



THE Illuminator

THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA SENIOR COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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View from the Chair



It has been six months since I became chairperson of UMA Senior College. I'd like to thank Carole Baldwin, the most recent chair, for setting a good example. I can still rely on her for advice when I need it. She was a good role model, and I hope that I can keep up the high standard of leadership that she set.

During my "honeymoon" period, I worked with the different committees to

make small changes in how our senior college operates. First, we decided to start a separate early membership enrollment period. With membership enrollment out of the way, signing up for fall classes was more manageable both for the students and the volunteers. Nevertheless, there are still bugs to work out.

Another change that you will see is a more current and active UMA Senior College website at umasc.org. Occasionally, I write a column to keep members up to date with the affairs of Senior College. You will find an article about the fall art class in this

edition of *The Illuminator*. It includes a web address for the UMASC website, where you will find a display of artwork produced in the class.

We had a successful fall semester in 2023. UMA Senior College offered twenty-five classes with 264 "seats" occupied. However, as soon as one semester ends, work begins on planning the next semester. The Curriculum Committee has been discussing some interesting new ideas for the spring semester. I am curious to see what they produce. Classes don't just magically appear. It takes a team to make them a reality and perseverance to bring them to the classroom or online. We are fortunate to have creative and enthusiastic volunteers, instructors, and professional staff who make the work appear seamless.

It takes a lot of hands to achieve a high-quality organization. We are always looking for additional volunteers to help turn the gears; no skill is unwelcome, and no effort is too small. If you have only a few hours to give, you might help answer phones during registration or greet students during the first week of classes. Members with technical skills can help orient instructors to our classroom technology or monitor Zoom classes. Standing committees such as the Curriculum, Finance, Publicity, and Concert Committees can always use more members to share the ongoing work. If you would like to help, send your name and contact information to office@umasc.org or call Lisa Moguel, our administrative specialist, at the Senior College office at (207) 621-3551.

I am writing this column in early November on a gray day when the first snowflakes are floating down through the bronze leaves of the oak trees, a harbinger of the season's change. By the time Ann Sullivan, the editor of *The Illuminator*, and her team get this edition to your door, we will be well into the holiday season. It will be a time to catch our breath and look at our accomplishments over the past year, review the goals we didn't quite reach, and remember the people we will not see again. Take advantage of the joy that this time of year brings by sharing it with family, friends, and even strangers.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the winter lectures and spring classes.

Sincerely,

Louis Fontaine, Chairperson
UMA Senior College

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Thank You! Chet Day, Art Ray, and Peter Ezzy "The Three Amigos"



Sandy Barringer

It all started about fifteen years ago when Art Ray, a retired CMP electrical engineer, was a member of the UMASC Curriculum Committee working on setting up courses. Those early classes were well attended, especially by women. Art was looking for something that might attract more men. So "Guy Flicks" was born in the fall of 2009 with the standard action film *Dirty Harry* starring Clint Eastwood.

At the time, there wasn't a proper venue for showing films on the UMA campus. Enter Deena and Chet Day, who had already been instrumental in establishing the popular *Sunday Concerts at Jewett*. Chet had retired from the highly successful early technology computer communications research industry, and he just happened to be setting up a home entertainment center (that he had won in a raffle) in his living room in Fayette. Peter Ezzy, who had served as a reserve officer with the Maine Emergency Management Agency, thought it would be a fine idea to start an "off-campus" course at the Days' home using Chet's new entertainment center.

The class proved popular. People tell stories about some tricky winter commutes to the Fayette home. At times, Chet would have to drive to the end of the ¼ mile driveway to pick up class members who would pile into the back of his pickup. In addition, attendees fondly remember special treats such as Tom Feagin's southern grits, Peter Rosenburg's salmon, and Mary Bayer's pecan sticky buns. The last session of the semester always involved a celebration—with guests and yummy treats.

Not surprisingly, word got out about this movie course. Finally, in the fall of 2012, "Guy Flicks" became "Action Flicks" and, a bit later, "Classic Movies." It transitioned to the Klahr Center auditorium, a venue that could accommodate up to fifty people.

