

The Northeast was the only place he hadn't lived

A brief conversation with Arlin Larson

"I'd lived all around the country, the West, the Midwest, the South, the Northwest. The last time I was looking for a church, I decided I'd like to come up to the Northeast." Arlin Larson, pastor of the Congregational Church in Searsport, kept his eye open for something that looked interesting. He came to a meeting in Augusta. "The friend I'd come with, instead of driving right back down 95 to the airport, took me to Camden and Mt Battie." When something came up in Searsport, he applied.

Born and raised in Lakewood, near Los Angeles, Arlin attended the University of Redland in California and received a degree in religion. He heard Paul Tillich speak in Santa Barbara. [Tillich was teaching at the University of Chicago, ending his career there]. "He was the first person I'd met who seemed to know everything. Another remarkable thing about Paul Tillich was that, during about 3 hours of dialogue with him, with some hostile questions, he never put anyone down. He managed to always rephrase their question as a serious one... and always had an intelligent response."

In the fall of 1967, Arlin went to the University of Chicago. "They had a new ministry program, for a doctorate of Ministry. The university mostly trained academics and scholars. We were on the fringes. Most of the divinity students were interested in either

social justice or in pastoral counseling. We got mostly academic training, very little church training. We had to do two quarters of social justice work, academic and practical in an agency or cause—then some kind of counseling, which I did in the hospital. Most of the students in the program did not finish it." Most stopped after the two year master's degree. "Only a few of us stayed on... that was for a Doctorate in Ministry, which required a dissertation. *That* lengthened it out to nine years for me. In the middle of this I went to Oberlin College, where I was a campus ministry intern, because I had some thought about going into campus work, but decided there that I wouldn't."

He went back the University of Chicago, finished his course work and still had the dissertation to write. "I worked in the Dean of Students office for eight years, was the academic counselor there while I finished. I loved Chicago and the University, but didn't see myself as an administrator, so I graduated and went on to a little church in the country outside of Chicago. I stayed there for three years.

"There was an opportunity at a church in Washington, D.C. The position was as an outreach minister, in the northwest, the Palisades neighborhood. They had done some fundraising for this position. I was the associate minister and had two big projects at that time which were a lot of fun.

"One was opening up a pre-school. This neighborhood was becoming gentrified. It was a middleclass neighborhood, but was becoming more expensive. The church had been in decline for a long time. This was in 1983. There were now two-career families, having children in later life, so the need was there. This [starting the preschool] fell pretty much on me. Not having any background, not knowing the laws, or how to do things, I had no idea where to begin. The church was opposed, as they saw no children in the church. I went down to the Episcopal Church down the road, which had a big school, pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, to learn about schools. The director was gracious, but said she didn't think people would come to our school because people who lived in our area already had their children's careers mapped out, and that started with entering them in the correct pre-school and that this Episcopal school was the feeder for the right schools. I wasn't discouraged. I knew that everyone didn't think that way and also that this school [the Episcopal school] had a waiting list, and those people needed to go somewhere. Within a year or two, our school had its own waiting list. And the school is still going strong."

The other thing Arlin did in DC was to get involved with a school for autistic adults. There had been a disagreement in the community about group homes. "This school had started after the civil war as an orphanage, and now it was becoming a group home. They had just purchased two homes in the area, and had spent quite a bit of money on improvements due to code restrictions. They also made sure they didn't stand out as institutions. This didn't stop the rumors that there were murderers and rapists being brought in. The clientele of this school were

autistic but were also severely retarded, having been in an institution that had been shut down by court order because of its barbaric treatment of those inside. This controversy involved members of the church, but our church became the first institution to support this group home, inviting them to come down and explain what they were doing, even inviting some of the men from the group home, who began coming to church." Arlin later served on the board of the school.

"From there we went to El Paso, Texas, where we stayed for eight years, for a small church in a mostly Hispanic area which struggled as people felt to be a threatened minority."

