



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE
Senior College at
Lewiston-Auburn College

Senior College News

51 Westminster Street
Lewiston, ME 04240

Winter 2008

Welcome

The Board and volunteers of the Lewiston-Auburn Senior College at USM/ L-A welcome you to the premiere issue of Senior College News. We hope to be able to publish twice a year, providing you with updates on scheduled classes, profiles of our fine instructors, the "Food for Thought" luncheon series, and many other items of interest.

First, the cast of characters. Heading the list is board chair Rose Goodwin who will don her newest hat, that of our Executive Editor. Coordinating the efforts of writers Bob Gardner and Ralph Tuttle will be Managing Editor Liette Morin.

About Senior College

USM's Senior College was established in 1997 in response to requests from seniors in the Portland community who desired an alternative learning opportunity. Rabbi Harry Sky shouldered the job of organizing the launch of what has become a state-wide membership of over 6000 of Maine's older learners.

Gradually, additional locations affiliated with the University of Maine System were added. In 2000, the program was brought to the Lewiston-Auburn College and an Advisory Board was formed to begin a schedule of class offerings.

Bethel Shields volunteered to chair and organize the new local Advisory Board and soon we were in business. Since that first semester offering of four courses, our local program has expanded substantially, with the 2007 fall semester boasting fourteen courses and an increasingly growing number of enrollees.

In 2001 USM's Senior College was renamed after receiving a gift from The Bernard Osher Foundation. The new USM Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, known as OLLI, is now one of 115 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes across the

country. This new level of support has enabled the Maine program to expand its peer-taught courses, workshops and other activities for adult learners, ages 50 and over.

In 2001 Kali Lightfoot, the former senior manager of program administration at Elderhostel, succeeded the founding director Rabbi Sky. Kali provided staff support and guidance to the USM/ Portland Senior College while embarking on efforts to expand the Senior College to other areas of the state.

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Food For Thought

A regular feature of our Senior College activity is the monthly luncheon series, "Food for Thought." Since its inception a large number of diverse presenters and subjects has been provided.

June Spear is volunteer chair of the committee that is responsible for filling the noon hour on every second Friday with interesting presentations –from area professionals, board members, and community leaders to senior citizens who share their unusual life experiences. "Food for Thought" is a great way to nourish the mind as well as the body.

The Food for Thought luncheon schedule through June 2008 is as follows:

- March 14 – Spring Semester Instructors
- April 11 – Marcy Covey, *A Cambodian Wedding*
- May 9 – Hugh Keene, *The Nature of Scientific Thought*
- June 13 – June Spear, *Colorful Days and Nights in Russia*

About Senior College (continued)

Currently the program has expanded to more than 16 Senior Colleges in Maine, made possible through the support of the University of Southern Maine and the state legislature, an approach unlike any other state with senior learning programs.

OLLI at USM also houses the Maine Senior College Network and serves as the National Resource Center for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes Network, designated and funded by The Bernard Osher Foundation of San Francisco.

Senior College is unique in that its volunteer members devise the curriculum

and recruit instructors who, in addition to bringing experience and competency to the classroom, must themselves meet



the age requirement so that all our classes are taught by peers. It has no entrance requirements, grades or tests, and no college background is needed.

Locally, courses are offered in the fall and spring semesters and are held weekdays at L-A College on Westminister Street in Lewiston.

Scholarships Available

Our Senior College at USM/L-A has been able to grow and establish a viable program with the support of the college administration and staff. Therefore, in recognition of this support, the Board of Directors at Senior College has voted to award two \$500 scholarships to students already enrolled at the college.

In order to qualify for a scholarship the applicant must reside in Androscoggin County and must have completed at least two semesters at the Lewiston-

Auburn Campus. He/she must also be registered for at least 6 credits during the semester the scholarship is received. Interested applicants are advised to check with the Learning Works office, room 184.

Last year a \$500 scholarship was awarded to Kelly Lyons who will receive her degree in the fall of 2008.

Volunteers Needed

As our membership and our course offerings have expanded, the need for additional volunteers in all of our committees has become apparent.