Each member of the trio brought his own unique skills to the operation. Art and Chet would come up with lively and sometimes extravagant ideas, but Peter was the one who always made everything happen. Chet called him "the glue." Early on, "The Three Amigos" (Pete's name for the three "Classic Movie" instructors) wisely began to bring others into what was then called the bullpen. Joe Lonigan, a neighbor of Chet's in Fayette, has always been Chet's backup and now runs the technical equipment for the movies along with his backup—Kip Glidden and Phil Fishman, HHRC operations manager. Initially, the class provided an extensive informational booklet of about 100 pages written primarily by Chet and partially financed by the UMASC office. Now, we offer a 30-page informational packet produced by Kathy Taggart, our editor and researcher, and contributed to by the eight or nine movie presenters chosen each semester. Henri Baker is our administrator, MC, and discussion leader.

Who knew it would take at least nine persons to replace "The

Three Amigos"?

With the passing of Peter Ezzy in the fall of 2022, we decided to celebrate all three of the "Classic Movies" long-time instructors. They had ushered us through many years of marvelous films, and as a last act, they organized our COVID semesters on Zoom—no easy technical task! In addition, Chet and Dee generously set up a matching fundraiser to replace and modernize the equipment in the Klahr Center.

We have been using it since the spring of 2023.

The first movie selected for that session was the Steve Martin, Chevy Chase, and Martin Short comedy *The Three Amigos*



Before the movie, we held an awards

ceremony to honor Chet, Art, and Pete. We were able to accommodate both class members and many guests. Shirley and Paul Ezzy came to receive Peter's beautiful framed award. Art Ray was able to attend to receive his award, and one of his brothers



Art Ray

Shirley Ezzy

Chet Day

came from New Hampshire to be with us. And, of course, Chet and Dee were in attendance, along with many guests. Thanks to Charlie Hartman, our fantastic photographer (and long-time movie presenter and class participant), we were able to send many pictures of the event and our Appreciation Award to all the special guests.

Thankfully, Chet is still supporting us. He still maintains a vast collection of classic movies that magically seems to contain every movie we select to show. He recently was heard to say that he was so pleased with the job we were doing to carry on "Classic Movies." What a compliment!

Thank you so much, Chet, Art, and Pete!

Sandy Barringer

Laughter... at the Core of a Life Well Lived!

Shall we laugh? Absolutely! A sense of humor is critical to our health, wellness, and effectiveness.



Gary Crocker

Consider this: you are offering remarks as a keynote speaker at a statewide conference of food service professionals. As you make what you hope will be received as humorous comments, laughter erupts throughout the room of some 400 people. But your eyes are drawn to one particular attendee whose

head is wrapped in a silk scarf, and her pale white complexion suggests she is likely very ill. But, she is laughing and that, you think to yourself...is a very good thing!

You finish your keynote address and move briskly to a smaller meeting room, where you plan to offer instruction on incorporating humor into our lives. As you make your presentation, you notice the same woman with her head wrapped in a scarf sitting in the back row. And—she is still laughing! A very good thing, you think to yourself!

You wrap up your lecture/demonstration and collect your materials and props to leave the room so the next presenter can set up.... But as you turn to go, the woman, the one with the headscarf, is standing right in front of you with her hand extended. You shake her hand as she introduces herself and offers the additional information that she has cancer. You say you are sorry, and she says she is, too, but she needs to tell you something. Her tone suggests she is about to say something powerful, and you become concerned that you may have offended her at some point during your presentation. But as she begins to speak, she looks you straight in the eye with uncommon kindness and a sense of sharing something important.

She explains that her cancer is painful and that she had not slept the previous night. She goes on to say that she had initially questioned why she would even attend the conference. After all, she would never again serve meals to school children. But, she continues, "There was a picture of you holding a pink flamingo on the conference flier with the caption, 'The Power of Humor,' directly under the picture." At this point, this remarkable woman looks at you as a tear rolls down her cheek, and she throws her arms around you and whispers in your ear, "It was worth it!"

Well, I don't have to imagine these "facts" because they happened to me in Augusta, Maine, in the fall of 2000. On

that magical day, I learned just how valuable a sense of humor can be. Near the end of her life, this woman gave me a gift: humor is important at any time, but it is especially important during difficult times.

As Charlie Chaplin famously said, "A day without laughter is a day wasted." I would add that a humorless life is a sad one indeed, and if we put a good education to work with a kind and giving heart toward our fellow travelers—and laugh at every opportunity—our lives will not only be successful, but they will, in fact, be joyous for us and those we encounter along the journey we call...life!