At the same time, Arlin became the Protestant campus minister at the University of Texas, El Paso, where the student population was primarily Mexican and Mexican-American. "The Methodists had a school in El Paso called the Lydia Patterson Institute. It was designed to give the Hispanic students enough of an education so they would be able to go to the university in the United States. Texas had an agreement with Chihuahua [the Mexican state to the south] that the Mexican students could pay in-state tuition. The students from the Institute, about half of whom were from Mexico, got attached to the Methodist Church, and were the students in the Protestant campus ministry [though most were Catholic].

"While I was there, I started a community service program that we called Praxis, where the Catholic campus minister, Sister Anne Francis and I arranged internships with social agencies in El Paso—at least twenty hours per semester, plus training. We offered these to instructors at the university as field work." The student would do the internship as part of the classwork. The instructor would lay the specifics of the academic requirement. "We

started off with one or two people, and by the time I left we had 250 students participating. We would get them all together at the end of the semester to share their stories." Arlin also did some adjunct teaching at the University while in El Paso.

The only college in the Congregational denomination there with a connection to the church was Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia. They had an opening for a chaplain. "I couldn't pass that up. I wore a variety of hats. The school had gone through many changes, and was trying to reconnect with the church. So I also was the Director of Church Relations, worked with the development office and was an assistant professor. I was also the local chairman for the convention of the denomination [Congregational] which was hosted in Atlanta that year [1997].

"We stayed in Georgia for a few more years after leaving the college as our son, Kyle was in high school. I did some computer network training. But at a certain point, I wanted to go back into the ministry and started looking at New England. Searsport came open and we came up in November, 2002."

Arlin's wife, Sharon, is a teacher. "She started out in hearing impaired. She has taught a variety of areas, even teaching sign language at Piedmont College. Moving around has been hard, but Sharon has found a nice fit in SAD 3, as a literacy teacher. Because she had training in Georgia for a Literacy Collaborative [that Maine had dabbled with, but never followed through on] she has become the literacy trainer for SAD 3 in elementary school. That's in addition to working with children.

"Coming to Searsport, it was wonderful finding such an active community, especially for seniors. The first thing I got involved with

was the Penobscot Bay Stewards. I learned a great deal about the area and got to know people in the area. After that I got involved with Senior College. I don't remember who asked me to teach. My church has become much more involved with Senior College, in that we don't schedule things on Thursday now. We probably have a dozen or more members who are active with Senior College. It's quite different from teaching 19-year-olds. We're not under pressure for grades, and people bring so much with them in the way of life experience. They can fill in some of details, and can broaden my horizons, by their own travel and experiences."

When not tending his flock at the Searsport Congregational Church, Arlin is very busy. "I'm secretary of the Greater Bay Area Ministerium (clergy association). For several years I was secretary of the Congregational Christian Council of Maine. I recently became the Historian for my denomination (National Association of Congregational Christian Churches). I am on the Board of Directors of Waldo CAP and serve on the group conducting the 'Living Here Tomorrow' study of Waldo County. I am also on the community advisory board for Seaport Family Practice for its application to become a Federally Qualified Health Center. Oh, in addition, I am a member of Searsport's Shellfish Management Committee." He's still finding time to prepare a class for Spring about "Historical Jesus" and we're glad he's here.

Special Events

Do you enjoy the special trips and events available through Senior College? If so, it's time to join the committee and help out. They'd love to welcome you. Call Marilyn Caron for information, 763-3940.

**Senior College
Calendar at a Glance
(as of December 10, 2010)**

Thursday, January 20, 2011

First day of Winterim classes

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Last day of Winterim classes.

Thursday, March 31, 2011 *

First day of Spring classes

Thursday, May 5, 2011

Last day of Spring classes

May 11–15, 2011

9th Annual Festival of Art
Hutchinson Center

* Note: First day of Spring classes has been changed this year to allow more time between Winterim and Spring. This allows the busy volunteers to be ready for the beginning of classes.

Thank You

A thank you goes out to Mike Nickerson of Nickerson Professional Associates for reviewing the year-end IRS tax report for Senior College.

Newly Formed Writing Group

A new writing group is welcoming new members. They meet on the 2nd Friday of the month, from 10–12 noon, on the third floor of the Belfast Free Library. If you're interested, please join them.

