



The Midcoast Inquirer

Midcoast Senior College's Newsletter

SPRING 2024 Volume 19, No. 1

AT MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE

Spring rewards the Mainer with flowers, budding trees . . . and sometimes, snow! We come to expect anything and everything. It's a season of renewal and change. Here at MSC, I come to the conclusion of my term as president of this fine organization. It's been a privilege to work alongside the trustees, committee chairs, faculty, and members of our senior college. I will continue on the board and also will continue to teach for MSC. It's a wonderful senior college that brings so much to so many seniors. Happy Spring! *Jay Kuder, President*



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU



As we put together this newsletter it is the start of the last round of courses for our '23/'24 academic year and we're already looking toward the fall. Time flies when you're having fun as they say! I want to thank the generous contributors of this newsletter and Nora Bishop who helped bring it all together. It is a way of keeping you, our treasured member and supporter of Midcoast Senior College, informed of what's happening behind the scenes, in the classroom, at the boardroom, and what's in our future. We welcome your contributions as well. Please send a poem, picture, or piece of writing to us at info@midcoastseniorcollege.org. Thank you!

Donna Marshall, Executive Director

MIDCOAST SENIOR COLLEGE

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

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IN THIS ISSUE - SPRING 2024

From MSC President	Page 1
What's Happening	Page 2
Summer Wisdom	Page 3
Murder Mysteries	Page 4
Student Writing	Page 5
Anniversary banner contest	Page 6
Spring Events & poem	Page 7
Sponsor Thanks	Page 8

MSC MEMBERS - SAVE THE DATES!!

If you are a current member of Midcoast Senior College, your participation in our annual end-of-the-year festivities is very important. We have separated our Business Meeting from our Social event so that the purpose of each occasion can be served best. It's critical that we have a strong attendance at our June 6 Business Meeting where we ask members to vote for new board members and approve other items. This is a short Zoom meeting. A week later, our Annual Social returns to Bowdoin College where we will also enjoy several musical pieces from the MSC Singers and the ever popular raffle.

LOOK FOR MORE DETAILS AND REGISTRATION INFO IN MAY

June 6: MSC Members Annual Business Meeting on Zoom

June 13: MSC Members Annual Social

MSC Engages in Long Term Strategic Planning

In February, the Board of Trustees of Midcoast Senior College embarked on a project that will help as we move forward to fulfil our mission and continue to grow. We enlisted the help of a facilitator, Rebecca Swanson Conrad, to help us explore ideas and focus on the areas that would strengthen and grow our offerings. It's an optimistic step into the future of lifelong learning.

SUMMER WISDOM SPEAKER SERIES

Sponsored by Thornton Oaks Retirement Village

Four Tuesday afternoons 1:00 to 2:15 p.m.

Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick

May 14 "To Err Is Human: Philatelic Errors and the Stories They Tell" with Richard Neiman

Since the appearance of the first adhesive postage stamp in 1840, hundreds of political entities have issued billions of such stamps. It is natural to expect that among these there would be errors in their production. This lecture will illustrate a number of blunders by a variety of postal entities, tell the unusual stories surrounding some of them, and relate how these stamps have become, pound for pound, among the most valuable items known. Although **Richard Neiman** has collected postage stamps since his childhood, he is perhaps better recognized as a retired physician and college professor who has taught many courses for MSC on medical- and disease-related topics.

May 21 "New Wine in Old Bottles—Conflict or Peace in the Middle East: The Gaza War" with Kathleen Howard Sutherland

The October 7th Hamas attack on Israel climaxed a seventy-five year plus conflict between Israelis and Palestinians over the question of the land of Palestine: Whose land is it? Palestinians, Israelis, or both? We explore in this presentation the historical basis for this conflict, the colonial legacy, the social, political, and religious issues in this conflict. Where do we go from here?

Kathleen Howard Sutherland is Associate Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies Emerita at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. She was born and spent 35 years in Egypt researching and teaching there at the American University at Cairo. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Morocco. She has taught courses on the Middle East and Africa at OLLI since 2005. She and her husband, John, reside in Portland.

May 28 "A Fulfilling Chapter: Happy and Healthy Retirement Years" with Chris Bowe

Dr. Bowe will speak about ways to make our lives happier, healthier, and more fulfilling in retirement and the healthcare system's role in promoting wellness. He will be happy to answer questions about his first year as president of Mid Coast-Parkview Health. **Chris Bowe, MD** was named President of Mid Coast-Parkview Health in January 2023. During his tenure as Mid Coast's CMO, Chris distinguished himself by leading the organization's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including heading the Incident Command team and providing strategic and clinical leadership during the deployment of mass vaccination clinics. Chris is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin where he completed both his undergraduate studies and medical school. He is a member of the American College of Emergency Physicians and certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine.