Gary Crocker

BS in Early Childhood and Education; MS in Adult Education

Activating Your Artistic Creativity



Elizabeth
Luckraft

Carole
Baldwin

Who could have known how many incredibly curious and creative students we have at Senior College? We (Carole Baldwin and Elizabeth Luckraft) have been co-teaching the senior college class on mixed media and creativity for nearly ten years, and we are consistently amazed at how much fun, joy, and spark these students create. Rather than

offering a class for "artists," we offer it to "creative explorers" who work and play with mixed media in a safe environment. Here, there is no right or wrong way to create. Instead, we tap into the creative energy we all have access to—if we just let go, trust ourselves, have fun, support each other, and take a few risks to explore the use of a variety of artistic materials. This atmosphere, by the way, leads to the creation of some unique and cool art as part of the journey!

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Making friends, being intellectually stimulated, building confidence, and having fun while learning are all a part of the senior-college experience. We love working with students year after year and seeing this wonderfully creative community grow! The following are some student perspectives on their experiences as Artistic Explorers in the fall of 2023.

Carole Baldwin and Elizabeth Luckraft

Venturing into a mixed-media art class for the first time felt extremely intimidating, but my determination to experience some right-brain exploration won out. And I am glad it did! Not surprisingly, many participants are far more skilled and experienced than I, but their outpouring of support and enthusiasm has been amazing and encouraging! This is true of the instructors as well. A constant source of inspiration, they have been patient, consistently providing positive feedback. I have learned much; perhaps more importantly, I look forward to continuing to explore the wonderful world of art! I shall never rival Matisse or O'Keeffe, but I have learned to see the world differently and appreciate the worth and beauty in all that I create. Thank you for that, Carole and Elizabeth!

Sue Robinson

Explore creativity! Sounds like fun, and it really is! I have always struggled with considering myself creative. I may be the least experienced person in the class since my last art class was in junior high. Each week, Elizabeth and Carole emphasize that we are in a safe environment. I have learned so much about watercolor pencils, acrylic painting techniques, mixing colors, and making gel and ink prints. My fear of trying something new seems to have melted away in this group of wonderful, creative people. I'm even exploring making and printing cards at home for this holiday season!

Stephanie Zurinski

I recently retired and decided to sign up for Elizabeth and Carole's class—Activating Your Artistic Creativity. This course has opened up a whole new world of possibilities in exploring different media to make and create works of art. I attended art school and never really tapped into my own creativity; I was making art to meet someone else's expectations and to make money. I am truly having fun in this class, exploring new ways of making art—for me—this time! I really enjoy sharing our creations on the gallery walk and am energized by listening to and learning from others.

Thank you, Carole and Elizabeth!

Nan Bell

Being part of the Art Explorer's class at the UMA Senior College has given me the confidence to take my art to the next level.

Joanne Webber

The class begins at 9:30, but since the first session, when "newbies" and "oldies" meet and mix, we have tended to gather earlier to share our art and our lives. The studio is a safe space. Weekly sharing of our "homeplay" through the clothesline gallery is rewarding. No pressure! Exhibit or not; it's all good.



With excited voices, we comment on the new lesson for the day and gather materials to start our projects. Little by little, the voices and the laughter subside as a harmonious silence takes over. We are in our collective Zen moment.

Priscilla Doel

How lucky am I to play and explore with paint with other UMA Senior College art explorers! Yes, I have taken this class twice; hopefully, it will not be the last. The upbeat energy of the other class members and the creative atmosphere of this class are palpable as soon as you enter the room. Carole and Elizabeth offer structure, cheerleading, and a genuine love of art to each and every student. After taking my first art class with them, I have even worked up enough courage to start making cards to sell at a local shop in my town! Unbelievable, but true! I cannot say enough about the value of being a part of the UMA Senior College community. It gives me a place to learn, connect, and explore as part of my post-retirement second act of life.

