

ILLUMINATOR

University of Maine at Augusta
46 University Drive
Augusta, ME 04330

Newsletter – Spring 2026



From the Chair

**Twenty-five Years of
UMA Senior College**

**Crossword:
Red-Winged Blackbird**

UMA Libraries

**Instructor
Profiles**

Class Artwork

**Student
Volunteer
Stories**

Important Dates

Celebrating 25 Years of Excellence

From the Chair Summer 2026



“May you live in interesting times.” This phrase is usually taken as an irony, a subtle curse. But if you look at it, it is quite positive. The phrase fits the past year of UMA Senior College in both respects. We started out cursed in the fall when our web site had problems during registration. The two hours that it took to remedy the problem stalled class registrations. The bad juju carried on when trying to adapt to the new computer software that the University installed. Then the changes in Zoom operation caught us off guard. We recovered and adapted to the situations. The rest of the year went relatively smoothly. The Office Committee members may disagree since they were in the middle of addressing each problem as it occurred but hopefully most classes and lectures went smoothly because of their efforts.

The spring semester went more smoothly, featuring several engaging classes and lectures. We had three lectures by the faculty of the University of Maine at Augusta as part of our recognition of its 60th anniversary: Director of Library Services Cynthia Kitchin, Associate Professor of Biology Jennifer Long, and Doctor of Counseling Psychology, John O’Brien. Recordings of all the spring lectures are now available on the UMASC website under the Class and Activities menu. Most are available for viewing on demand anytime.

Partnerships are a key part of our senior college. From its beginning, the UMASC has relied on a close partnership with the University of Maine at Augusta. Frankly, we could not exist without its support. We have access to its physical facilities and electronic resources without any expense, and it also covers a significant portion of our administrative specialist’s salary. UMA Dean Pam MacRae has been the representative of the university on the UMASC Board of Directors for five years and has provided us with strong support and good advice. She will be leaving UMA for a position at the University of Maine at Farmington this summer. UMASC owes her thanks for the guidance that she provided.

The other valuable partnership is with the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine, located in the Michael Klahr Center on the UMA campus. We use the Klahr Center classroom for several of our popular classes and use its theater for our films class. We used the Klahr Center theater to show “Art of the Earth in 3D” by Roger Richmond, which was spectacular. We will try to bring Mr. Richmond back for another show in the fall. We demonstrate our appreciation to the Klahr Center with an annual monetary contribution.

The cooperative relationship with these two organizations allows us to provide the classes that you all enjoy. This spring, we developed a new partnership with the Viles Arboretum in Augusta. We previously rented class space at the facility for field courses. This year, David Greenham, the arboretum director and one of UMASC’s board members, offered the arboretum’s space at no charge. David views it as part of the arboretum’s public service mission. The arboretum provided the perfect place for the class “Sewing Dresses for Little Girls in Need” (aka Dress a Girl Around the World). The sewing class needed a large space that was easily accessible for bringing in materials and sewing machines. David offered the Viles Arboretum downstairs conference room where the participants could walk in and set up their sewing machines with minimal effort. This spring, the Board of Directors of UMA Senior College strengthened this partnership by becoming a Sustaining Sponsor of the Viles Arboretum for \$500.

Hopefully, UMA Senior College provides its members with a positive experience of “interesting times.” Our formal partners, volunteers, and instructors help enrich the lives of our members. Every partner is valuable whether their role is providing physical facilities, scheduling courses, registering people for classes, or teaching a course. These partners are essential in the operation of our senior college.

We are always looking for new volunteers to make UMA Senior College work. Recently, Mick O’Halloran listed the type of people that we need as “experienced, very bright, accomplished, well spoken, with some tolerance for sitting in meetings and willing to do work for no monetary remuneration.” He said this with a smile, but the description fits many of our members. If you would like more information about how you can help UMA Senior College, please contact us at office@umasc.org or 207-621-3551.

Mark Twain said that an open mind leaves a chance for someone to drop a worthwhile thought into it. Who knows? Maybe interesting times at UMASC can provide some of those thoughts.

Louis Fontaine
Chairperson UMA Senior College

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On the Cover:
Stephanie Zurinski - *Red-Winged Blackbird*, Acrylic, 2026

Get Outside with Senior College

By Stephanie Zurinski



Stephanie Zurinski - *Sand Beach*, Embroidery, 2026

There is a growing body of evidence that spending time in nature reduces stress. The delightful book *The Nature Fix* by Florence Williams explores the science behind why contact with nature reduces anxiety, lowers blood pressure, and increases the ability to focus. Senior College is doing its part to help us get outside which is important to our health and well-being.

Each semester, Senior College offers several nature-related classes. This spring, you could learn to identify wildflowers, trees, or birds. Each of these classes has a lecture component which gives you basic knowledge. But the best part of each class is putting that new knowledge to use in the field. Harry Vayo, who teaches the wildflower class, is a Maine Master Naturalist as are our two birding instructors, Cheryl Ring and Sue Kistenmacher. Merle Ring is a Maine licensed forester with over 45 years experience. You learn a lot and get excited to learn more.

Nina Mollicone led three walks in the Augusta Nature Center near Cony High School. If you haven't been there, you are missing a true gem. The Nature Center comprises 179 acres with 5 miles of trails through the woods. Whitney Brook meanders through the area and there are two ponds. The wildflowers are amazing and you might even see deer or turtles.

If you want to get your hands dirty, organic gardening might be for you. It's a five week course on all the details of going organic from selecting seeds to installing irrigation and everything in between. Tom Vigue has been gardening for over 50 years and has been a member of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association since its inception.

If sports are more your thing, Raymond Fecteau will teach you to play Pétanque. It's a game of skill where the player who tosses or rolls his or her balls closest to the target earns points. Raymond is so passionate about the game that he founded Mill Park Pétanque in 2010.

So, when you're feeling frazzled and unable to focus, get out into nature for a while and take in the sights, sounds and aromas. Many of these classes are offered each semester or at least once a year. Senior College makes it easy for you to find like-minded folks to get outdoors with. As Terry Tempest Williams writes in *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*, "The degree of our awareness is the degree of our aliveness."

Members have told us they want to get to know our Senior College instructors better. Welcome to Instructor Profiles - a series dedicated to the people who bring us such amazing learning experiences. In this issue we meet Liz Champeon and David Greenham.

Interview with Liz Champeon

By Margaret Bean



Liz Champeon is a quintessential example of lifelong learning. She is curious, eclectic, and loves to teach. Liz has taught several semesters of geology and delivered three lectures for UMASC students.

