

# Cobscook Currents

Winter / Spring 2007  
2006

News from the Cobscook Community Learning Center



*The mission of the CCLC is to sustain an educational setting within which people can cultivate understanding and enrich life through experiences in the natural surroundings, with our cultures and traditions, and through access to the arts.*

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*You're Invited to the Grand Opening  
of the CCLC Commons!  
Saturday March 24, 2007*

Finally! After years of fundraising and months of construction, the next major campus facility - The CCLC Commons—is nearly finished. This long-anticipated addition houses a commercial kitchen, a dining hall / large function room, and additional classroom space. The Commons represents a major step forward for the CCLC and will support new and expanded opportunities for programming. Activities are already scheduled for the Commons space. On Sunday, March 25, area residents have organized a showing of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. When the Center first showed this film in late 2006 in the Timber Frame building, we were bursting at the seams to accommodate everyone. The Commons will easily seat a group of 100 for films and other events. The Old-Time Music Jam held the 2nd & 4th Monday of each month will move to the Commons beginning on March 26th, and on Wednesday the 28th participants with the Washington County Leadership Institute will meet in this new space. Our first class in the Commons will be held on Saturday, March 31 as Sid Hughes offers Traditional Woodworking Basics.



Commons under construction—November 2006

Before these activities happen, we're planning an official **Grand Opening Celebration on Saturday, March 24 from 10 am—5 pm.** Throughout the day there will be displays, music, activities, a silent auction, and tours of the Commons and campus. A ceremony to thank all of those whose efforts have gone into the building of the Commons is planned for 11 am and will be followed by a potluck meal. For a donation of \$10 per person, folks will be invited to pick out an individually-crafted ceramic bowl to eat from and take home. These bowls were made by about 20 community volunteers during a series of workshops facilitated by Connie Harter-Bagley and Kevin Thompson (more about this on back page).



Interior of the Commons in September 2006—It looks much different now!

**We look forward to seeing you at the Grand Opening!**

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McCrimmon before June 15.

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of *Cobscook Currents*. I'd like to offer an enormous "THANK YOU" to everyone who contributed time, talent, funding and a positive participatory spirit toward CCLC activities this past year. Also, this serves as a welcome and thanks in advance to all who bring those same gifts to our work in 2007 and beyond.

With this letter I offer a brief overview of the accomplishments of the past year and highlight a few areas of program expansion for 2007. There are enormous challenges facing us at every level – from individual to global scales. The CCLC stands as a center for personal and social renewal. Grundtvig, founder of the Scandinavian Folk School Movement, observed that in order to make the world over, we must first *fall in love*. People participating in the CCLC are creating an environment where we can fall in love – with pottery, with making music, with spending time with a family member while trying something new, with pursuing a high school diploma or college degree, or with getting involved in important issues. Vicky Eiben, a doctoral student studying grassroots community based educational initiatives, notes that "*community learning centers have the potential to lay the foundation for learning systems of the future. In searching for sites for my research I located numerous grassroots education initiatives, but none with the depth and breadth of vision held by CCLC. This is a model with great potential to inspire and inform community learning initiatives in other rural communities throughout North America.*" Please enjoy this issue of *Cobscook Currents* and find out more about this great model of community education. More importantly, step in (perhaps again!) and participate in CCLC activities and programs – be part of this positive movement.

**Program Expansion:** The CCLC works within its community to bridge identified interests and needs with programs and opportunities. As a result of individual teen parents wanting to attain a high school diploma approaching CCLC staff, we linked with the Community School to bring their successful Passages Program to Washington County. When Sidney Hughes revealed his passion for blacksmithing, our staff worked with him to develop a series of weekend immersion courses. To date he has offered four beginner classes and has added intermediate classes to the 2007 roster. Blacksmithing is now an activity anyone can consider within the list of options in this area and Sidney, who until recently has worked in isolation with this art form, has a community of people with whom to share his interest. You will find an article about Sidney and Betsy Miller, one of his students, on page 4.

