



The Midcoast Inquirer

The Newsletter of Midcoast Senior College

SPRING 2025



MSC president Bruce Hauptli introduced the panel at the 25th Anniversary event.

Midcoast Senior College Turns 25!

Donna Marshall, Executive Director

MSC's Origin Story

The origin story of Midcoast Senior College dates back to 1996, when the first senior college in Maine was established at University of Southern Maine in Portland. (Today, Maine has 17 senior colleges.) One of the teachers at that first senior college was Jack Thompson, and one of his students was Nancy Wheeler. These two later teamed up to create what we now know as Midcoast Senior College.

In the late 1990s, two additional senior colleges were established, including one at University College Bath Brunswick, with the support of David Baty (UCBB director) and Dennis Unger (dean of student affairs). An open house in 1999 to gauge interest

in the area for a senior college drew many attendees, and by 2000, Midcoast Senior College was officially on the map. An executive board oversaw the startup. Estimates put the student body number at 84 for the inaugural fall term in 2000.

MSC's initial mission statement read: "The Midcoast Senior College program is designed to provide a curriculum of intellectually stimulating learning opportunities and special activities for persons 55 years or older, regardless of educational background." The college would later expand to include a speaker series called Winter Wisdom, excursions, a current events forum, and additional classes.

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(MSC) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2000.

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Mail: 18 Middle St., Suite 2, Brunswick ME 04011 Follow us on Facebook for even more fun news!

MSC Turns 25!

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In May 2003, a logo contest attracted 30 proposed designs. The circular lettering of Midcoast Senior College by George Phipps and simple line drawing of the Seguin Island lighthouse by Jeanne Brooks were chosen to create MSC's logo. In December 2004, *The Midcoast Inquirer*, then a quarterly newsletter edited by David McKeith, was launched. The inaugural issue included essays of serious interest, poetry, and notes on cultural events. In June 2012, thanks to the efforts of many, MSC became a 501(c)(3) independent nonprofit organization in the state of Maine. And in May 2019, the college's mission statement was amended to "The Midcoast Senior College program is designed to provide non-credit academic courses and other educational events for people of 50 years and older to continue their lifelong learning."

MSC Today

Today, Midcoast Senior College has a full schedule of courses extending over two terms, a Summer and Winter Wisdom speaker series, annual members' meeting and luncheon, excursions, and more. It also has a 50-plus choral singing group (part of the MSC Singers class led by Stuart Gillespie) and an active writers' group, The Senior Scribblers.

The mostly volunteer organization is thriving, meeting the appetite for knowledge among area seniors and finding new ways to stimulate lifelong learning. MSC has a 14-person Board of Directors, 40-person faculty roster, full-time executive director, part-time associate director, bookkeeper, and nine committees.

Like all organizations, MSC has faced challenges since its founding, including the pandemic breakout in 2020. Yet the resilience and determination of MSC's volunteers, teachers, board, and students—including a willingness to learn how to use Zoom and the financial support of our members and community sponsors—have enabled us to surmount even the toughest hurdles.

Commemorating MSC's Beginnings

A committee was assembled in 2024 to plan a year of events marking MSC's 25th anniversary. As part of this effort, the MSC extended community was invited to vote on five options for an anniversary banner graphic. The winning selection, designed by Dan Possumato, features a lighthouse, picking up on the logo and anniversary theme: "Lifelong Learning Lights Up Our Lives: 25 Years of Illumination."

On January 3, 2025, our 25th year began with an afternoon celebration held at St. John's Community Center in Brunswick. A special-event commemorative flashlight was presented to all attendees. The free event included a seven-person panel discussion on the history of MSC, led by long-time member Nora Bishop; musical performances from the Midcoast Senior College Singers; door prizes; a free raffle; catered refreshments; and, of course, cake! Nearly 150 people attended this kickoff event. And there's more to come. During the remainder of 2025, additional special events will further mark MSC's milestone anniversary. Visit www.midcoastseniorcollege.org to learn more. ■

President's Letter

For 25 years, Midcoast Senior College has provided stimulating and enjoyable lifelong learning experiences to area seniors—and we're still going strong. Our regular offerings for 2025 are well under way, including Winter Wisdom (thank you to The Highlands for their sponsorship!), Spring Term I, and a fast-approaching Spring Term II.

We prosper and grow primarily by word-of-mouth, so consider becoming what I call an MSC Ambassador. Let others know about MSC and why you enjoy our offerings. Everyone wins: Friends unaware

of MSC won't miss out on classes, lectures, and events. Your own learning experiences will become even richer, as interesting individuals take part in MSC offerings. You'll also help boost MSC's revenue with every new member and course registration you encourage. Note: The role of MSC Ambassador extends beyond just attracting new members—you can also help recruit instructors, volunteers, and committee members.