Liz and I discussed her interesting background over pie and tea at Dysart's truck stop in Hampden. Liz has lived in many places, spent vacations at the family camp in Jonesboro, and now lives in Orrington. When she was a child, she and her lifelong friend Ellen decided they wanted to be archaeologists, so they started studying cultures and teaching themselves Spanish from a textbook so they could work around the world. Ellen stuck with that plan and became an anthropologist; Liz decided to study engineering and entered the UMO engineering program in

1961, one of three females in a class of 250! After two years of engineering, she switched to a major in geology. She became proficient in geothermal heating long before most of us had even heard of it!

Liz's career in Maine involved working with the Maine Department of Transportation, teaching environmental geology at Unity College, and working for S.W. Cole, a geotechnical firm in Bangor.

Liz enjoys teaching Senior College students. She appreciates their motivation to learn and their feedback. She encourages questions. She told of being challenged by a woman who asked how she could justify geologic science with the creation story in the Bible. Liz answered: "Geologists don't create anything; we just discover it."

The subjects Liz chose to talk about in her lectures are fascinating. Her father is part Native American, and living near Syracuse, NY, gave her exposure to the Iroquois Nation. She prepared a lecture illustrating that the American Constitution is modeled after the democratic "Great Law of Peace" developed by the League of the Iroquois in the 16th century. Based on her interest in other cultures, she developed a lecture on Mayan math which employs a system of dots and bars. Pulling from her family's oral history in Jonesboro, she retold ghost stories about a dead woman walking on Catherine's Hill looking for a ride, and a sailor killed in a fight who walks around Looks' Point at night.

Liz is interested in lots of things. She likes researching new subjects and is thinking about creating a new lecture. Stay tuned!!

Interview with David Greenham

By Bonnie Green



It's the early fall of 1984. David Greenham, who'd earned his BFA in acting and directing from Syracuse University a year and a half earlier, has returned to campus to begin taking classes as the first student in a planned Master's in Theater Management at the SU Drama Department. But he and some friends decide they'd rather go out and start a touring theater company in some rural state they'd never been to. After lots of discussion, it came down to a choice between two states, Maine and Mississippi. They assumed it would be too hot in the delta, so on Memorial Day weekend, the rag tag company of twelve actors, directors, and technicians moved to Maine.

That's how Brown's Head Repertory Theater was founded, named for the lighthouse on the eastern tip of Vinalhaven Island, where the company started. Brown's Head Rep toured the midcoast, and eventually the entire state thanks, in part, to a contract with the Maine State Park Service. Over the course of 5 years, they produced dozens of original plays, toured throughout New England, and had a successful run. Along the way David learned to manage a non-profit, write grants, and fundraise, and never stopped creating theater. His reputation led to a call in 1998 from the Board President of The Theater At Monmouth (TAM), The Shakespearean Theater of Maine. They were going through a leadership transition and needed some help.

David agreed to step in and intended to stay only one year. By the time he stepped down as Producing Artistic Director fourteen years later, TAM was a leader in high quality summer professional theater. During his tenure in Monmouth, he also helped lead the renovation and restoration of historic Cumston Hall, the town-owned Victorian gem that houses the library, and a stunning performance hall on the 2nd floor.

David has been working with UMASC since the first class he taught in 2005. It was a class on how a theater production happens from the first read through to opening night. He clearly recalls how stimulating the senior college students were. "They brought great imagination and energy to the class projects. It was a pleasure to work with them."

In 2012 he was hired as the program director for the newly built Michael Klahr Center, home to the Holocaust and Human Rights Center (HHRC). His job was to create programs and partnerships to make sure the building was vibrant for the community. He recognized the opportunity to work with UMASC to the benefit of both organizations. HHRC could provide classroom spaces which served to introduce students to the Center. UMASC could assist the Center in upgrading some AV facilities. The HHRC - UMASC partnership has continued, even though David has moved on.

After a brief stint as interim director of the Maine Arts Commission, David was named executive director of Viles Arboretum. His connection to UMASC has come along with him, and he's created a partnership that permits senior college classes to be held at the Viles Arboretum facilities.

Over the years, David has taught numerous senior college classes and he continues to do so. His recent class comes from his experience working for organizations that rely on volunteers, and recognizing the energy and passion of senior college students. David and co-teacher Kelli Gilzow Stowell, Workforce Coordinator and instructor for Augusta Adult and Community Education, taught Volunteerism for Older Mainers, a class aimed at providing tools to make volunteering more rewarding.

Both Kelli and David bring a depth of knowledge of the topic and strong organizational skills to the class. Halfway through the course, David says they're having a great time. He adds that having students who are interested, involved, and passionate makes teaching for UMASC a rewarding experience.

David Greenham truly appreciates UMASC. The board's dedication, and the eager, committed students are inspiring. Thanks to its strong partnerships, dedicated volunteers, and growing membership, UMA Senior College offers older adults in Kennebec County and beyond a vibrant place to learn, connect, and thrive.

Dave is a member of the Board of Directors for UMASC.



Priscilla Doel - *Puffins*, Watercolor, 2026

Senior Colleges in Our Communities

By Patty Ferrentino

Did you know that as members of UMA Senior College, we have access to the courses, classes, workshops, field trips, and lecture series of all the senior colleges in Maine? That's right! We not only have membership to our own program here in Augusta, but also fifteen other senior colleges from Fort Kent to Wells. All you have to do is go online to the Maine Senior College Network site (maineseniorcollege.org) and click on any school to explore the courses being offered. Many of the classes are available through Zoom, so you don't have to travel or miss anything you might be interested in. In fact, participation in other Maine senior colleges is encouraged. Additionally, you can sign up for the Maine Senior College Network newsletter to find out the latest and greatest happenings across the state.

As I recently perused the course offerings at the other schools, I began to realize that just about anything a senior college student could want is available, from Puffin Cruises offered at Acadia Senior College in Bar Harbor to Ancient Literature at the Osher Institute in Portland. Given the wealth of inspiring and enjoyable offerings at each college, we urge members to check out the Maine Senior College Network site and sign up for their newsletter. Remember, although we in Augusta are fortunate to have superb courses offered every semester, there is still more available to us through the network.



Joyce Doyle

The Maine Senior College Network Communications Coordinator, Joyce Doyle, invites everyone to get involved with learning, teaching, and participating in the many other colleges available to us through our membership. She has stellar goals for the future of Maine's senior colleges that will benefit all of us. Following is an interview we had with Joyce:

UMASC~What sparked your interest in becoming the coordinator for the Maine Senior College Network?