We are pleased to report that in our second year of fulltime operation course numbers have doubled, that we surpassed our 2006 course hour projections, and participation numbers increased by 120%. Of those who have taken classes at the CCLC, 52% utilized our scholarship funds. These funds, raised through grants, contributions and other fundraising activities, were awarded on a need basis. Multi-age learning continues to flourish at the Center. 135 of our 335 participants were youth. It is common for family members to enroll in classes together - a mother and son taking blacksmithing, grandmother and grandchild taking pottery. In addition to our courses, the Center is enjoying ever increasing use by area groups, organizations and individuals.

**Making the Shift from Partnership Goals to Partnership Programs**

**Passages:** The CCLC and Community School are collaborating to bring the Community School's Passages program to Washington County. We have identified students ready to begin, and plan to launch the program by Fall '07.

**Mercy College Online Degree Programs:** In October of 2005 we met Barbara Benjamin, Associate Program Director for Mercy's graduate program in Organizational Leadership, as she was visiting the Downeast region. Over the course of her visits we discussed our respective programs.

She returned to Mercy to establish a partnership to make Mercy programs accessible to students from this region. The partnership secures a 30% tuition discount for all students in Washington County  
(*con't p. 3*)

MERCY  
COLLEGE

*Mercy College Online Degree Programs continued...*

and supports the CCLC in its work with students to help them succeed in attaining a college degree. Felicia Newman is the first student to take advantage of this partnership. Read about her experience on page 5 and contact us to find out more about this unique program.

**RUS Partnership.** The CCLC-led Distance Learning Partnership has been awarded a \$250,000 USDA Rural Utilities Services Distance Learning Telemedicine Grant. The grant provides the technological infrastructure to enable the partners to make the most of these powerful tools. Partners include School Union 104 (the Eastport School System), the Wiscasset School System, Lee Academy, the Community School, Bowdoin College Upward Bound, and U-Maine at Orono's Wabanaki Center and New Media Program. Tandberg Corporation and CBE Technologies are corporate partners in the project. All are enthusiastic about and committed to achieving the goals of the grant. Our first steps include installing the technologies and designing training sessions.

**Campus Development: 2006, A Year of Major Growth**

**Commons:** Support from foundations, individuals and agencies helped us achieve the final \$162,500 required to move forward with construction of the CCLC Commons. Thanks to all who contributed to that success. We had a great team of builders working under the leadership of Buildings Etc, our General Contractor. The Commons adds kitchen and dining facilities to the CCLC plus additional classroom space.

**Caretaker's Home:** Kevin Thompson, CCLC's resident potter and Director of Office Systems, and his family look forward to taking up residence in the new Caretaker's Home on campus in March. Their 24 hour presence adds security and support during short and long term residential programs.

**Jimmy Soctomah Memorial Park:** Wayne and Lorraine Rice took the lead to create a memorial park for Jimmy Soctomah, our first Community Organizer, who passed away in February 2006. This beautiful area is fully landscaped with trees, benches, picnic tables, and a lovely stone waterfall (the fruits of another stone masonry class).

**Pond:** This past fall we had a 1,500 sq. ft. pond dug near the center of campus. The shallow pond is safe for young visitors, is a beautiful centerpiece for the campus, offers freshwater habitat for programs, and serves nicely as a small skating pond in winter. It is adjacent to the fire ring built during a 2005 stone masonry course.

**Trails:** Community volunteers and staff have completed the East Stream Trail. This 1½ mile hiking trail winds through several distinct habitats, takes visitors to the tidal waters of East Stream and back up to the Dennison Point Trail which is managed by Maine Inland Fish and Wildlife. Special thanks go to the Machias High School students who built a cedar bridge over a stream and a stretch of boardwalk across a wet section of the trail during a day of community service.

**Community Gardens:** Nan Williams, one of our ABLE volunteers, has taken leadership of the community gardens at the Center. This fall we tilled a large section of the old field and we have a huge compost pile waiting for application this spring. Contact Nan to find out ways to participate and adopt a garden plot.

**Projecting Out: 2007 and Beyond**

**Outdoor Programming:** The CCLC received a generous grant from Maine Community Foundation to purchase gear necessary for extended backcountry programming. We are partnering with area educators, organizations and registered Maine Guides to develop programs. Read more about it on page 6.