Speaking of revenue, I'd like to make an appeal. MSC's Board tries to maintain affordable membership and tuition fees.

However, these fees cover only 50 percent of our budget. Our sponsors' support is vital for helping to make up the difference. **So is our Annual Fund, contributions to which account for nearly 35 percent of our yearly budget.** How can you help? Consider making monthly donations—easy to set up on our website. Remember: Whenever you support Midcoast Senior College, you're investing in the future of our learning community.

Bruce Hauptli
President



MSC Board of Directors

Officers

President: Bruce Hauptli

Vice President: *pending*

Treasurer: Kevin Hart

Secretary: Susan Goran

Additional Board Members

Freda Bernotavicz

Leona Dufour

Jay Kuder

M. Kelly Matzen

Craig Snapp

Erv Snyder

Laurie Spurr

William VanderWolk

David Vogt

George Young

Committee Chairs

Community Outreach: Susan Goran

Curriculum: Leona Dufour and John Haile

Winter Wisdom: Reg Elwell, Stuart Gillespie, Craig Snapp, David Vogt

Summer Wisdom: Morton Achter, Kelly Matzen, David Clark

Development: *pending*

Events: Freda Bernotavicz

Executive: Bruce Hauptli

Finance: Kevin Hart

Technology: Donna Marshall

Board News

We welcome **Laurie Spurr**, our newest Board member, whose term began in January 2025. Laurie's background is in languages, translation, and journalism. She has attended many MSC events and classes, and is an active member of the community, volunteering for local organizations as well. We welcome and look forward to working with Laurie in her first term for MSC.

Thanking Departing Board and Committee Chairs

Midcoast Senior College expresses its gratitude to board and committee members who have departed following many years of service. **Ervin Snyder** is concluding a year on the MSC board after two terms, ending in 2023, during which time Erv served as Treasurer. His return to the board to fill a vacancy speaks for Erv's commitment to our senior college. MSC is grateful to our committee and board members who make so many contributions to our senior college. **Janet Kehl** served on MSC's board for two terms, ending her second term in June 2024. During her tenure, Janet served as chairperson of the Events Committee and, later, co-chairperson of the Curriculum Committee with **Victor Papacosma** and **Bill VanderWolk**.

Victor stepped down from his role as co-chair in 2024 after many years serving in that capacity, working tirelessly to build our faculty and courses. Bill currently concludes his first term on the board and continues to serve on the Curriculum Committee, as does Victor. Janet continues to serve on ad hoc committees including MSC's 25th Anniversary committee and our Nominating Committee. **Karen Williams'** first term began in 2019, and she assumed the role of Treasurer and chairperson of the Finance Committee, later serving as Vice President as well. She was an active committee member and volunteer before leaving the board in 2024.

Seeking Additional Board Members

Members of MSC's Board of Directors play an important role in our college's operations. Do you know someone whom you'd like to recommend for service on the Board? Have you considered serving on the Board yourself? If so, contact us at info@midcoastseniorcollege.org to let us know. Aspiring Board members should be familiar with Midcoast Senior College as well as be members of MSC. ■

Editor's Letter

Hello, Fellow Lifelong Learners! When MSC Executive Director Donna Marshall and long-time MSC member Nora Bishop asked me if I'd like to take up the editorial reins for *The Midcoast Inquirer*, I was honored and thrilled. As a former freelance business writer and journalist, recent transplant to Harpswell, and newly minted retiree, I've been happily exploring the rich array of learning opportunities offered by Midcoast Senior College. I'm excited to

have the opportunity to contribute to this wonderful organization. Huge thanks to Donna for taking such great care of the *Inquirer* in between editors! I hope to continue to do this vital publication justice.

As you explore this issue, you may spot some design and content changes, as we seek to continue making the *Inquirer* the best it can be. In addition, in honor of MSC's 25th anniversary, you'll find news of events and occasions marking this

milestone in the life of our college, as well as a retrospective piece hearkening back to the *Inquirer's* earliest days.

The *Inquirer* has a proud history, and like each of us, it continues to adapt and grow over time. I hope you'll feel free to write or call with any suggestions you might have for supporting our newsletter's ongoing development. Thank you!

Lauren Keller Johnson, Editor



Mark Your Calendar

MSC Spring Term II

Registration for classes begins on March 17. Learn more about each course and find registration information at www.midcoastseniorcollege.org. You may also call our office at (207) 725-4900.