JD~I've always loved taking classes and learning. As I got a little older, those opportunities weren't as frequent. So when I discovered the senior colleges and their mission, I knew right away I was on board.

UMASC~What are your goals for the senior colleges? What changes are you hoping to implement?

JD~The senior colleges all have different sizes, locations, experiences, and foundations, which means they each have their own needs as well. My true goal is to keep everyone connected and share information around the common themes of course development, membership growth, and sustainability.

UMASC~How are you planning to achieve your goals?

JD~I started by making sure we had an easy method of sharing materials. Now we have a place where you can find updated information about each college, a list of instructors available for teaching, and a collection of 'guides' based on topics we have discussed and researched together. Next, I'm looking for ways that the colleges can reach out to each other without using me as a go-between so we develop a true network of resources.

UMASC~What are some of the things you do as part of your duties in running the Network?

JD~I'm very much a questions and needs find ways to share When a college has a out for support in connecting with other Essentially the Network the other colleges know



facilitator. I gather from each college and information together. hurdle, they can reach research and colleges and resources. is a way to make sure they're not alone.

Janet and Lucy (Lewiston/Auburn Senior College) at the event table

UMASC~What are some of your biggest challenges?

JD~I would say the diversity around our colleges and communities. Our Network ranges across the entire state, which is amazing. And, in fact, Maine is the only state with a network like this. But that also means we have some rural communities and more urban communities, and all the personality differences that creates. There's no one answer to any of our questions. Which makes it the biggest challenge, but also one of the biggest reasons it's so interesting.

UMASC~What are some personal benefits you have encountered in running the Maine Senior College Network?

JD~The people, no doubt. I've started traveling to meet people in person (yay!) and am having the most wonderful time doing it. Everyone is welcoming, ready to share their insight and to ask questions. The volunteers are the ones who make the colleges a success, and they are so passionate about their work. It's inspiring.

UMASC~What else would you like readers of the Illuminator to know that I haven't asked about MSCN and/or individual senior colleges?

JD~I think the one thing I want everyone to know about any of the senior colleges is the sense of community they each have. People are taking part because they want to learn and to keep growing. But what they find is a group of people like them. And don't be nervous to join thinking that you're not collegiate enough or haven't been in a class for a while. It's open, friendly, and everyone is welcome.

Twenty-five Years of UMA Senior College

By Louis Fontaine

Several years ago, when UMA Senior College left the Farmhouse building, I took possession of a black file case containing records from its first decade. These records reveal the effort required to establish the Senior College—work that few of us fully appreciate and much of which we now take for granted. They include dozens of names, some familiar and many no longer with us. I will not try to list the key contributors here for fear of leaving out someone important. The creation of the Senior College depended on the efforts of retired citizens, politicians, and university administrators, with financial support from the Maine Legislature. Part of that story appears in an interview with founding member Chuck Acker by Ann Sullivan, published in the fall 2021 edition of the Illuminator, available under the Welcome menu at umasc.org. Events after 2013 are based on information from the website archives and personal knowledge.

The mission of UMA Senior College is to provide intellectually stimulating learning opportunities and special activities developed primarily for people age 50 and older. We fulfill that mission through the vision of our founding members and the dedication of those who followed them. We honor their work by continuing to build on the foundation they created.

2000–2002 Discussions began about establishing a senior college at the University of Maine at Augusta. An exploratory committee was formed, bylaws were developed with the university, committees were organized, and a board of directors was elected. Start-up funding was

provided by the Maine Legislature.

Spring 2002 UMA Senior College held its first semester, offering eight courses on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Membership was set at \$25, and tuition was charged for each course. Scholarships and tuition waivers were available for members with financial need. UMASC had 160 members.

April 12, 2002 UMA Senior College held its first annual members meeting.

2003 Concerts at Jewett Hall began, featuring a variety of Maine musicians, including classical, folk, jazz, and other performers. UMASC volunteers recruited performers, secured business sponsors, and sold tickets. UMA staff managed the facilities, including lighting and audio equipment, and provided support.

Winter 2003 The first Illuminator was published as a four-page, black-and-white newsletter.

January 2007 Brown Bag Tuesday lectures began. Members were invited to bring lunch, and the series became so popular that it moved to the Klahr Center for more space.

2010 UMA and UMA Senior College established the Forum for the Future; a series of forums and panel discussions aimed primarily at older adults. The program offered a wide range of topics of interest to the broader community as well. Topics ranged from healthcare to

Maine's economy. The forums were free and open to the public. The Brown Bag Tuesday lecture series moved to Granite Hill Estates, a retirement community, where it remained until 2020. UMASC membership had grown to 280.

2011 UMA Senior College launched its first website. The site provided information about the organization and courses offered. Visitors could download registration forms to fill out and send by mail.

2013 Over the 23 semesters since 2002, UMASC had offered 259 courses to 2,821 members.

Summer 2019 UMASC launched a new website, allowing members to register for classes and memberships online as well as via paper forms.

2019 As endowments and gifts increased, the Board of Directors discussed eliminating tuition for individual classes.

Spring 2020 UMASC concerts, forums, and classes were canceled because of COVID-19.

Summer 2020 Lectures and classes were offered online through Zoom. The move to online learning spurred the Board of Directors to eliminate the \$30 tuition for individual classes. Membership remained at \$25 and options were added for joining at higher levels.

Fall 2020 In-person classes resumed at UMASC under University of Maine mask and social distancing requirements. Some classes remained online or were offered in a hybrid format combining classroom instruction with Zoom. Membership for the

2020-2021 Academic year was 282.

March 2022 Classes resumed without distancing or masking requirements. Concerts and forums did not resume.

April 16, 2026 UMASC held its 25th annual members meeting.

May 2026 UMASC had 446 members and, during the 2025-2026 academic year, offered 57 classes, a book club, and eight free winter lectures open to the public.



Lauren Hallee - *Orange Abstract*, Watercolor, 2026

From Bookshelves to Digital Portals: the UMA Libraries

By Stephanie Zurinski

“Google can bring you back a hundred thousand answers. A librarian can bring you back the right one.” Neil Gaiman

The Internet has certainly changed the way librarians work and what libraries offer. In the first of the Spring Lecture Series, Cynthia Kitchin of the UMA Libraries addressed these changes and how library services have adapted. She also highlighted the UMA Community Card program which allows Senior College members access to the library.

In the past, libraries were full of books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and atlases. Card catalogs were a major feature and were the key to finding what you needed. You would take your books to the checkout desk where the librarian would hand stamp the due date on every one. The aroma of books and the quiet hush of scholarship filled the library.