Kim Rideout-Dawes

Friday mornings are "adventure time" for those enrolled in Activating Your Artistic Creativity. Our spirited leaders, Carole Baldwin and Elizabeth Luckraft,

generously guide us as we follow each Friday's creative trail. UMA allows us to use the art studio in UMA's Fine Arts Building, and we greatly enjoy this privilege. This space enables us to create in an environment that accommodates both artistic exploration and social connections. For two hours, we learn, play, create, and share as we suggest, support, and celebrate our fellow explorers and ourselves as well. We "make art" with paper and paints (and more) and all kinds of tools—traditional and non-traditional. Our mornings are alive with curiosity, adventure, and the very best—many "Aha!" moments.

Kathleen Crilly

Editor's note: You are cordially invited to visit the Artistic Explorers' virtual art show on the UMASC website at: umasc.org.

The Artistic Explorers



Puppy Love



Stephanie Zurinski

As I pull into the driveway, I can hear Astra's excited barking. She barks, "You're home, you're home, you're home!" as I walk from the garage to the back door.

Her toenails make a clickety-clickety-clack sound as she dances her excitement, barking the entire time.

Astra is a Samoyed with soft, fluffy fur-like down, pointed ears, and a plumed

tail that curls over her back. Her bark is very high-pitched, almost ear-piercing. When she throws back her head and howls, I can only laugh and join in.

Bending down to pet her head, I can feel the breeze from her wagging tail on my face.

I tell her, "Let me change clothes, and then we'll go for a walk." The phrase "go for a walk" sends her into more ecstasies of dancing, tail-wagging, and barking.

I slip out of my corporate clothes and into jeans,



sneakers, and a sweatshirt. With her leash and the car keys in hand, I head to the lake with my enthusiastic pup. In the car, Astra moves from one side to the other with the occasional pause to put her cold, wet nose in my ear and lick the side of my face.

As we turn onto the familiar road, she starts to whimper in excitement. "Almost there," I tell her. I park the car and clip on her leash. She bounds out, ready to explore the wooded path. It's early May, and the trees are just beginning to bud. Lightly squeezing the sticky alder buds releases their sweet spring aroma, and I inhale deeply.

From the direction of the lake, we hear an odd, hooting laugh. The grebes are back! We emerge from the trees at the water's edge to watch the pair do their courting dance. But it's the song that accompanies the dance that really means spring to me. As the two grebes approach each other, their necks stretch out and up. The strange laughing sound gets louder as the two birds get closer together.

As I watch the grebes, Astra explores the forest floor. With her black nose quivering, she sniffs just about every square inch of the territory we cover. I do believe that her nose is the most aerobically fit part of her body.

A wise person once said that we don't deserve dogs. This is true. They are so pure, so innocent, and so in-the-moment. Astra has been at my side through thick and thin. She is my hiking buddy, confidante, and, in some ways, my savior.

Stephanie Zurinski

Writing to Discover My Thoughts

Flannery O'Connor said, "I have to write to discover what I am doing."



Stephanie Harkness

Writers' Workshop facilitator Janet Cowperthwaite, asked us to respond to one of the quotes that started each of her classes, and I chose Flannery O'Connor. I write to discover what I am thinking. Free-flow thinking tends to wander aimlessly and get lost around corners. Thoughts can end up in a dark alley of frivolous self-entertainment or, worse, self-punishment.

When I attempt to tack thoughts down to a page and struggle with them until they stop wiggling, it helps me to focus on what I am thinking—to define the

thoughts, to organize and reconcile conflicting thoughts, to acknowledge them, and to own them. Then, I am better positioned to judge if my thoughts are clear, informed, ready to act on, or still too drunk with emotion to be serviceable. I can choose to act on my acknowledged thoughts or put them to bed and have one spring awake at night in the middle of a dream. The middle of the night is not a good time to pin those buggers through the thorax like a beetle or butterfly in a display box.

Just because my thoughts may be well-considered doesn't mean they are true or correct. I am reminded of the meme of two men looking at a figure inscribed on the ground. The man on one side sees 6, while the man on the other sees 9. It is the messy business of perspective that is the problem. Often, a third unseen person is not there to tell us his intention when he made the mark. Which direction was he facing? What if he wasn't writing a number but just waving a stick in the dirt in a creative flourish, and I'm trying to make sense out of playful nonsense?