Class	Faculty
Healing	Steven Piker
Exercise and Aging	Chris Scott
Introducing West African Textiles	Susan Bowditch
The Wyeth Family of Artists	George Young
Brain Repair	Don Stein
MSC Singers: A Celebration	Stuart Gillespie
Growing Up	Frank Strasburger
American Religion 1820-1920	Ted Stainman
Humor: Not Just a Laughing Matter	Susan Goran

Summer Wisdom

Free and open to the public! Tuesday afternoons at 1:00-2:00 P.M., at the Morrell Meeting Room at Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick—unless otherwise noted. MSC greatly appreciates Thornton Oaks Retirement Community’s support of Summer Wisdom.



Date	Presentation	Presenter
May 6	The Sweets Business	Tom Wilbur Wilbur Chocolates
May 13	Elder Health Care	Rani Snyder Vice President of Programs, John A. Hartford Foundation
May 20	250 th Anniversary of the Benedict Arnold Expedition	Robert Stevens
May 27	Ecology and Plant Life of Maine	Cheryl Swift
June 3	MSC Silver Jubilee: Twenty-five Years of Maine Politics	Don Carrigan—at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Brunswick

Additional Events

To learn more about the following events, visit www.midcoastseniorcollege.org.

Date	Event	Location
May 16	Excursion to Farnsworth Art Museum	16 Museum St., Rockland
June 12	Annual MSC Members Meeting and Luncheon Celebrating 25 Years	Daggett Lounge, Bowdoin College
June 25	Excursion to Portland Museum of Art	7 Congress Sq., Portland

Senior Scribblers: Aspiring Writers Wanted

Do you enjoy inventing stories, playing with language, and trying out new writing techniques? If so, consider joining MSC’s thriving Senior Scribblers writing group. Facilitator Harry Hopcroft suggests a prompt for each assignment, and group members are off and running—drafting complete stories (containing a beginning, middle, and

end) of no more than 1,000 words. Prompts might range anywhere from “Write a story that consists only of dialogue” to quirky phrases (such as “garden party,” “five-minute decision,” “computer glitch,” and “skipping work or school”). Writers read their stories out loud during class. Remarkably, each writer typically comes up with a unique response

to the prompt, which adds to the fun and enables group members to learn from each other. Aspiring writers may visit the group to see how it works, but ultimately must be members of Midcoast Senior College or any senior college. To learn more about the Scribblers, contact Harry Hopcroft at harry@techmanage@gmail.com or (207) 841-8324.



A Look Back

Midcoast Senior College's 25th anniversary is a fine time to look back and remind ourselves of our college's history and purpose. To that end, here's an excerpt from the *Inquirer's* very first issue (December 2004), by former editor David McKeith. I can't think of better words than David's to convey the value and richness that our college offers to seniors.

Lauren Keller Johnson

... Retirees are eager for continued social activities that bring them together with their peers. Many crave intellectual stimulus and encouragement. Many wish to continue using a lifelong skill. Many desire to contribute something to the community beyond their own doors.

Programs of lifelong learning speak to each of these needs, but [MSC's] programs differ significantly from college-age education. Our volunteer, retired faculty are co-learners who encourage among their peers what has been described as a "conversation among equals." Faculty come from many experiences and not solely from teaching careers. Students are notably self-motivated . . . [T]hey come to feel themselves gathered into a community of eager learners with ample discussion, agreement and disagreement, and insight. . . . [L]earning continues beyond [the courses] at [each learner's] own pleasure.

The Joys of Book Journals

Back in August 2010, my husband and I spent a weekend with my oldest friend and her husband. I asked her about a book list she'd kept when we were in college. Ginny said, "Yep, still do," and showed me many notebooks, where lined pages had single entries: book title, author, date finished. I was overwhelmed that she'd kept it up. The entries were in the thousands.

Inspired, I decided to start my own book journal. However, being a garrulous English major, unlike my friend the art major, I had to write a commentary on each book I finished.

After being asked to write this column, I took a look through my first reading journal. Revisiting those entries brought me to myself 15 years ago. I may have gotten better and I may have stayed the same concerning my tastes and attitudes. Some of the books I barely remember reading; others, with my commentaries, leapt out at me as if I'd just finished them. I began the journal with a comment on *War and Peace*. I noted that it took me about six weeks to finish. Very impressed, I wrote: "Truly universal in all senses of the word—the battle scenes are riveting and panoramic. Most of the time, the philosophy is absorbing, but Tolstoy

overdoes it by that Epilogue with all its parts..."

Then I began a journey through Robert Wilson's Inspector Falcon series. A reread of *Invisible Man* showed up a little later, along with *Henderson*, *the Rain King*, both getting stars. These were followed by a return to Wilson's Africa crime series.