Please consider joining our organization. Contact our Volunteer Committee chair Carol Seward, or any member of the Board, at 753-6610, to discuss where your skills and interests can best enhance Senior College.

Kudos to Senior College Pioneers

When Bethel Shields agreed to head the organization of a local Senior College Program at the new L-A College, she reached out to bring together a group of people of whom only a few had teaching experience. Fortunately, people such as Barbara Randall, a former dean at Bates College and retired English department chair at Edward Little H.S., Madeleine Giguere, Sally Belisle, Mildred Bickford and Pat Lemaire,

eagerly signed on to the project, bringing their outstanding experience and networking skills with them.

Other early members of the group, originally called the steering committee, and then the advisory board, were Dale Cronin, Terri Dion, Natalie Dunlap, Nancy Holler, Sandy Lane, Helen Levesque, Ruth Linehan, Eloise O'Neill, Dorothy Prince, Cathy Thorpe,

Glorianne Travaglini and Ralph Tuttle. Providing support and guidance from L-A College were Terri Pelletier and Sandi Croft.

A Meeting of the Minds

by Hugh & Grace Keene

2007 SENIOR COLLEGE CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 1
SAMOSET RESORT ON THE OCEAN
ROCKPORT, MAINE

The conference registration was scheduled at 4pm where we picked up our handy Senior College tote bags along with the information needed for the sessions. Members of the Coastal Senior College were the local hosts sporting "U-ROCK" tee shirts. They served as moderators for the sessions as well.

A reception was held at 5pm with hors d'oeuvres to tide us over until dinner, and we could meet with fellow registrants.

Six o'clock found us at the conference dinner in the Bay Point Ballroom with remarks from Kali Lightfoot, coordinator for the Maine Senior College Network. A short engaging WOW slideshow was presented of the year's highlights in some of the Maine Senior Colleges. Entertainment provided for the occasion was the art and craftsmanship of puppetry created by the 6th Age Opera Company from Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Scenes from well-known operas were woven together by a rhyming monologue.

After a Continental breakfast, the Rockport Room was the meeting place for Bob Rackmales from Belfast Senior College who presented an interesting talk on "JFK AND ISRAEL". Issues such as arms sales to Israel, chief policy aims in the Middle East, and our consistent support of Israel over the years were discussed. Suggested readings were handed out to each table. Rackmales joined the State Department during the Kennedy Administration and served in senior positions in the U. S. Foreign Service.

The gathering of smaller senior colleges with 150 or less members was labeled "Birds of a Feather Flock Together" with skilled facilitator Terry Foster... an exchange of information on what courses other Senior Colleges offer: ex., *Sage on the Stage*, *Civil War Medicine*, *Archaeology Road Show*, *Japanese Flower Arranging*, *Cooking in French (Italian, Vietnamese)*, *Let's Do Lunch*

(*eat out once a week and critique/chef speaks to the group*), *Alzheimer's Helping the Helpers*. PR suggestions were also brought up: newsletters, connect with newspaper, media connection, speakers' bureau, word of mouth/bring a friend, and community connections.

Copies of the scene Act II, scene ii, from Macbeth were available to those attending Herb Greenberg's "Shakespeare's Dramatic Power". The scene was brief and his topic was a masterpiece of dramatic intensity, of characterization, of language, and of the depiction of an extreme psychological state. Greenberg had us all spellbound. He is a retired professor of English at Michigan State.

Our dinner at the State of Maine Hall was delectable: a Downeast Lobster Bake!

Eighty-three people signed up for Charlie Plummer's "Lincoln at Gettysburg"...L/A Senior College was proud to see him in full dress as we heard his interpretation of Lincoln's three-minute speech containing the 272-word revolutionary masterpiece for the reburial of the dead. He suggested Lincoln polished his already composed speech, as he traveled the 80 miles on the train, still wearing the mourning band for the death of his son. Some 20,000 came to the 17-acre cemetery to hear Lincoln's speech ("words to disinfect the air...")