Perspective is important, or we could stumble when walking down a hallway. We need to be mindful that a person we brush past is coming from the other direction. Where is he coming from? What has happened to him? Does he see me? Will he step aside to let me pass, or will he intentionally knock me aside with his shoulder as he passes and angrily declare I'm in his way, and I should watch where I'm going?

Today, much is said about angry discourse between people about their views of their world; we worry about how unpleasant and even scary the discussion can be. There may be more argument and less debate—more chest pounding for dominance than trying to understand one another. There is more interest in being right and less interest in learning about others. There is more emphasis on winning than working together toward a shared goal.

My favorite activity in high school was being on the debate team. Team members had to spend a year studying to defend both sides of a proposition—both sides! Surely, you can not defend a proposition you do not agree with, but you do, and that is the magic of debate. You learn that there is more than one side to a story and that both sides have valid and invalid arguments. When you are done with your study, you may end up with a definite belief, but it is informed, and you can give reasons in a respectful way.

Reasons do not get stronger by raising your voice, name-calling, stereotyping, and attributing motives without actually knowing them.

Motives are wiggly but powerful. Understanding other people's motives is difficult. Understanding your own can be difficult. What do you really want? Why do you want it? Can you have it and still let others reach their own goals? If not, why not? Is everything a zero-sum game?

When I write down my thoughts, I am often surprised by what I am thinking. Words are not my only means of wrestling with my thoughts. I also use art—art journaling, for one. It is not as precise as words, but it often provides the big-picture affective backstory for my thoughts.

I am interested in other people's stories. When meeting with a friend, I will often say, "Tell me a story." Your stories are important. Write them, draw them, sing them, dance them, cook them, plant them. They are important. You are important.

Stephanie Harkness

My 50 Years at UMA & UMASC: Musings of a Perpetual Student

Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones, a popular documentary on Netflix, highlights several remote areas where their citizens live considerably longer than elsewhere. We're talking nonagenarians, centenarians, and even supercentenarians (over 110 years old). I had seen

casual references to such places in the past, but it was purely of academic interest because I wasn't sure I'd want to live that long. Besides, I was younger then and quite unconcerned with geriatric matters.

Well, the years have flown by, and I've generally been in denial about aging, but now I must reluctantly admit it—I'm getting old. I now have the incentive to take a closer look and see what lessons I can learn from that superannuated cohort that could help me make a more graceful transition into my "Golden Years."

The individuals cited in the *Blue Zones* typically live in remote rural villages in places like Sardinia, Costa Rica,



Linwood Riggs

Greece, and Okinawa. Far from the stresses of city life, their towns are typically located on rocky hillsides, so walking the steep terrain keeps them physically fit. Because their societies honor older folks, the elderly remain socially engaged and respected. They often eat foods found on the Mediterranean diet, but other healthful diets are also popular. I'm not suggesting that we learn Italian, relocate to Barbagia, and live the simple life. But still, we certainly can help preserve our mental acuity and interest in life by taking stimulating UMASC courses.

I've also been reading articles on successful aging from AARP, the Mayo Clinic, and other credible, non-commercial sources. That hardly qualifies me as an authority on the subject, but some things seem clear. Good nutrition and regular exercise are essential, but staying mentally engaged and socially connected appear to be equally important contributors to successful aging. We can't just sit around at home, munching Fritos and watching reruns of *Gilligan's Island*, and expect to stay healthy and age gracefully. With Zoom meetings as an option, though, we can still attend some classes from the comfort of home. Of course, if you're reading this in *The Illuminator*, you've got the message already, but please tell your over-50 friends and neighbors about our wonderful Senior College.

My experience with continuing education began over fifty years ago after serving in the Army. Faced with the unpleasant prospect of being drafted, I had enlisted for a three-year hitch in exchange for a commitment for a twenty-five-week computer training class. After finishing my service, I returned to my home in Wayne and landed a job as a field engineer with RCA's Computer Systems Division in Augusta. By a happy coincidence, UMA had just been established as a separate campus in 1971, so I began evening classes there in 1972 while working full-time. Among my veteran's benefits were the GI education benefits, which paid for all of my tuition and books, with a small amount left over. Imagine that! And I enjoyed being a student!