You will no longer find the stereotypical shushing librarian. Today's libraries do offer quiet spaces but they also offer spaces for noisy collaboration. Print books are now just a small part of a library's offerings. Libraries also offer audiobooks, ebooks, and DVDs. There are libraries with collections of tools, sports equipment, or seeds. Access to the collection is through an online catalog which you can use from home to place holds or renew items.

The UMA Libraries have public computers, printers, scanners, and photocopiers available. Ninety percent of the collection is digital. The librarians are information navigators, digital literacy

teachers, and technologists. They are available to help in person, via chat, or on Zoom. Tech Hub staff can help with computer issues and are available Monday through Thursday. It's best to make an appointment.

But libraries aren't just about information. Libraries build community through programming. At UMA, that means workshops on digital literacy and library research to support students and faculty. They offer film screenings, Lunch and Learn, the Silent Book Club, and more. The library has a full event calendar that can be found at: <https://umalibguides.uma.edu/libraryevents>.

Of special interest to Senior College members is the free UMA Libraries Community Card which grants access to everything the library offers except some specialty databases. Sign up for a Community Card at the front desk and start using the computers and printers, borrow books and DVDs, or utilize interlibrary loan and tech help. The card also grants access to the library space and events.

Maine residents have access to the Digital Maine Library (<https://digitalmainelibrary.org/>) which contains full text of many magazines, journals, and newspapers on a variety of topics from academic subjects to home improvement, auto repair, and hobbies and crafts. These resources can be accessed in libraries, including UMA Libraries and your local public library. You can also access them from home by logging in with your local public library card. The Ancestry Library

Edition database is available only in your local public library.

Libraries and librarians have been around for a long time. Even as technology brings more changes to society, the library's mission remains the same – helping people access quality information and building community.

Blue Hope

by Dawn Kliphan

When the Birds Come to the Garden I
hope they eat all the ticks

When I Feed my Cats
I hope one will live longer, and the other
will lose a pound or two

When Looking at my Car
I hope the rust holds off for a whole
longer

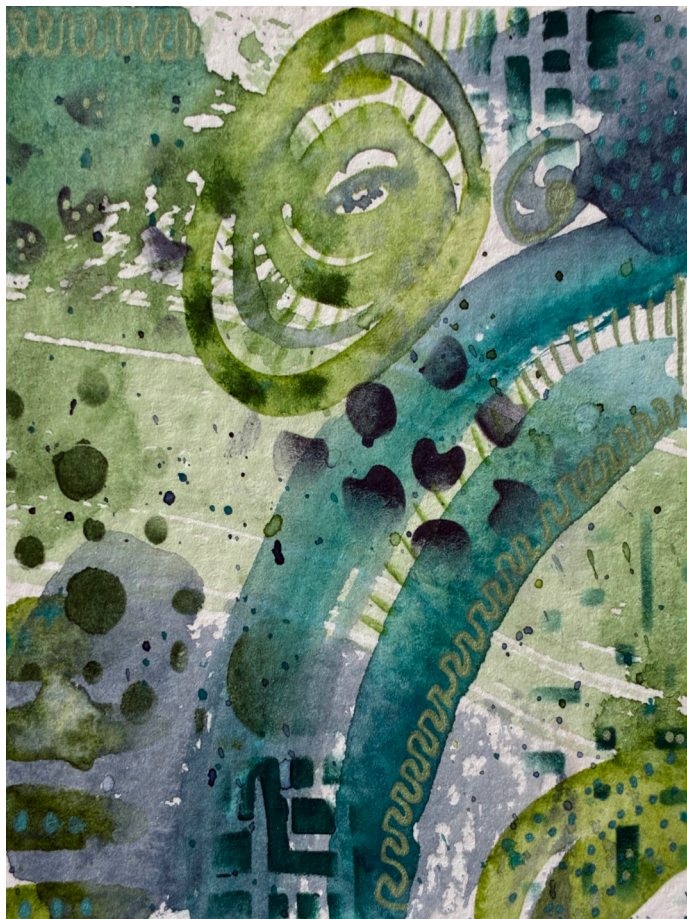
When Paid
I hope my finances withstand the coming
storm

When the Phone Rings
I hope it's not a political call

When around People
I hope I don't disappoint them

When I Get Up in the Morning
I hope I can be productive today

I Will Hope Some More



Lauren Hallee - *Blue & Green Abstract*, Watercolor, 2026



Stephanie Zurinski - *Lady in Blue*, Collage, 2026

Sewing Dresses for Little Girls in Need

By Judy Feinstein

About three years ago, Linda Fowler, a retired teacher from Corinna, received what seemed like a random email from an organization called Dress A Girl Around the World, a campaign of Iowa-based Hope 4 Women International (<https://www.dressagirlaroundtheworld.com/>)

Intrigued, she looked into it; as someone who has sewn for much of her life and also values volunteering, the organization and its work felt like a perfect fit. Linda reached out to friends in Corinna who joined her in the effort, and they began sewing together. Linda is also a longtime Senior College member. When one of her friends suggested pitching Dress A Girl for a UMACS class, Linda quickly came to see as indomitable "can do" enrolled in the class – a Linda's group in Corinna, Augusta area. They sew experienced among them honing their skills. What is an interest in "getting contributing to a cause



did just that, with what I her enthusiastic and approach. Eight women couple of others from and the rest from the together; the more help those working on they all have in common back to sewing" and they feel is worthwhile.

One class member told me that the meeting has been something she "looks forward to every Monday." Another one commented that the group is very welcoming. "It's very nice to be here with these women," she said, calling out the "community feeling" in particular. I visited the class three times, and that sense of community was stronger each time. Linda herself told me that she thinks she's gotten more out of the class than the students have – that it's been "pure joy" to work with them.

Dress A Girl coordinates making dresses that have been delivered to girls in countries in Africa, Central and South America, and the Philippines. Girls and young women in these countries are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, but Hope 4 Women has learned that "a girl wearing a new dress presents an appearance that she is well cared for and may discourage would-be predators." There are sewing groups across the United States and other countries including Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and elsewhere. The organization also provides clothing and quilts in locations throughout the United States as well. In April, the UMACS group was visited by Dress A Girl Northern New England chapter's regional coordinator, based in York, ME. This year, the chapter's goal is to contribute 8,000 dresses; nationally, over 4 million have been sewn for children throughout the world. The UMACS class expected to finish 80 to 100 dresses this spring.

