



PVSC

Voice

Learning for the Fun of It!



GETTING THROUGH WINTER

Looking Forward to Spring!

Winter courses are underway and there's a rich variety! Alfred Hitchcock, Tai Chi, Maine nature poetry. Plus a delicious selection of One-Day Presentations. What interesting ways we have to spend some long wintry hours!

Meanwhile, your trusty Curriculum Committee is hard at work putting together a terrific spring course lineup. Here's a sampling of POTENTIAL topics for the semester that begins in late March. You'll notice a fun new emphasis on "doing/making" courses.

- ★ Line dancing
- ★ Tai Chi (follow-up to the winter intro)
- ★ Building knitting skills (intermediate)
- ★ Movement
- ★ Scots/Irish culture
- ★ Literature
- ★ Current events (follow-up to the fall courts course)
- ★ Maine pipe organs
- ★ Aviation history in Maine
- ★ Maine's nature heritage
- ★ Crafts
- ★ Woodworking (Orrington)

Sheila Krautkremer is Retiring!



"Sheila is an All-Star— notable in PVSC history."

Five years ago, Sheila accepted the job of part-time Administrative Coordinator. At that time, we offered two semesters of courses, plus 6 one-day presentations. Then Covid hit and our world changed.

The semester was about to begin, but all the classes had to be canceled and refunds sent out. Then we had to pivot to Zoom, which meant learning how to run the technology and explain it to members. New course offerings had to be developed, tested, and offered. Countless glitches had to be fixed.

Sheila rode that storm like the pro that she is. She made telephone friends with our members, and trained many of them in the ways of Zoom learning.

Wearing So Many Hats

And as we suddenly went from limited, predictable, in-person offerings to year-round programming and multiple delivery options, Sheila's job went from being part time—the way she was, and still is, paid—to being our Girl Friday for everything, practically all the time. She has solved problems from home, from California, from the side of the road. On one memorable occasion, she solved a Zoom issue from her hospital bed!

Besides Zoom mastery, Sheila has handled the countless behind-the-scenes functions that keep our organization running—wrangling our tricky website, handling payments, supporting instructors and the Board, and dozens of other tasks.

One Of The Nicest People You'll Ever Meet

She's done all this and more with a smile and personal touch with everyone. If now she deserves a happy retirement it is Sheila! Now she will have time to travel with husband Steve, and visit with daughters Sarah and Rachel, grandchildren Gwyneth, John, and Alexander.

Sheila will soon be helping to train a new coordinator, and she'll be staying in PVSC as a member of committees and as a student. If you have a chance to see Sheila or talk with her, please thank her for all that she has done for PVSC.

~ Ann Torrey



Wintering



Some of us tolerate winter. Some run away from it. Some wise souls embrace it.

Kris Reid is an embracer. She's also a hiker-adventurer who takes her camera along, with terrific results. She shared some early-winter snaps with us.



"Skrids of snow on the edge of the dirt drive, naked hardwoods with a few conifers stirred in and the layers of a sunset sky when the sun falls at a low angle, squeaking in before 4:00 o'clock!"

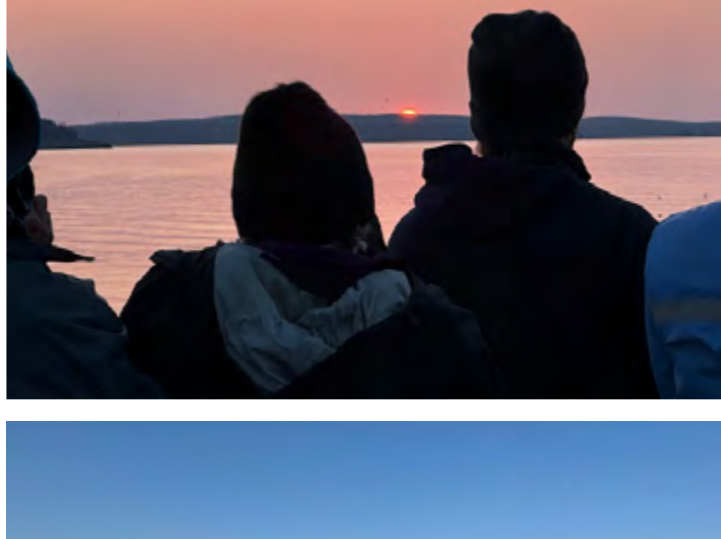
Late Fall Pelagic Boat Trip

Carol Plummer and Mary Smith enjoy birding. They were excited to learn more about pelagic birds and this past September went on Maine Audubon's Pelagic Birding trip. "Pelagic" means "of the sea." These pelagic seabirds spend most of their time on the open ocean except for a brief period when northern species nest in arctic and subarctic tundra or remote coastal islands. Otherwise they're rarely seen from shore, and a boat trip is often the only way for birders to see them.

After attempting the trip in 2023 and being foiled by a hurricane, this year's trip didn't have the best of starts. Arriving at the dock at 5:30 in the morning, they boarded the Bar Harbor Whale Watch's *Friendship V*, a 112-foot jet-powered catamaran. The sunrise on the way out to the ocean was spectacular. It was a gorgeous sunny day with light winds and seas like glass—even 35 to 40 miles off shore!

There were sightings of many pelagic birds—razorbills, puffins, storm petrels, jaegers, hundreds of gannets diving and catching fish, and a South Polar Skua, to name a few. Even some birds you wouldn't expect to see so far out including an American Kestrel and a yellow rumped warbler! The highlight of the day was the whales—two big pods of pilot whales, a couple of minke whales, a couple of finbacks, and a whole bunch of humpbacks. What an adventure!

~Mary Smith



Driving While Aging

So: are you still driving at night? In winter? Taking the wheel on road trips? Wondering if you'll have to hang up the keys one day—or already have?

A lot of us have stories about what happens when a parent needs to stop driving. My mother "only drove slowly around town." Then she had three fender-benders in a row and unhappily handed over her keys. Another time, a friend called me in a fury to report that her daughter had stolen her car. Her daughter had indeed taken the car away as a desperate last resort after three terrifying and endless fruitless discussions.

Driving and independence are so tightly linked that it can easily be a fraught issue. But there are some resources to help us cope.

The National Institute of Health has a web page with a wealth of information that might

be helpful. This article has tips you're probably already using, and some things to think about that may be new. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/safe-driving-older-adults>

You can assess your own situation with a straightforward checklist, including non-cognitive things that affect driving, like arm strength and medications. It's linked to the NIH site, or go directly to <https://www.nhtsa.gov/older-drivers/driving-safely-while-aging-gracefully/self-assessment>

And did you know that you can take an online course designed to help you "extend your driving career?" AAA offers it in Maine for \$28. <https://exchange.aaa.com/safety/older-driver-safety-mobility/aaa-roadwise-driver/>

Wherever you're going and however you get there, especially on these cold, dark evenings, please—as a Texas acquaintance used to say—"Y'all be careful out there!"

~Anita Kurth