UMA enrollment numbers were small then, but there were no computer science courses. So, I took whatever interested me: logic, sociology, art history, psychology, and anthropology were among my favorites. I eventually earned an AA in liberal studies, a BA in psychology, and a Master of Business Administration

from three different campuses—UMA, UMO, and USM. Remarkably, I took all but two classes here at the Augusta campus. (At that time, faculty from Orono and Portland drove to Augusta to teach selected courses.) This process took seventeen years and gave me a good background as a lifelong learner, so signing up for classes at UMASC after my retirement seemed almost inevitable.

I have taken a couple dozen courses. I can't mention all of them, but among the recent ones I particularly enjoyed were the Chris Williamson and Carter Meyer's Farnsworth Art Museum lectures, Dan Mitchell's architectural history courses (a good fit for my photography and local history interests), and Elizabeth Reinsborough's always interesting travel presentations. Thanks to them and to the many others who have donated their time and energy to giving presentations, organizing UMASC classes, publishing the newsletter, and attending to all the other administrative tasks involved. Special thanks also to Bennett Katz, whose vision sparked the creation of UMA back in the 1960s, and to UMA for supporting our Senior College.

Although I pursued a rewarding technical career in information technology (IT), the subjects that interested me most have always been social sciences and humanities: art history, architecture, psychology, and anthropology. On this Thanksgiving, I am grateful that UMA and UMASC have enriched my life by offering an opportunity to engage in lifelong learning.

Linwood Riggs

Whole Food Plant-based Diets to Support Healthy Ageing



Mary Bayer & Leon Bresloff

During this course, Eileen Fingerman, M.D., and her husband, Tom Vigee, presented cooking demonstrations and explored food choices. The lessons were conducted deep in the woods of Sidney in their home, which they both designed and built. The initial class met at UMA for an introduction to the science behind plant-based cooking and a viewing of an

insightful documentary. Students gathered for the other sessions in the instructors' kitchen in Sidney.

During these home-based sessions, students stood facing a deep counter overlooking the kitchen to observe the preparation of various dishes. Eileen explained what they were demonstrating and why they made certain choices, leaving ample time for lively Q&A interchanges. Surprises and insights soon began. Not only did we have the opportunity to



Eileen and Tom preparing for the next class

watch the food preparation, but we also observed Eileen and Tom using a wide variety of cooking utensils, equipment, and storage options, everything nestled in its own handy setting. It was such fun watching the two of them working in tandem! Later, Lee and I adopted many of their helpful modifications in our own kitchen.

During each session, when the preparations were complete, we gathered at the dining room table for lively taste and talk times. Some in the group feared resistance and were concerned about how partners and family might greet such innovations. We shared our disdain regarding the large number of medications often prescribed, especially for patients of an advanced age. Plant-based foods can offer interesting interventions—a "Food for Medicine" approach. The scientific studies appeared quite convincing to us, especially those related to encouraging healthier living. In class, we explored many of these alternatives.

We were thrilled to hear that plant-based eating offers a successful response to the ever-present battle against unwanted pounds. In this country, there's an epidemic of obesity from which the elderly are not immune. This is where plant-based diets really shine!

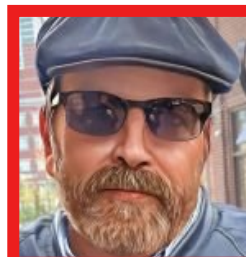
Excess weight disappears, with appropriate weight easily maintained. No more fussing around with dieting. What's not to like about that? We love the luxury of eating what we enjoy without worrying about gaining weight! Our final sit-down taste and talk time celebration was fun but sad. We hated to see the end of such an interesting experience with these creative folks. Finally, after a group hug, class was dismissed.

A few days later, Lee and I decided to try adopting a plant-based diet. We began this new chapter in our lives after eliminating the suggested "unhelpful" products from our diet. Six months later, we're feeling invigorated and have easily met our weight loss goals. We enjoy the challenges of creating a new way of cooking and eating. Because we travel frequently, we took a few short trips to test out ways of maintaining our new diet. No problem. Then we wondered what we'd feed our kids when they'd visit. Finally, we decided they'd just have to eat what we eat. Lucky for us, they were game for anything! A West Coast daughter arrived with a copy of *Forks Over Knives* tucked into her suitcase. Everyone requested copies of our recipes. Recently, many friends and relatives have ordered our favorite cookbook and have sent photos of what they've created.