June 4 "Puppet-Making for Dummies" with Austin Phillips

With the art of ventriloquism making its way back into mainstream entertainment, Austin Phillips finds himself busier than ever supplying a unique demand. Join us for an unforgettable afternoon discussing a day in the life of the world's last dummy-maker. Based out of Portland, Maine, **Austin Phillips** is a builder and restorer of professional ventriloquist figures, and puppets alike. He is a ventriloquial history, and Punch and Judy enthusiast with an extensive collection of antique figures and artifacts that date back as late as the 1800's. Austin lives out his passion each day creating, repairing, and restoring ventriloquist figures in his workshop overlooking the heart of downtown Portland.

DIVE IN TO THE WORLD OF MURDER MYSTERIES

Readers of murder mysteries are always looking for recommendations of new writers since we read these books so fast. There's nothing like finding a writer who has already published twenty titles. Those might last a year! This list, which contains suggestions from me and from my students at OLLI and MSC, is mostly early 20th Century British with some recent British and American authors and even a Mexican series. Enjoy! ~ Susan Ranson, MSC faculty member

- Atkinson, Kate (Jackson Brodie)
 Allingham, Margery (Albert Campion)
 Bentley, E. C. (Trent)
 Blake, Nicholas (Nigel Strangeways)
 Borthwick, J. S. (Sarah Deane)
 Carr, John Dickinson (Dr. Gideon Fell, Sir Henry Merrivale)
 Caudwell, Sarah (Hilary Tamar)
 Chesterton, G. K. (Father Brown)
 Christie, Agatha (Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple, etc.)
 Clinton-Baddeley, V. C. (Dr. R. V. Davie)
 Collins, Wilkie: *The Moonstone*, *The Woman in White*
 Conan Doyle, Arthur (Sherlock Holmes)
 Crispin, Edmund (Gervase Fen)
 Crofts, Freeman Wills (inspector French)
 Cross, Amanda (Kate Fansler)
 Dickens, Charles: *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*
 Dickinson, Peter (James Pibble)
 du Maurier, Daphne: *Rebecca*
 French, Tana (Dublin Murder Squad)
 Grainger, Peter (D. C. Smith, Kings Lake Murder Squad) (Kindle and Audible only)
 Grimes, Martha (Richard Jury)
 Herron, Mick (Slow Horses)
 Innes, Michael (Sir John Appleby)
 James, P. D. (Adam Dalgliesh, Cordelia Gray)
 King, Laurie R. (Sherlock Holmes and Mary Russell)
 Knox, Msgr. Ronald (Miles Bredon)
 Langton, Jane (Homer Kelly)
 Leon, Donna (Commissario Brunetti)
 Marsh, Ngaio (Roderick Alleyn)
 Mortimer, John (Rumpole)
 Nabb, Magdalen (Marshal Guarnaccia)
 Perry, Anne (William Monk, Thomas Pitt)
 Peters, Ellis (*Brother Cadfael*)
 Poe, Edgar Allan (C. Auguste Dupin)
 Sayers, Dorothy L. (Lord Peter Wimsey)
 Simenon, Georges (Maigret)
 Taibo, Paco Ignacio (Héctor Belascoarán Shayne)
 Tey, Josephine (Alan Grant)

Will America's Republican Form of Government End Soon? by Dan Possumato

The fall of the Roman Republic, one of the longest-lived in world history, occurred around 27 BC. I say around because no firm date can be assigned to the transition from republic to empire. The changes had been gradually happening over many decades. Eventually the Romans devolved into an autocratic government, trading their liberty for perceived stability. Perceived because the administration of the empire rested on one man, and the death of one emperor resulted in the rule of another. Sometimes they were able and responsible rulers such as the first emperor Augustus, but in several other instances they were tyrannical aberrations such as Caligula, Nero and Diocletian.

Founded in 509 BC after the last king was overthrown, the Roman people believed they had built in such a series of safeguards and checks and balances that neither one man nor one faction could ever usurp the will of the people. At least not for long.

So frightened of autocratic rule by one man, the Roman people selected by open election two consuls to administer the government, one to keep watch on the other. Their terms were only for one year, which was sometimes extended during times of crisis. They had a Senate, from which our own derives its name, made up of members of the aristocracy. But there was another body, something akin to our House, which represented the plebs, or the common citizens. They elected Tribunes, who could veto laws and other edicts passed by the Senate they felt detrimental to the plebs.

These three levels resulted in government institutions, parliamentary rules and political customs that for 400 years fostered negotiation and compromise. With this well-oiled form of government, Romans began to take their republic for granted. It was a fatal mistake.