Linda's goal is to spread the word about the work this organization does and recruit more sewers. In the meantime, she's already thinking about a follow-up class, and some of the women are hoping to start local groups where they live.

It's said that a picture is worth a thousand words – here are a few photos.



More completed dresses at this year's UMASC Annual Meeting and Luncheon in April.

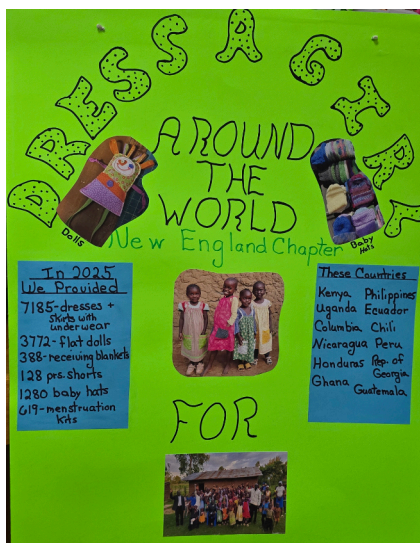
Great care goes into selecting the colors, patterns and decorations, and adding pockets.



Linda brought a display and many of the completed dresses to this year's UMASC Annual Meeting and Luncheon in April.



Group at work: Susan, Jane T., Christine, Linda (standing), Catherine, Sarah, Hazel, Norma, and Jane P.



The Maine Connection to Senior Colleges Everywhere

By Louis Fontaine

Maine's state motto is "Dirigo", Latin for "I lead." A fitting motto for Maine in many respects, including the founding of senior colleges nationwide.

Ann Sullivan wrote about the beginnings of UMA Senior College in the fall 2021 edition of the Illuminator. The article is available at the UMA Senior College website under the Welcome menu. The article describes how Chuck Acker brought the idea of a senior college to Augusta. Rabbi Henry Skye and Robert Patenaude, President of the University of Southern Maine, founded an institution in 1996 that provided intellectual stimulation and companionship opportunities to retirees looking to expand their horizons. Word of this USM Senior College spread and attracted Chuck Acker from Augusta. In 2001, Chuck and a group of friends met with the provost of the University of Maine at Augusta about establishing a similar organization at UMA. The provost's initial reception to the idea was lukewarm. He was worried about incurring additional costs at a time when the University's budget was being cut. Fortunately, at that time, the State of Maine legislature appropriated \$5,000 for the startup of senior colleges throughout the state. That act helped seal the deal between UMA and Chuck and his friends. In the same year, USM Senior College received an endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation.

But what is the connection between the Bernard Osher Foundation and Maine? That would be through Bernard Osher himself. Mr. Osher was raised in Biddeford, Maine where he managed the family

hardware store. Later he moved to New York and then to San Francisco and became involved in the financial industry where he amassed a fortune. In 1997, Mr. Osher and his wife Barbro Sachs-Osher founded the charitable Bernard Osher Foundation. The foundation supports lifelong learning, post-secondary scholarship, medicine, and the arts across the United States and in Sweden, Mrs. Osher's home country.

Bernard Osher maintained his connection to Maine, summering in the midcoast. While visiting a friend at the University of Southern Maine, he stumbled onto a classroom of "40 to 50 white-haired people"¹ being taught by Rabbi Harry Sky; the same Rabbi Harry Sky who was teaching Chuck Acker! This inspired Bernard Osher to establish the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) to support continued learning for people 50 years and better. The USM Senior College provided Bernard Osher with a model that could be used in other places:

- Peer-led, noncredit learning;
- Member-driven governance;
- Affordable, membership-based structure;
- Liberal arts focus without the pressure of grades; and
- Integration with a host university

USM Senior College became the first Osher Lifelong Learning Institute location and was the Institute's National Resource Center until 2014. The OLLI National Resource Center is now located at Northwestern University. Currently there are over 120 Osher Lifelong Learning

Institutes throughout the 50 states with partner and satellite locations in 334 locations. The USM Osher Lifelong Learning Institute hosts the Maine Senior College Network which provides resources and communication among Maine's 17 senior colleges.

You can learn more about the Osher family, their association with Maine and their philanthropy in an article published in the October 2011 issue of The Maine Magazine available online at <https://www.themainemag.com/1734-the-osher-family/>. Maine is fortunate to have a generous family like the Osher's connected to the state. Bernard Osher's foresight and philanthropy led to the start of senior colleges right here in Maine.

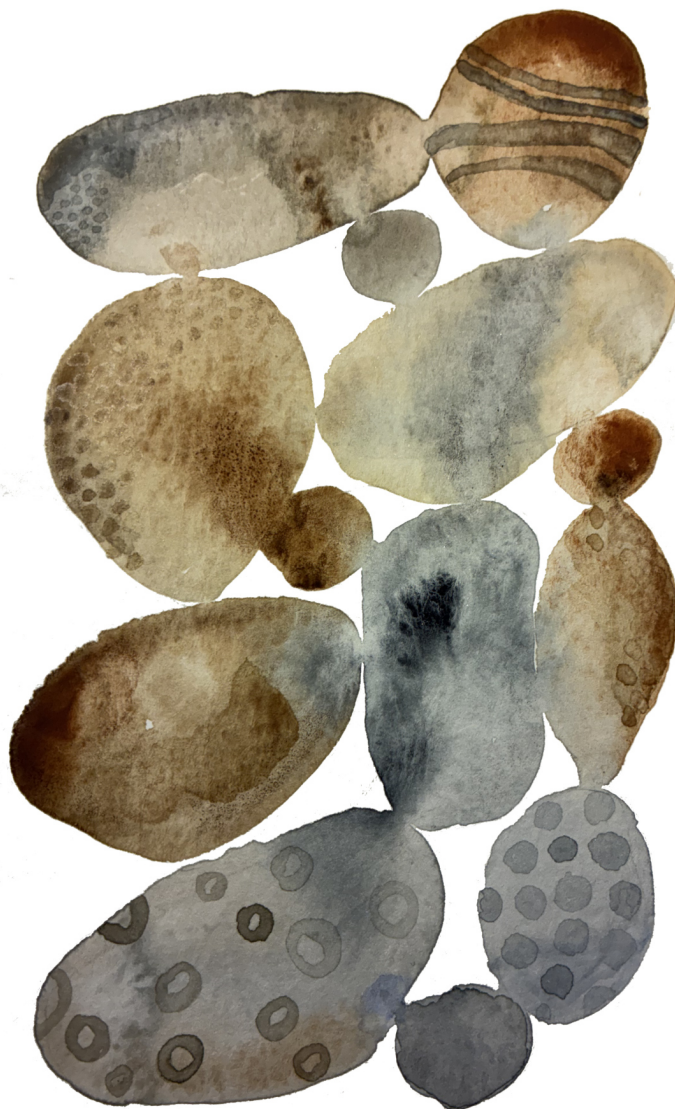
1. Harris, Liz, "Bernard Osher: tirelessly working for good", The Jewish News of Northern California, April 8, 2019. <https://jweekly.com/2019/04/08/bernard-osher-tirelessly-working-for-good/>