I continued this pattern of a romp through detective/spy novels followed by a serious read, as with Alexandra Popoff's biography of Sophia Tolstoy. The next time I reread *War and Peace*, I wasn't that big a fan of the struggling narcissist, who disavowed his own famous novels while working out his salvation and being true to himself.

I finished 2010 with 42 titles, including my discovery of Andrea Camilleri's Inspector Montalbano, taking up space next to entries like Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*, returning to Arkady Renko and how he was dealing with Putin's wolf children, those oligarchs, and that mafia in *Three Stations*. (You can't say contemporary fiction doesn't offer warnings....) The last two entries for 2010 were *Cosmos* by Witold Gombrowicz (one of the strangest novels I've ever read, particularly with its consideration of onanism and suicide, first

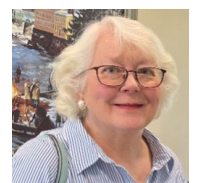
published in 1965 in communist Poland) and *Shantoram* by Gregory David Roberts (about the Bombay mafia, Russian-Afghan war, and Iranian gangs, and a brutal read concerning Indian prisons and survival therein; I don't think I'll ever reread it).

Eclectic? Intellectual? Slummy? Probably all three describe that year's entries.

If you've kept a book journal or have a solid sense of where your reading has taken you over the years, what does reviewing your choices tell you about yourself? Have the books you've read challenged you? Inspired insights or opinions you'd never considered? Made you wiser, more critical, more understanding, more uncertain or confused? Has your response to a book you've reread in a later phase of life differed from your initial response? If so, how? Have your reading tastes and preferences changed over the years? How?

Keeping track of our reading is a worthy exercise. It's never too late to begin the pleasure of expressing *your* opinion on what you've read.

Leona Dufour



Faculty Focus

Meet George Young

The Midcoast Inquirer *spoke recently with George Young, who has taught a diverse array of classes for Midcoast Senior College over the past nine years, including the novel War and Peace, Dante’s Inferno, and ancient Greek and Roman literature. For MSC’s Spring Term II, George will be teaching The Wyeth Family of Artists. I spoke with George to learn more about his experiences with teaching for MSC and his upcoming course. Below are excerpts from our conversation, edited for clarity.*

Lauren Keller Johnson

Lauren Keller Johnson: What do you find most fulfilling about teaching for MSC?

George Young: I get to teach whatever I’m interested in! It’s most fulfilling, though, that the students are genuinely interested in intellectual activity. They’re glad that they now have time to study something of interest that they didn’t have time for earlier in their lives. They’re invested in the courses they take; they *want* to participate. And since they’ve all had different and rich life experiences, they learn as much as—or even more—from each other than they do from me.

We’ve also had some surprising connections and “small world” experiences. For example, while teaching *War and Peace*, I talked about the process by which Prince Andrei dies after being wounded. One of my students said that the book’s description of the dying process mirrored what she saw during her tour of duty as a nurse in Vietnam. Another student said he had served as a doctor in Vietnam. It turned out that both of them had worked in the same medical unit in Da Nang.

LKJ: What got you interested in teaching your forthcoming course, *The Wyeth Family of Artists*?

GY: My wife Pat and I used to be in the art business—we bought and sold 19th- and 20th-century paintings in the retail and auction markets. We love paintings. In fact, we recently visited the Brandywine Museum, in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, to see its superb Wyeth collections.

LKJ: Tell me about the Wyeth course.

GY: This will be my first time teaching an art course. *The Wyeth Family of Artists* focuses on the lives and works of N.C., his son Andrew, and his grandson Jamie. We also cover important women in their lives who were talented in their own right and who influenced them, including spouses, siblings, and teachers.

LKJ: What do you find most interesting about the Wyeths?

GY: I think their lives and their work have a special appeal for people in Maine. And, they have more in common than people might think, given their different personalities, styles and approaches, and life experiences. I also find it interesting that they don’t fit neatly into simple boxes



that art historians like, such as “modern,” “abstract,” or “realism.”

LKJ: What do you hope your students will take away from the Wyeth course?

GY: I hope they’ll learn how to view and respond to the paintings in new ways, and we can talk together about questions like “What do you see in this painting?” “What do you feel when you look at it?” “What does it seem to be saying to you?” When you learn more about a body of artwork, how you view the art, and what you get out of it, can change and become richer.

LKJ: Thank you, George, for taking the time to speak with me.

GY: You’re very welcome! ■



Christina’s World by Andrew Wyeth, 1948



Community Outreach Committee members staff the informational table at the 2023 People Plus! Expo.