As one cookbook shouts out, "Be A Plant Based Woman Warrior!" (Men can join, too; Lee did.)

Mary Bayer and Leon Bresloff

Memphis



Mike Bell

Two days a week, they sat in the classroom, wondering what was next. What shenanigans was the Crump machine up to? Who was stopping by 706 Union Street to lay down some vocals? And the burning question of the whole class...Had Elvis really left the building? Memphis, Tennessee, has always had much to offer our country. The artists, civic leaders, and people who built that city never disappointed the folks gathered here in Augusta. This metropolis has watched over the flow of history from its perch on the river bluffs. And the music...

The sheer talent that became part of the various music scenes in the Bluff City still brings new artists to the

city to try to make it. They walk in the shoes of giants. Judging from the smiles, tapping toes, and harmonizing that happened each week in our class, it is clear that music—in all its forms—can bring us together. Whether it be blues, rockabilly, soul, or just plain old rock and roll, the sounds of Memphis still reach out across time and touch hearts and minds today.

Like many cities in our country, Memphis still has some work to do to set things right. The history of this town from its beginning to the present day demonstrates that truth. But Memphis has always found ways to move on and reinvent itself. That's what we explored in class this fall, and I hope this experience will linger in our minds for a while down the road.

Go, Cat, Go!



Jailhouse Fingers McGee

How Do Toxic Exposures Affect Us as We Age?



Jane Disney

Declining health and well-being in older adults are often attributed to the “advance of time” without consideration of other contributors to health-related issues—in particular, how much does exposure to toxic chemicals affect health and well-being as we age?

MDI Biological Laboratory is working with the University of New England’s Center for Excellence in Aging and Health to explore how exposure to arsenic and other toxic metals might affect health and well-being metrics in older Maine adults. Maine, the state with the highest percentage of adults over age 50, relies heavily on unregulated wells as a source of drinking water. Due to its bedrock geology, groundwater in Maine is often contaminated with

inorganic arsenic, which is linked to a variety of diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, and autoimmune diseases.

By joining forces with the Maine Senior College Network, Maine Seacoast Mission, various Area Centers on Aging, and with sponsorship for outreach efforts from Maine AARP, we are engaging adult Mainers of all ages throughout the state. Our goal is to educate and encourage them to complete a drinking water survey and submit a well-water sample for analysis to determine the levels of arsenic and other toxic metals. In a follow-up questionnaire, participants will be invited to share information about their health and well-being. This will aid in finding population-level correlations between toxic exposures and aging metrics. For more information about participating in this study and to obtain a free water test kit, contact us at drinkingwater@mdibl.org.

Dr. Jane Disney, Associate Professor of Environmental Health at MDI Biological Laboratory, Salisbury Cove, ME: jdisney@mdibl.org

Revelation

I started my sophomore year in high school after moving from Chicago to Cleveland. We lived in North Olmsted, 12 miles west of the city. I traveled ten miles east each day to get to St. Edward High School.

Every school day in the gray light of morning, I put on my tie and sport coat (school regulations) and got on a bus with other commuters. I hung onto the straps until I got to Kamm's Corner in the city, then changed to the St. Ed's bus in Lakewood.

I was the new kid. Most days, I felt like I'd fallen out of the sky.

It was with some anxiety that I decided to go to a mixer. Dances at St. Ed's were called "mixers." I could understand what they meant because St. Ed's was definitely unmixed. Twelve hundred students. All boys. The Catholic high schools around town were not coed. The thinking was that if girls and guys were kept apart, they wouldn't waste serious study time thinking about



Michael Szela

each other—like denying a man water on the belief he would eventually forget about it.

Three times a year, St. Ed's invited Magnificat, St. Joseph's, Holy Cross, and all the other girls' schools to come to our dance. It took a lot of courage to come, I thought. There were a few cool guys, all right, but the rest of us were close to clueless around women, not to mention immature. Dick Motzinger managed to string up a few jock straps along with streamers... Anyway, it was like receiving visitors from another planet.

I resolved to meet the challenge and actually talk to and dance with a girl. I approached this like an assignment, figuring out the bus timetable, clothes, and topics of conversation. My ragged sport coat was unacceptable. But, for some, the more ragged the better. Dick Motzinger's elbows poked out, and his silk liner trailed over his hips (he did get called on that).