More information can be found at:

University of Southern Maine Osher Lifelong Learning Institute: <https://usm.maine.edu/osher-lifelong-learning-institute/>

Osher Lifelong Learning Center National Resource Center: <https://sps.northwestern.edu/oshernrc/>

Maine Senior College Network: <https://www.maineseniorcollege.org/>



Lauren Hallee - *Brown Rocks*, Watercolor, 2026



Stephanie Zurinski - *Raven*, Acrylic Gel Print, 2026



**Ob la di, Ob la da
(Life Goes On)
Life in Song Titles**

By Jeannie Nelson

Paul: Yesterday I was on Abbey Road, you know, The Long and Winding Road, past Strawberry Fields, near The Octopus Garden when I Saw Her Standing There.

It had been A Hard Day's Night and I Should Have Known Better and Let It Be, but I Call Your Name, Hey, Jude, but no, it's Eleanor Rigby.

We Come Together and Eleanor says, Do You Want to Know a Secret? She Loves You.

Paul: Who?

Eleanor: Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds.

Paul: She may have diamonds, but she Can't Buy Me Love.

Eleanor: No, but All You Need is Love. I will Help you. We Can Work It Out. With a Little Help from My Friends, I can get you a Ticket to Ride on Day Tripper, Lucy's Yellow Submarine.

Paul: But All My Loving is for Lady Madonna.

Eleanor: I heard She's Leaving Home. You're Going to Lose That Girl. You've Got to Hide Your Love Away.

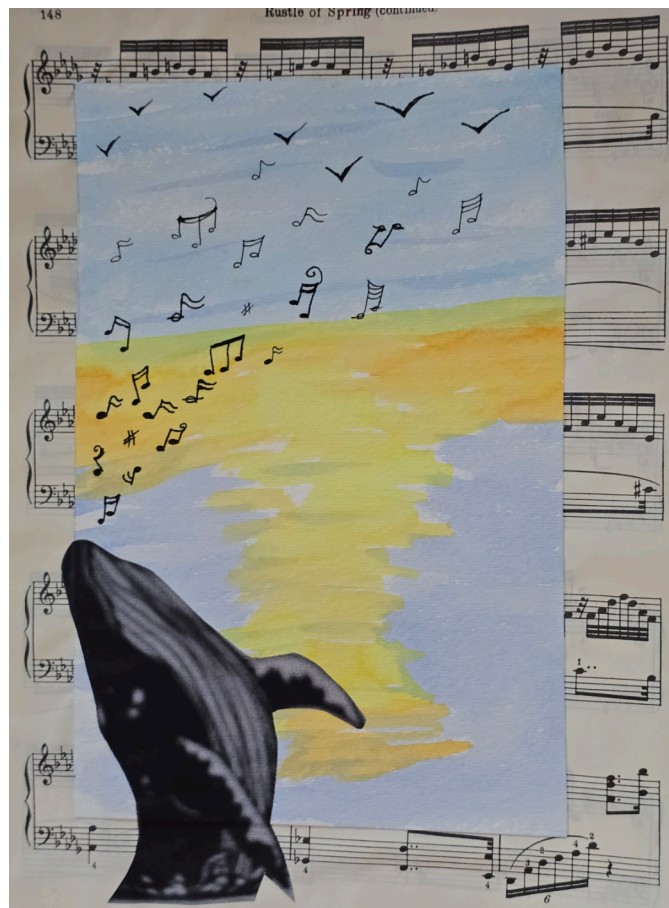
Paul: If I Fell for Lucy, our friends would be All Together Now. In My Life, I would Imagine she would Please Please Me Eight Days a Week. I hope she will still love me When I'm Sixty-four.

Eleanor: You can Drive My Car to the dock.

Paul: Guess I'll Follow the Sun Here There and Everywhere with Lucy.

Paul: It didn't work out with Lucy, and now I am a Paperback Writer and a member of Sargent

Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band living on Penny Lane.



Kathy Stowers - *What Song*, Collage, 2026

Spring 2026 Student Feedback Quotes

I am newly retired and have recently moved back to Maine after many years living out of state. I think the UMASC is amazing and I intend to take full advantage of the offerings.

You have such an incredible selection of classes! I tell everyone on the Midcoast about UMA Senior College.

The Senior College is truly a gift to the community. I hope it continues for decades to come.

Have really been enjoying classes at UMASC, meeting new people with similar interests.

UMASC is a valuable resource for the community. The variety of classes. It's been such a wonderful way to learn and meet people. Thank you!

I appreciate all the work and time volunteers put in to make SC so successful.

Senior college can fill a void in lives of seniors, especially those who are alone

Senior college is a great need and asset in the state for all people interested in learning and in keeping healthy interest alive.

I'm very grateful for all of the volunteers who make UMASC possible. I was very active at one point and enjoyed it then, but now I'm especially appreciative!

I continue to be impressed by the overall organization of UMA Senior College and the wide variety of courses offered. I love that there are courses which offer some academic rigor and those that are just plain fun.

UMA Senior College is above average in its organization, class offerings and instructors.

I am so thankful for all the work UMA Senior College staff and volunteers put in to give us such a great array of classes

I appreciate all of the instructors and all of the volunteers who work hard to put all this together. This semester was particularly enjoyable.