"Freud and Creativity" with Rabbi Sky presented two views of giants Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung: Freud engaging in the occult and seeing the future in liberalism...Jung involved in myths, anecdotes of fairy tales of the world. Freud and Jung met on a boat to America and talked about dreams. Both were interested in the self, shadow, balance, and the unconscious. He explained DNA is passed down from generation to generation...85% of what we are, is a form of the unconscious.

"Shakespeare for Pun" was presented by Melissa Mitchell, an instructor at Washington County Community College. She gave examples to show how Shakespeare used the English language to enhance what the characters

were saying. For example, homographic words, words that are spelled the same and sound the same but have different meanings, are used in many of his plays. A person will LIE in bed meaning he will not tell the truth. Heterogenic words, words that look alike but are pronounced differently, were used in his puns. An example of this was "What part does a fish like to sing in a chorus?" The answer was bass. The audience was asked to give examples.

"Global Warming" was presented by Paul Kardo who was trained by Al Gore in Nashville. The latest information on global warming was given. Although much can be done in small steps, Mr. Kardo pointed out that changing to other sources of energy not producing carbon dioxide is very complex, and some of the suggestions for bio-fuel can actually produce a negative effect. An interesting example given however was the house of the future that has no heating system as we know it.

Tim Byrne, official conference photographer, offered a slideshow during our conference finale noon lunch with photos of the Samoset, the presenters, the sessions, and candid shots of many attending the conference.

The Samoset just concluded a \$3M guest room refurbishment in the spring of 2007. Each room had either a private balcony or terrace overlooking the ocean/golf course. The amenities in each room were more than adequate.

The University of Southern Maine at Lewiston-Auburn Senior College

Presenting—Dr. Charles Plummer, Ph.D

by Bob Gardner

HE, TOO, TALKS TO THE ANIMALS. AND US!

"I tell people 'I'd like to live another 500 years. There's so much to learn.' And what Charles 'Charlie' 'Chuck' Doctor Plummer, educator, naturalist, etc. likes best ".is to teach and share wisdom with others. Being associated with people seeking life-long learning."

His success in doing just that is demonstrated each time his name and class is announced at Lewiston-Auburn Senior College. Told it's a problem because of his packed classes and disappointed turnaways. Charlie shrugs in one of his inimitable gestures, arms outstretched and palms up, smiles and says "What am I to do?"

Whether it's philosophy, history, religion, psychology or literature, Charlie makes it live! He provokes, stimulates, gestures, amuses and listens, all the while, emphasizing his points with a change of expression, a retreat to the rear with knees bending in disbelief, or merely a bewildered shaking of his head. His students are invited to participate as well as listen and watch. "It's not a one-way street" he says. "Often, I learn a lot from class interchange."

An avid reader and self-disciplinarian, Plummer says "Reading is my own program of self-study. I read history, philosophy, science, religion. Some fiction. I am committed to spending a portion of each day reading. Keeping the mind active is a powerful preventive of Alzheimer. It grows more of those brain receptors we talked about in our last Senior College class."

Storytelling is a powerful teaching/learning element, Charlie states emphatically. "I fear we've lost it in our schools." Telling stories through characterizations not only illustrates the truth of his teaching/learning theory, it has him in great public demand. "Rather than just read to an audience about U.S.S. Grant or Robert E. Lee or Joshua Chamberlain and so on, I decided to perform as the character himself. Over the past 25 years, I've done

1,000 performances." With his classic grin Charlie says "I'll do Chamberlain as long as people think a 73-year-old is 37."

There was a time when this man who has spent a lifetime in education in one role or another, didn't know it would be that way. "I was born at home as were my three sisters and four brothers. in Lisbon Falls. My great-uncle Dr. Alfred Plummer brought us all into the world. Uncle Alfred having completed my delivery, looked at my dad, his nephew, and said 'Fran, nobody has ever been named after my father Charles'. and that's how I became Charles 'Chuck' and Charlie!"