**Got a Question?
Ask a Yellow Tag!**

Some members of Senior College will be sporting bright yellow name badges when the Winterim semester begins on January 20. The cheerful name tags will be worn by Senior College officers and board members, along with the chairs of various standing committees.

The reason is simple: to make it easy for every member to spot the volunteer Senior College leaders in their midst. These are the "Go-to" people for your questions, suggestions, concerns and random thoughts on anything and everything about Senior College.

If you're not sure where you're supposed to be, flag someone with a yellow tag and you'll be set. If you're loving your class, or have an idea about how it might be improved, pass your thoughts along to someone with a yellow name badge at coffee hour. If there's a course you'd like to see offered, or know someone who would make a terrific instructor, or you think you might like to help with some aspect of Senior College . . . well, you get our drift. Something good should come of it!

You can expect to be greeted by some of these yellow taggers as you enter the Hutchinson Center for the first day of Winterim classes on January 20. For the first time, there will be a registration table in the atrium for those who are late-late-late in signing up for classes. This will eliminate the bedlam in the Senior College office that occurred in September, when a record number of new members crowded into the office to register while volunteers were scurrying to get books to classrooms and assist instructors. However, waiting until the last minute is not a good idea, since some classes may be full and others may not have textbooks available for those who sign up late.

Pat Griffith, Senior College Vice President

Winterim Courses At A Glance

Brighten up your winter with some intriguing new classes. If you haven't signed up for any Winterim courses yet, you still have time to enroll. Simply fill out the registration form you received with your course catalog before the Holidays, or print one out from the Senior College website:
www.belfastseniorcollege.org
and mail it in. Classes begin January 20.

MORNING CLASSES 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Maine Architecture—Then and Now

What is it about great Maine houses that makes them so striking? Learn about the different historic styles and hear about current efforts to protect our rich legacy of antique houses.

Understanding The Great Recession

Still wondering how the world's most sophisticated financial system spiraled out of control in 2008? Find out in a course designed expressly for those without a financial background.

Robert Browning's Timeless Monologues

Marvel at the distinctly modern musings of noblemen and notables from centuries past—in words rendered by a remarkable poet for whom the whole world was his dwelling place.

A Short History of the Supreme Court

With all the battles being waged in Washington these days, it's a good time to pause and review why we have a Supreme Court and recall just what it was created to do.

The Genius of Isaiah Berlin

Though little known to the general public, this seminal liberal thinker has been acclaimed as an unparalleled guide through the tangled geopolitical terrain of the twenty-first century. Come find out why.

Making the Most of Your Mac

Here's your chance to learn how to use everything those imaginative folks at Apple packed into your machine.

A Feminist Reading of Jane Eyre

In this course we will closely examine the view of mid-nineteenth-century women presented in Charlotte Bronte's great classic—and learn why feminist critics have had a field day with it.

AFTERNOON CLASSES 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Secrets of Great Maine Gardens

Get ready to step out of winter and tour some of the most colorful gardens in the Pine Tree State with several of the state's top horticulturists.

Justice for All

How does the Maine correctional system differ from those in other states, and how has it changed over the last twenty years? Four experts—a sheriff, a judge, a parole officer, and a self-described community activist—describe what they have observed.

The Creative Process—Sparking It and Keeping It Burning

What is your creative potential? Learn how to embrace innovation, spontaneity, and adventure as you tackle new projects and pursue your own goals.

Dilemmas of U. S. Policy in Asia

What are the choices facing the Obama Administration in pursuing its goals in China, India, and other Asian nations? This course will help you get the most out of this year's Camden Conference, *The Challenges of Asia*.

Finding Your Voice Through Letters

From personal letters to the epistolary novel, we'll explore the rich world of letter writing and discuss how letters are at the very heart of effective, memorable, and poignant writing.

Two Radio Plays by Horton Foote

The two plays we'll work on in this class both involve older family members telling their stories of conflict with the young and of their struggle to adapt to a changing American culture. Tune in for some enlightening entertainment.

The Good Old Summertime in Watercolor

In the dead of winter, it will be fun to create a summertime painting. Bring your most evocative summer photograph to class and we'll use it as the basis of a watercolor that will be a pleasure both to create and to behold.