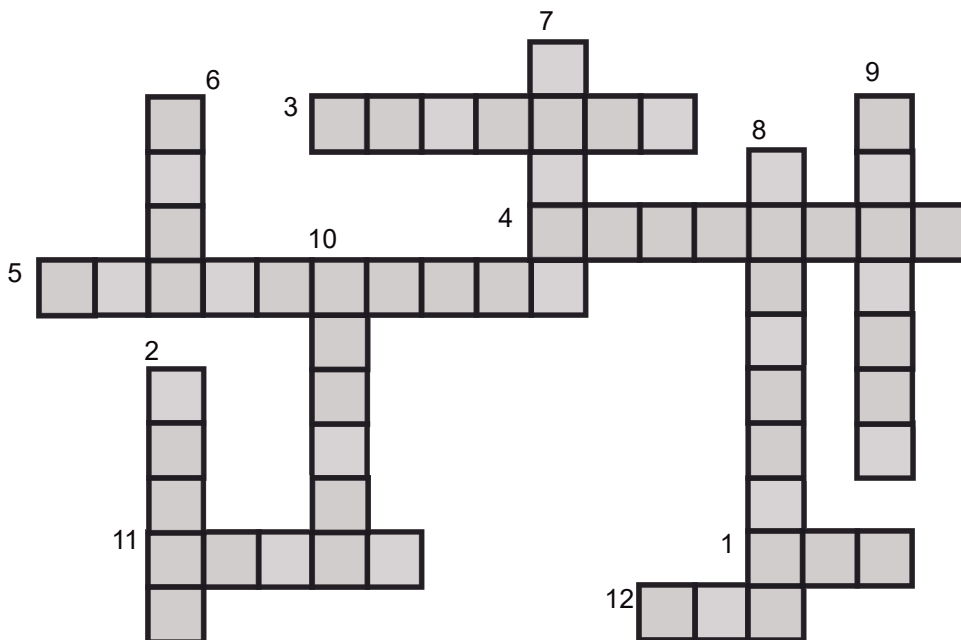
I have only high praise for Senior College. There is obviously a great deal of organization and skill in running this well oiled machine.

Across Clues

1. Unmistakable bird sound: Conk-la- _____
3. Its primary springtime home
4. The striking red and yellow wing patches
5. Male behavior in nesting season
11. Location of colors
12. Primary color other than black



Red-Winged Blackbird



Down Clues

2. Color of the female
6. Number of syllables in their Latin species name, phoeniceus
7. Number of colors on the male
8. Often mistaken for a _____
9. One of their favorite plants
10. Seeing blackbirds heralds the return of this season



Crossword Answers:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. BROWN | 1. REE |
| 2. FOUR | 3. MARSHES |
| 3. THREE | 4. EPAULETS |
| 4. BLACKBIRD | 5. AGGRESSIVE |
| 5. CATTAIL | 6. WINGS |
| 6. SPRING | 7. RED |

ANSWERS →

Down Answers

Across Answers

Senior College Volunteers

By Patty Ferrentino

One aspect of UMA senior college members that I have come to truly appreciate is a general sense of openness that has allowed me to get to know my fellow students. During the course of casual conversations with the members in my classes, I have learned that many of us enjoy making a difference by volunteering in our communities. Over time, I began to notice a definite trend of UMASC members' volunteerism that inspired me to highlight this in an article honoring members' contributions. Many of us continue to expand our horizons not only by doing coursework at UMASC, but by donating our skills and time supporting organizations we care deeply about. Senior college members often seek out satisfying ways in which they can apply their knowledge and skills through meaningful volunteer work and providing support where it's needed in our communities. A theme that comes through is finding work that is interesting. UMASC colleagues have wonderful stories to tell about the rewards of volunteering and how they found just the right place for them. The following UMASC student statements highlight some of the ways in which our fellow students contribute:

Alison McDonald (Bridge, Geology)

Organization: Volunteer Mediator for the State Attorney General

I learned of this volunteer opportunity through an internet search, and it is very rewarding and interesting! Volunteers commit to 3 hours a week to help mediate disputes between businesses and consumers. This is an in-person role (at least for a while) in an office setting with a group of lovely people.

I applied online and went through a detailed training. Then I was assigned cases to work on with staff assisting me as needed. While acting in my role as Mediator, I would call and talk to both the consumers and the businesses and try to get them to reach an agreement. None of this was legally binding (as it was voluntary participation on both sides), so it required no knowledge of the law itself beyond what I learned in my training.

Basic knowledge of Windows isn't necessary but helps. If you are extroverted and don't mind calling strangers, this is a wonderful way to make a difference to consumers and businesses who are having trouble. I enjoy all aspects of it including the opportunity to be back in a professional setting once a week.

Organization: Bridging The Gap

Bridging The Gap is a nonprofit organization in Augusta that offers two main programs to people: Everyday Basics and Addie's Attic. The combination of the two allows those who need assistance to get through the month by providing a sampling of things like toilet paper, soap, toothpaste, shampoo, and laundry detergent (Everyday Basics). Additionally, there is a clothing pantry where people can shop for items for free (Addie's Attic).

My role is to facilitate the clientele's needs as they come in on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the days we are open to the public. I endeavor to make people feel comfortable as they are asking for help, and I direct them where to go. This opportunity allows me to provide a huge service to the community, particularly to people who have literally nothing. One time, I helped a young girl find everything she needed from dress to shoes, so she could go to her prom. By the time we were done putting together her ensemble, she was beaming: confident and proud, excited and ready to go to her prom! Each time I am there it leaves me feeling grateful and satisfied that there are good people willing to help those less fortunate.

The organization continuously needs donations and volunteers to do a variety of things including greeting clientele, helping them find things, and also to systematically help sort, fold, and display clothing on a regular basis. The organization can also use anyone with technical abilities to work on their website and social media pages. All potential volunteers (or those who wish to donate) should call Melissa at 207-458-7088. <https://www.btgaugusta.org/>

Organization: Kennebec Valley Humane Society

I have been volunteering with the Kennebec Valley Humane Society (now on Leighton Road) in Augusta for years. Their staff and facilities are remarkable, and there is never a shortage of fun and rewarding things to do to help.

To start, an interested party fills out a volunteer application (available online). Next, you attend an orientation where you tour the shelter and see what jobs are available (of which there are many). Once you attend the orientation, you are initially trained on the basics of washing dishes and doing laundry (the shelter's biggest ongoing need). From there, you are able to sign up to be trained on other specific jobs from dog walking, cat socializing, and more.

My personal involvement is usually spent doing the dishes and laundry because it has to be done whether volunteers are there or not. In the case that volunteers are unavailable, the staff get stuck with the job on top of their regular duties. So this is my way of truly supporting the staff and their amazing work. I also do cat socializing, which includes patting and loving on the kitties while checking their kennels to ensure they're still clean. Lastly, I sit on the Fundraising and Events Committee and volunteer at those events. I absolutely adore volunteering for this organization. <https://pethavenlane.org/volunteer/>

Daryl Shaw (Bridge, Writers' Workshop, Unruly Art Journaling)

Organization: Pineland Suzuki School

Last semester, Louis Fontaine, who liked my work on the UMASC Illuminator, asked me if I would consider donating time to developing a major fundraiser publication for the Pineland Suzuki Music School. I agreed to do graphic design for a concert program. I developed the design and in the process was able to learn additional skills. There was a lots

of back and forth to approve the format and edit the text. One of my bridge partners proofread the program just before I submitted it and found an error concerning her nephew which we were able to fix. I found my computer expertise is needed by nonprofits! My advice to anyone who wants to donate their skills is: “Do it!” You’ll feel the love and the community you serve will appreciate your work.

