info@midcoastseniorcollege.org) or 207-725-4900.

### **"DRY" Continued from page 4**

The wedding dress that had served three generations went, the flat-screen TV stayed. And, what to do about the stock? No good answer there, just open the barn doors and the pens, and hope for the best.

About 4:30 the crowd broke up, the way smoke does when given enough space. Nobody was sleepy; they were just giving in to a situation that wouldn't move, wouldn't change. At some deep and hidden level, I think they all would welcome a lightning strike and a fire. I know I felt that way. The wait would be over, and there would be a real enemy to fight.

I walked home, the kitchen light was still on. Through the window I could see Momma fetching another cup of coffee. She was looking over her shoulder and asking Poppa something as she filled his mug, and he was shaking his head real slow from side to side as he was sitting down at the table.

Poppa sat down real heavy, real tired. ☐

# SENIOR COLLEGE CLASSROOMS

Page 6

THANKING OUR PARTNERS - Our classes meet in different venues in our community. We are so grateful for the support and open doors extended to MSC!



**THORNTON OAKS,  
MERRYMEETING ROOM,  
BRUNSWICK**



**THE HIGHLANDS,  
MERRYMEETING BAY  
ROOM, TOPSHAM**



**ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
BRUNSWICK**



**WESTRUM HOUSE, COMMUNITY ROOM, TOPSHAM**



**UMA BRUNSWICK  
CENTER, BRUNSWICK**



**CURTIS MEMORIAL LIBRARY,  
BRUNSWICK**



**PATTEN FREE LIBRARY,  
COMMUNITY ROOM, BATH**



**TOPSHAM LIBRARY**



## UPCOMING COURSES, LECTURES & WORKSHOPS



MSC FACULTY FALL TERM I 2023

(FROM UPPER LEFT, CLOCKWISE): Barbara Snapp, Bill Hammond, George Young, Bruce Hauptli, Joseph deRivera, Dave Cutler, Kevin Hart, John Burr, Leona Dufour. Missing are: Martin Samelson, Terry Porter, Raymond Boisvert



MSC FACULTY FALL TERM II 2023

(FROM UPPER LEFT, CLOCKWISE): Frank Strasburger, Morton Achter, John Haile, Bill Hammond, Michele Lettiere, Emma Wegner, Steven Piker, Susan Welsh, Stuart Gillespie, David Spurr, Thomas White, and David Tarbet.

We completed our first round of Fall Courses in early November. Our second term starts November 6 with a range of courses. Register on our website!

## FALL TERM II COURSES

- [Why Bad Things Happen to Good People: A Study of the Book of Job](#) by Frank Strasburger
- [Landmarks of the American Musical, 1866-1967](#) by Morton Achter
- [Moby-Dick: A "Deep Dive"](#) by John Haile
- [Introduction to Big History, Part II](#) by Bill Hammond
- [William Faulkner's \*Go Down, Moses\*: The Destructive Power of Possession](#) by Michele Lettiere
- [The Journey from Climate Doom to Active Hope](#) by Thomas White
- [The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins](#) by Emma Wegner
- [MSC Singers: Folk Song Choral Arrangements for Christmas](#) by Stuart Gillespie
- [Homo Sapiens: Who Are WE? What Are We?](#) by Steven Piker
- [NATO-Russia War in Ukraine Was Predictable, Predicted--and Avoidable](#) by Susan Welsh
- [Venice: Literature, Art, Architecture](#) by David Spurr
- [Homer's Iliad](#) by David Tarbet

## JANUARY WINTER WORKSHOPS AND RECORDED LECTURES

Workshops on a variety of topics, free recorded lectures, and museum tours will be offered in January. Stay tuned for details!

## WINTER WISDOM LECTURE SERIES

Free one-hour presentations on a range of topics with a musical guest kick-off are planned. Look for more information on our website and in an email blast in December.

## RETAILERS SUPPORT MSC

Bath, Maine offers a charming downtown with cafes, restaurants, and shops. The heart of the town overlooks the Kennebec River where a paved walking path is lined with comfortable places to sit and take in the view. Midcoast Senior College enjoys the support of two special retailers in Bath: Now You're Cooking and Just Framing. These unique shops serve year-round residents as well as vacationers with the attention and warmth reflective of their community roots. Thank you to our community friends in Bath!

### JUST FRAMING

Located at 149 Front Street in Bath, Just Framing has been voted, for the past 14 years, the "Best Picture Framer" in Midcoast Maine. The store has served the community's framing needs for over 40 years. Along with the matting and framing services, this unique business sells original and reproduction antique maps and charts with an emphasis on coastal Maine. They also carry current and vintage topographical maps. For a special personalized occasion, a stencil mat is just the thing and Just Framing will help you with a design. Shop the original artwork and prints by local Maine artists, their inventory of ready-to-go frames, and their selection of notecards and other gift items. At Just Framing your needlework, artwork, print, or photograph will be enhanced by the skill and artistry they're known for. Stop in on weekdays or call for an appointment at 443-3076, email [mike@justframing.com](mailto:mike@justframing.com).



### NOW YOU'RE COOKING

No visit to Bath is complete without popping into the delightful Now You're Cooking located at 49 Front Street, Bath, a premier cookware store and event space. Store shelves are stocked with kitchen products for the home chef. In addition to cookware, bakeware, tableware, and cookbooks, this gem of a store has just completed a renovation to its instructional kitchen area. Their calendar is filled with how-to demonstrations and classes that will appeal to the novice as well as experienced cook. A world-class wine and beverage inventory complements the offerings. More than a store, at Now You're Cooking the staff brings their love of food and knowledge about the store products to create an atmosphere that will have you coming back for more. Visit their website at [acooksemporium.com](http://acooksemporium.com) for instructional videos, an events calendar, and notices of special sales or call 207-443-1402 with your questions.



## MSC THANKS OUR SPONSORS

Midcoast Senior College is a non-profit organization that relies on the support of its members, donors, and community sponsors. Sponsorship represents a significant portion of our budget. We are grateful to have the ongoing support from our sponsors listed below and welcome new sponsors. Please contact us at [mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org](mailto:mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org) with your interest in joining us as a sponsor.

Atlantic Federal Credit Union  
Bath Savings Institution  
Joane Tait, Realtor  
Just Framing  
Maine Pines Racquet & Fitness  
MW Sewall

Norway Savings Bank  
Now You're Cooking  
Rhumbline Advisers  
The Highlands  
Thornton Oaks Retirement  
Community