Over time, economic inequality began to cause friction amongst politicians, who obstructed their opponents while pursuing their own individual gain. Violent mobs took to the street (on one occasion they trapped the senators in their building and threatened to burn them alive), and civil wars broke out, each side claiming they wanted to restore the ideals of the republic.

Edward Watts writes in his excellent book *Mortal Republic* that, "The Roman Republic died because it was allowed to, from thousands of small wounds inflicted by Romans who assumed that it would last forever... In ancient Rome and in the modern world, a republic is a thing to be cherished, protected, and respected. If it falls, an uncertain, dangerous, and destructive future lies on the other side."

Speaking of powerful men such as Julius Caesar, Crassus, Cicero and Cato, Watts sums up his book with the following excerpt that is relevant to the America of 2024:

"Each of these men's selfish, individualized pursuits of glory ensured that Romans quickly returned to a form of elite political competition in which no limits were placed on the tools one would use to vanquish his opponents. And the fact that ordinary Romans did not immediately oppose all of these selfish acts and punish all of these actors by withholding their votes simply encouraged more and more extreme behavior."

Please vote this coming November!

Midcoast Senior College will celebrate our 25th anniversary in 2025. It's an exciting and impressive milestone. We are planning many events to celebrate the occasion and have asked one of our members to create the celebratory graphic banner. Dan Possumato's creativity is evident in the six banners below. We've also created a fun contest to determine which of the six banners will be chosen. [Go to this link to place your vote!](#)

BANNER #1



BANNER #2



BANNER #3



BANNER #4



BANNER #5



BANNER #6





JUNE EXCURSION PLANNED TO COLBY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART!

Join your senior college friends for a chartered bus to Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville. Enjoy lunch at the college's cafeteria Dana Hall, personalized guided tours of the museum, and the lovely campus in early summer!

What: Chartered excursion to Colby College in Waterville. Enjoy lunch at one of the college dining halls, explore the campus in early summer, and learn about the Colby College Museum of Art collections through personalized guided tours.

When: Thursday, June 27. From 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Cost: \$49 per person. Includes bus, lunch, guided tours.

Register: Registration will open on April 26 on our website:

<https://midcoastseniorcollege.org/project/colby-college-museum-of-art/> MSC members may purchase tickets for themselves and non-MSA member guests on our website.

And Spring Begins

This piece was submitted by a member of Midcoast Senior College who wishes to remain anonymous

The sun is out and beckons me to join it.

Oops - the snow shovel and double oops - the snow shoes do not belong to Spring

The bright yellow Winter Aconite (*Eranthis cilicica*) shines across the driveway. Now that it has been here for five or so years it sneaks up between the violets that will bloom saying that it is time to start cutting the grass. Not far away the Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) are nodding hello to the new season in what will be a blanket of Woodruff (*Asperula odorata*).

A walk down the driveway to pick up the paper reveals what will be next appear before Spring goes by. Many leaves of Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia pulmonarioides*), various Narcissus and Dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) with many more to join.

Colors of Spring are not limited to the welcome flowers but allow the birds to offer their symphony of the season. The harbinger of the last of Winter, the Robin joined by the red Cardinal, the piggy Bluebird, the bully Blue Jay and regal Goldfinch.

The guarantee that Spring has begun is the arrival of the delightfully noisy Peepers.



Winter Aconite blooming

THORNTON OAKS: A SUPPORTER OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Located off Baribeau Drive in Brunswick, Maine, on 29 wooded acres, Thornton Oaks' cottages and apartments are designed for senior living in comfort and practicality. Along with the access to a healthy lifestyle, Thornton Oaks makes sure that its community has opportunities for a vibrant intellectual life.



Among a rich offering of programs, Thornton Oaks residents have access to walking paths, social events, and more. It also subscribes to the belief that learning is a life-long endeavor. To ensure that all residents and that members of the senior community have access to learning opportunities, Thornton Oaks has

welcomed Midcoast Senior College classes which have met in the community room and annually sponsors MSC's free speaker series, Summer Wisdom.

Most importantly, Thornton Oaks is a vibrant community of people who have lived interesting lives, and who nourish a warm, neighborly atmosphere. Residents are instrumental in planning and shaping community events. The calendar is filled with daily activities, from book groups and bridge parties to foreign affairs lectures and flower arranging. The main building, Matthew Terrace, is a two-story rotunda, with a grand piano, and is the setting for parties and concerts. The building also houses a library, art and exercise rooms, sunroom and deck, large multi-purpose room, and a fireplace lounge.

Midcoast Senior College is grateful to Thornton Oaks and their continued support of our free programming to the greater community. For more information please visit their website at thorntonoaks.com.

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 with your interest in joining us as a sponsor.

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