MSC Thanks Our Volunteers

Volunteers play a vital role in enabling MSC to operate, and we're profoundly grateful for your help! If you haven't volunteered for MSC before and you think you might like to give it a try, contact us at info@midcoastseniorcollege.org or (207) 725-4900 for more information. There's a wealth of opportunities to make a difference through volunteering. For example, depending on your interests and availability, you might:

- Spread the word about MSC—to friends, neighbors, family members, and others.
- Serve on one of our many committees—see page 3. Contact Donna Marshall at office@midcoastseniorcollege@gmail.com to learn more about the committees and how to volunteer for one or more of them.
- Serve on our Board.
- Teach a class on a subject you're knowledgeable and passionate about.

- Help a faculty member conduct an in-person or Zoom class.
- Assist another student; for instance, by offering a ride to someone who can't drive to a class, or coaching someone on how to take part in a Zoom meeting.
- Thank an MSC sponsor (see page 8) by visiting their business and expressing appreciation for their support.

Classroom-Helper Training Session

Interested in helping a faculty member conduct a class? Come to a training session:

Friday, April 4, 9:30-11:30
 UMA/Brunswick Center on the Landing
 12 Sewall Street, Brunswick

Call the office at (207) 725-4900 for more details about the session! ■

Our Mission

The Midcoast Inquirer articulates the academic spirit and educational mission of Midcoast Senior College. To that end, we announce course offerings, lectures, and special events, and provide a literary forum of essays, reviews, interviews, and commentaries written by faculty and students.

What Is Inquiry?

When David McKeith named our newsletter *The Midcoast Inquirer* back in 2004, it was no accident. Inquiry is essential for lifelong learning. But what is inquiry, exactly?



Frank Goodyear, Museum Co-Director, leads MSC members on a tour of Bowdoin College's Museum of Art.

One source I discovered—Britannica Education (britannicaeducation.com)—maintains that inquiry is a specific learning process. That process includes asking our own questions, investigating multiple sources of information for a specific purpose, thinking critically to make sense of the information we've found, and establishing and communicating our new understandings and knowledge. When we learn through inquiry, we make new connections—among ideas as well as with fellow learners. Equally important, we may discover that being wrong is a normal part of learning, and is even valuable if it leads us to new insights.

Lauren Keller Johnson

Sponsor Spotlight: Maine Pines Racquet & Fitness

Midcoast Senior College's many offerings provide a wealth of opportunities to break an intellectual sweat—essential for keeping our minds sharp and thriving. But breaking a physical sweat is just as vital for staying healthy, balanced, and fit. That's where Maine Pines Racquet & Fitness—a longtime MSC sponsor—comes in. Located at 120 Harpswell Road in Brunswick, Maine Pines is the only racquet-sports club in the Midcoast area. As owner and manager Rob Manter explains, as much as 60-70 percent of Maine Pines' members are seniors, and the club offers an array of fitness opportunities for this age cohort. Strong minds, strong bodies, strong community: If you haven't already explored Maine Pines, why not treat yourself to a visit? Below is just a taste of the club's offerings.—Lauren Keller Johnson

Maine Pines Racquet & Fitness is known for being one of the nation's Top 50 Tennis Welcome Centers and the United States Tennis Association New England Club of



Aerobics class at Maine Pines Racquet & Fitness

the Year—but that's not all. Maine Pines has tennis, pickleball, and fitness programs for all ages and ability levels. The club boasts six heated indoor courts and five pickleball courts with a second-floor viewing area, a lounge with a big-screen TV, pro shop, weight room, large aerobics studio, yoga and spin room, cardiovascular equipment, and much more!

Maine Pines' programs can help you lift your spirits, change your life, and do good things for your body. On the tennis side and pickleball side, the club features a variety of junior, adult, and senior programs that include clinics, leagues,

lessons, and tournaments. On the fitness side, it offers a wide array of group fitness classes that include aerobics, toning and sculpting, pound, Pilates, barre, SilverSneakers®, and yoga.

Midcoast Senior College is grateful to Maine Pines Racquet & Fitness for its continued support of our free programming to the greater community. For more information and to take a video tour, please visit mainepines.com. ■

MSC Thanks Our Sponsors

As a non-profit organization, Midcoast Senior College relies on the support of its members, donors, and community sponsors to help fund its operating costs—so we can continue delivering the courses and learning opportunities so crucial to our community. Sponsorship represents a significant portion of our budget. We are grateful to have the ongoing support from our sponsors listed here, and we welcome new sponsors. Please contact us at mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org to join us as a sponsor.



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