SPECIAL COURSE OFFERINGS

Digital Photography Workshop
for Mac Users

Digital Photography Workshop
for PC Users

Two separate one-day workshops focused on understanding your camera, taking better photographs, and downloading your pictures onto your home computer. Each workshop is limited to 12 students only.

Three Centuries of Tragedy in Opera

A Saturday afternoon class enjoying magnificent performances of Orpheo et Euridice, Boris Godunov, and The Rake's Progress—all in the comfort of the state-of-the-art Hutchinson Center Auditorium.

Winterim classes meet on four successive Thursdays, unless otherwise indicated. Class fee is \$30 for one course and \$25 for each additional course. A \$25 annual membership fee for Senior College is also required. All classes take place at the University of Maine Hutchinson Center on Route 3 in Belfast. For further information on classes or registration, consult your Winterim 2011 Course Catalog, view it on line at www.belfastseniorcollege.org or call the Senior College office at 338-8033.

From the Hutchinson Center

There are literally hundreds of courses offered, either onsite, ITV, video conference online and videostreamed. A few favorite live courses are listed below.

Photoshop and Digital Imaging—A weekend, hands-on workshop.

Maine Writers Course—Films, novels, short stories, essays and creative non-fiction will be included.

Design and Illustration with Digital Tools—Tuesday and 2 Saturdays

Book Design with InDesign—Have an idea for a book, but don't know where to begin?

Printmaking—Three weekend courses.

Call the Hutchinson Center, 338-2000, for more information about classes that may still have openings.

Help Wanted!

Qualifications

1. A basic knowledge of the English language
2. A curiosity as to what goes on at Senior College
3. A love and acceptance of people
4. An understanding that we are all volunteers, doing what we can
5. Some simple computer skills and the willingness to learn something new
6. A love of puzzles, particularly jigsaw puzzles
7. The ability to feel joy when the puzzle comes together and the courage to begin a new one

Benefits

1. The lack of a paycheck—After all, if you got paid for this, you'd have to give the government some
2. Your own hours—And you can procrastinate if you wish
3. Some happy volunteers who will help you write, proofread, and keep you on track
4. The undying gratitude of the Board of Trustees of the Senior College
5. And you'll have me if you need it... To hold your hand and get you started

Senior College is looking for a new Editor for the Newsletter. I knew nothing when I started over four years ago and I know there's someone out there who will do a great job. Give me a call if you think it might be for you. It's been a lot of fun for me, and it will be for someone else.

Debbie Mitchell, 338-1255

Community Column

Waldo County YMCA

Matter of Balance. An 8 week program on Tuesday afternoons, beginning January 18th

Short Programs of Interest offered in Collaboration with the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition

Winter's Birds – From Feeder to Forest

January 11, 2011

Winter's Birds – From Gulls to Water Birds

January 25, 2011

Short Programs

Houseplants – Maintaining and improving your houseplants

January 19, 2011

Genealogy – Beginning Your Search

February 1, 2011

Making the Most of Your Digital Camera –

February 16, 2011

Portugal/Spain Trip

November 2011

For further information call the YMCA at 338-4598 or visit the website

www.waldocountyyymca.org

Spring Survey—A Few Facts

46% have been attending Senior College for 5 years or more

60% first heard about it from a friend

15% were born in Maine

4% don't read the newsletter

86% visited another state within the last year

10% visit the website regularly

11% feel there isn't enough variety in courses

79% were greeted the first day and found the way to their class

Holiday Social, December 16, 2010



Shirley Jarvella plays a Bach Prelude



Jennifer Armstrong offers stories and song



Larry Theye and Betty Becker-Theye respond when Marilyn Caron suggests the perfect free Christmas gift—A HUG



Fred & Maryanne Whaley offer a song

senior COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE HUTCHINSON CENTER

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Senior College admits members regardless of race, color, sexual orientation,
 and national or ethnic origin

80 Belmont Avenue, Belfast, ME 04915 www.belfastseniorcollege.org (207) 338-8033

Check the on-line version for pictures from our 10th Anniversary Dinner, honoring founders of our Senior College, including a special "thank you" to Jim Patterson, for his help along the way.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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