I spent the early evening getting pumped. Listening to thunderous rock n roll and playing air guitar, I was carried along by raging hormones. Splashing on aftershave didn't seem deceitful; it was the finishing touch on the total package.

My parents were still stubbornly in the do-it-yourself mode. With seven kids, they had to be. So it was back on the bus to get to St. Ed's. My heat began to cool. Why was I doing this, really? This was a lot of trouble. Chances are I'd ask someone to dance, and she would turn me down in front of my so-called friends—an event I'd see in replays all week. ("First time talking to a real girl?")

The bus riders were mostly tired workers, men with shirts with their first names printed above their pockets and women with bags of cleaning supplies. Three guys with Rocky River High School jackets got on. They gave me looks of comic disbelief, held their noses, and bubbled with laughter. I ignored them.

The usual transfer bus wasn't running this late, so it was more than a mile walk from the nearest stop. Now I was really running on empty.

I finally pushed the door open at St. Ed's and got my hand stamped. We had a huge gym. The place was comfortably dark except for the neon-lit stage. They had cool bands. I heard Joe Walsh do "Rocky Mountain Way" there before it became a gold record. Lurking in the shadows, I could check out the girls.

Girls always come in groups. My friends told me, "If they come in a group, they'll stay in a group." I was looking for someone who wasn't tightly bonded to her friends, like culling out strays.

The band started playing some wonderful tunes: Jimi Hendrix's "All Along the Watchtower," Tommy James with "Mony, Mony," and "Crimson and Clover." It was the music I'd come for. I loved to dance. I cruised the dance floor dozens of times, considering a number of girls. If you approached several times and they didn't walk away, then the third time, you had the green light.

Finally, I could take it no longer. It was a Chuck Berry tune. The girl before me was a pretty good dancer. I made the "Do you want to dance sign?" She faced me nonchalantly, and we began to dance.

I gave her an appreciative smile. She had long honey-colored hair and wore a Lakewood High sweater (crosstown public-school rivals), a short pleated skirt (that twirled wonderfully), knee socks, and penny loafers. Gee, but I'd like to know you better. I tried conversation, but with music blasting, all I could get was an answering head bob. Anyway, dancing was better. She moved through space with supple grace and athletic energy, whatever the music called for. And she was tireless. I finally told her it was time for a break. She let me walk her out into the deliciously cool air. She was a sophomore at Lakewood and lived close by. I thought her friend would show up, but she didn't.

"You really know how to dance!" I said.

"Thanks," she replied. We spent a moment looking at the stars. "It's getting colder," she said with a shiver.

I reached over to give her a friendly shoulder-to-shoulder warm-up hug, but she turned to face me. And to my great surprise, I found us gliding together for a kiss. She started with soft contact, then pushed a little more firmly. Her hair swung softly along the side of my face, and I could smell her perfume. The stars began to spin, and the earth trembled. We broke off. "Incredible!"

"Come on!" she said. "Let's dance!"



Chuck Berry
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2024 COMING ATTRACTIONS

The Winter Lecture Series will kick off on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 1 PM. All lectures are free and open to the public, so spread the word and invite your friends to join us! All winter lectures will be **Zoom only**, so no worries about winter driving.

Jan. 9	Steven Podsiadlo	Salt Marsh Basics
Jan. 16	Jim Schneid	Understanding Common Respiratory Conditions
Jan. 23	Chris Williamson	The 1913 Armory Show and Its Ripples in Maine
Jan. 30	Mike Bell	Thaddeus Stevens: Man of Principle and Courage
Feb. 6	Lawrence Wade	Grain Loading and Delivery in a Tankship
Feb. 13	John Sutton	Maine Railroads: Then, Now and the Future
Feb. 20	Patricia Sullivan	Flora and Fauna as Travel Enticements
Feb. 27	Elizabeth Reinsborough	Journey to Kathmandu
Mar. 5	Shelly Gerstein	Living with an EV in Central Maine

The spring semester will begin the week of March 18. Information on the spring classes will be available on the website in mid-February, and registration will open on Monday, March 4, at noon. The Curriculum and Office Committees are working hard to pull together another great semester for you! If you would like to teach a course or know someone who would like to share their knowledge and passion, contact UMASC at (207) 621-3551 or office@umasc.org.