Donna Runnels (Writers’ Workshop) **Organization: Unity Library**

I have always loved books and libraries. I first volunteered in grade school at my school library. When I heard Unity was going to start up a library a few years ago, it was a natural fit for me, so I contacted the library organizers about volunteering. The first thing I helped with was a book sale. I now have a regular weekly two-hour shift, but I also fill in on other shifts because I have a flexible schedule. I take as many extra shifts as I can. One of my responsibilities is to contact patrons about overdue materials, but in truth librarians help out with all manner of needs. For example, on my last shift, we truly became a full-service library when my co-worker jumped a client's car battery that had died! At first I had some difficulty finding organizations to volunteer at but now I am also a member of the Curriculum Committee at the Senior College and regularly donate blood. I am at the 8 gallon mark!

Laraine Bosse (Writers’ Workshop)
Organization: Literacy Volunteers of Kennebec

After retiring and moving to Maine in 2022, I looked for a way to continue my profession of teaching English at the Literacy Volunteers of Kennebec. I did their 6-hour training and was soon matched with a young woman from Syria. We began meeting weekly at LVK. After about 6 months, she mentioned her family was moving. As part of our conversation I asked her about the move. It turned out they were moving just around the corner from me with just a couple of houses between us! It’s been about 1 1/2 years that we’ve been neighbors. I feel like part of the family and they are very comfortable with me and my husband. It has truly been a pleasure getting to know them.

In addition to enjoying tutoring English, I have assisted with training new volunteers, fundraising, and maintaining the “little libraries” in parks. I love being part of an organization that welcomes people of all stripes from anywhere in the world. I feel like I’m with my “tribe.” It’s a very strong community.

Deciding to support your community can be scary. You may feel it will be difficult to become a part of something unfamiliar, or that they could want a lot of your time because needs are great. I suggest you follow your heart and really figure out what you are willing to give. Present yourself to organizations you think might be a good fit. Interview these organizations. It is a waste of everyone’s time if you jump in blind and then either don’t enjoy what you’re doing or quit because you are overwhelmed. Be steady and reliable and you will find the sense of community you’re seeking and fulfillment through helping.

Margaret Bean (Writers' Workshop, UMASC Instructor and Finance Committee)

Organization: College Guild

I have always had an interest in rehabilitation for prisoners. When a friend told me about College Guild, I called them to find out more. College Guild is a system of online free correspondence courses for inmates of federal prisons. They offer a variety of units from Greek mythology to marine biology. 300 volunteers serve 600+ inmates. The fact that the program was founded locally at Bowdoin College and is housed in Brunswick made it all the more interesting. After signing up to volunteer, I took a short training video and studied the handbook to serve as a "Reader" of inmate students' work. Prisoners start by choosing a unit online, do the course work, respond to a series of 25 or so questions, and mail their answers to the College Guild office. Volunteers receive a packet of the students' writing and respond in about 7 days via email. The College Guild staff emails the Reader's response and packet to the prisoner.

I enjoy writing and have been delighted to find a volunteer opportunity that lets me read interesting units and offer constructive feedback and encouragement to students who are eager to participate. College Guild provides student comments in its newsletters, and the appreciation they express is heartwarming. Many say College Guild contact is the only mail they receive, and they credit the program with helping them build confidence and hope. I am proud to be part of that effort.

For anyone who is thinking about volunteering, I recommend finding an organization that appeals to your interests and your experience. There are so many organizations that need help—from delivering meals for Meals on Wheels to teaching Senior College classes to guiding patients to their destinations in the hospital. Ask around and find something that motivates you to share your time and talents. For members interested, you can contact the College Guild at collegeguild.org.

Mike Chalmers (Astronomy SC student), **Organization: Maine Maritime Museum**

My wife and I volunteer at the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath. I work as a Visitor Service Assistant, with a focus on helping visitors find their way around campus, and often providing golf cart rides. I have had training in First Aid and CPR, and provide assistance in emergency situations.

I learned about the museum when I visited a few years ago. We have also enjoyed a couple of their river trips on the Kennebec. As recent "immigrants" to Maine (we moved from Georgia last November), we were looking for a way to get involved in the community and meet new people. I saw an ad in the Lincoln County News which mentioned a volunteer fair; we went and signed up. I have been amazed at the number of people – paid staff and volunteers – needed to keep the museum functioning.



Dr. Jenifer Cushman, President UMA, at the Senior College Annual Meeting 2026



Dean Pam MacRae at the UMASC Annual Meeting 2026

Summary of the 25th Annual Meeting of UMA Senior College By Louis Fontaine

On April 16, the UMA Senior College held its 25th Annual Meeting at the Calumet Club in Augusta. The meeting was attended by 125 members and friends. A display of art from Reactivating Our Artistic Creativity and the dresses from Sewing Dresses for Little Girls in Need greeted people as they entered. While waiting for the buffet to begin, UMA music instructors Jackson Cromwell and Duane Edwards and UMA student Thomas Runco played soft jazz in the background. After the meal, UMA President Dr. Jenifer Cushman addressed the meeting about the role of the university in the community. Dean Pam MacRae was recognized for 5 years of service as UMA's representative to the senior college. Dean MacRae will be moving to the University of Maine at Farmington in July. The major award of the meeting, the Legacy Award, was given to Kay Fiedler for her years of service in many roles of UMA Senior College. The meeting was adjourned after electing UMASC members to serve on the Board of Directors for a two term.



Kay Fiedler Receiving the Legacy Award at the Senior College Annual Meeting 2026



Good Food and Good Friends at the Senior College Annual Meeting 2026

Dates to Remember Summer / Fall

July - August	Renew memberships for the 2026-2027 seasons
July 10	Deadline for submitting fall class & lecture proposals
August 17	Fall classes will be listed on umasc.org
September 8	Registration for fall classes begins
September 21	First day of the fall semester



Carole Baldwin - *Spring Flowers*, College 2026



Carole Baldwin - *Blue Dragonfly*, Print, 2026



Pearl McNeil - *Zentangle*, Watercolor 2026

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Senior College
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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.