At 16, while still an imaginative and aggressive high school student at Lisbon High, he worked a summer job removing a railroad line up through Buckfield. "We used huge tongs to move the tracks.really rugged work." At 17 he worked construction on I 295 building a bridge over the railroad tracks. From there he shut down boilers and shoveled the ashes at U.S. Gypsum in Lisbon Falls. And later, after graduating from high school, he toiled as a bobbin stripper at the Farnsworth Mill in Lisbon Center. He realized these jobs "helped me to make the decision to go to college. I made up my mind not to stay a laborer."

So the teaching, the storytelling, the administrative work all began here. Teaching started in 1960 for eight years at the Chamberlain School. Later principal at Washburn, East Auburn and C.P. White Schools for 20 years. Asked if he might have lost touch with the students when he became a principal, Charlie said "I could do more for all of the kids as a principal than teaching a class." He has since served as acting principal at Bethel, Jay and Litchfield and also worked with gifted and talented children at Auburn Middle School. "You create your own success which for me meant being willing to work hard for whatever you undertake. It's the science of the mind."



That mind-set led Charles to pursue and achieve a B.S. in Education, a Master's in Administration and Supervision and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies and Metaphysics.

A totally different phase of his life took place with the Korean Conflict which would involve the years from 1952 to 1956.

An unforgettable experience came about as a member of a U.S. Naval Air Crew off the U.S.S. Essex doing reconnaissance over the Sea of Japan. "We had engine failure. No question what that meant. I felt total calm as we descended straight down. I relived my entire life in those seconds. My last thought was that it would be hard on my mother. She had already lost one of my brothers in Korea. Fortunately we were rescued by helicopter and flown to a hospital in Japan where I recovered quickly from cuts, back strain and hypothermia."

One of Charlie's greatest joys today is his daily walk through the woods. Two hours every day. "It lets me practice gratefulness and to express how grateful I am just for the opportunity to do it. I believe when I am walking through the woods, I am as much a part of the woods as they are of me." Sharing these experiences, he continued "Recently, just before I stepped into the woods, a partridge came running up. He stopped and walked next to me for a mile. Just five feet away. Later I stepped into some water and almost on a muskrat. I talked to him. He never moved."

Thus concludes our presentation of Dr. Charles Plummer whose spring 2008 Class will be "Social Deviance." Plan to register early as the scalpers may be slinking about with promises of the best seats at a very high price. And expect more than the sound of a voice going on and on for the man in front says "teaching without emotion doesn't work for me. Storytelling only really works with emotion. I did Chamberlain last November at the Samoset as part of "Lincoln at Gettysburg" and, I mean, I got choked up!"

Annual Meeting

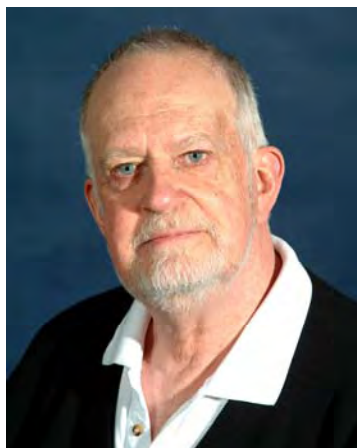
In September, 2007, the Senior College Bylaws were revised by vote of the Board. Included in the revision was the establishment of a membership annual meeting to be held in the month of May for the purposes of reports from the Officers and for the election of new Directors to fill positions vacated due to term expiration.



Members,
Mark Your Calendars!

Annual Meeting
May 13, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.
in Function Room 170 at
Lewiston-Auburn College

*In Remembrance of
Keith Sherburne
1932-2007*



As most of you know, the arts were a very important part of Keith's life, and he generously shared his love and passion with OLLI and Senior College at Lewiston-Auburn College. He was founder and director of the Sixth Age Puppet Opera Company and was a special blend of creator, director, and inspiration.

Keith was an instructor at Senior College at Lewiston-Auburn College and his 2006 course on the light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan was especially appreciated and enjoyed.



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- Scholarship: Hugh Keene
- Special Events: Bob and Pauline Gilbert
- Food for Thought Series: June Spear
- Video Conference: Rose Goodwin
- Communication: Bob Gardner, Rose Goodwin, Grace Keene, Liette Morin, Ralph Tuttle