**Dormitory:** CCLC co-founder Tim Beal and Board President Jim Miner are leading a group to design the dormitory. This fifty-bed facility will have a large lounge and will provide three living / studio spaces for visiting instructors. Tim, owner of Timber Frames, Inc., is exploring the possibility of having the Timber Framers' Guild of North America raise the frame for this building as part of their annual convention.

**Lesley University:** CCLC and Lesley administrators recognize the CCLC as an ideal setting for intensive residential programs and retreats and maintain their commitment to deliver several programs through the CCLC.

**Passamaquoddy / CCLC Extension Programs:** CCLC Board members and Passamaquoddy educators, Stephanie Bailey & Judy Lolo, are working to offer CCLC programs at Indian Township and Sipayik and to establish transportation services between the reservations and the CCLC. Contact Stephanie at [Stephanie@thecccl.org](mailto:Stephanie@thecccl.org) for more information.

Thanks again to everyone who has helped carry us this far. Welcome to all newcomers. Here's to the great year ahead.

—Alan Furth, Executive Director



Master mason John Viselli and students built benches and a waterfall for the memorial park.



Machias HS students stand on their bridge.

## ***Learning a New Art: Blacksmithing, Teaching, and Discovering New Passions***

*Editor's Note: The CCLC is a place where students and teachers alike come together in the spirit of adventure and exploration. Folks like Betsy Miller come and learn a new skill or art, while craftspeople like Sidney Hughes can hone their skills as instructors and deepen their own understanding of their craft. Prior to linking with the CCLC, Sid had never taught a blacksmithing class. Likewise, Betsy had never taken one. The Center works with folks like Sid to develop an idea into a program, and links people like Sid and Betsy together in a circle of teaching, learning, inquiry and practice.*

### **Delving Deeper into the Craft through Teaching: Profile of Sidney Hughes, Blacksmith by Betsy Miller**

Sid was introduced to blacksmithing as a kid, helping out his grandfather on the family dairy farm in south Texas. His job was to crank the handle on the bellows to keep the coal fire in the forge the correct temperature. "My grandfather was a farmer who used his blacksmithing skills to make repairs and to build equipment needed on the farm; it was a necessity."

Many years later and eight years away from retirement, Sid rediscovered blacksmithing. "I started going to the Windsor Country Fair to watch the blacksmithing demonstrations. And I started collecting books, videos and old blacksmithing tools." Soon he built his own traditional shop and, like his grandfather, Sid made what he needed. First he taught himself how to make an S hook, then he made some forge tongs. He continues to learn by making tools, hooks, handles, furniture and decorative items for his shop and for his family and friends.

As Sid's blacksmithing skills grew, a teaching opportunity emerged at the CCLC. "Although I took education courses in college and I have teaching experience from my career in law enforcement, I was very nervous the first time I taught a class. I'll never forget it. I think I rehearsed at least a dozen times. I had even written out cue cards. I lost the nervousness, though, once I started showing the students the tools. It was like introducing an old friend to new friends."

Recently retired, Sid is now a regular instructor at the CCLC in both blacksmithing and traditional woodworking. This summer he will be the blacksmith at the Grand Lake Stream Folk Art Festival (July 28 & 29). Come watch this masterful craftsman in action.

### **Falling in Love with a New Art: Interview with Betsy Miller, Workshop Participant**

**CCLC:** What motivated you to take your first blacksmithing workshop?

**Betsy:** My father taught me to appreciate the beauty of old tools. As a teenager we visited a traditional blacksmith shop in rural Illinois. Memories of that visit have always stuck with me. Currently, I have an office-type of job and I don't get much of a chance to do anything physical. Blacksmithing is a physical and artistic craft. I love that it gets me using my hands.

**CCLC:** How would you describe your experience of taking a class with Sid?

**Betsy:** Sid welcomed me in such a way that I felt no intimidation at all. He takes a very systematic approach to teaching and starts with a tour of the shop and all the tools. But most importantly, he has an attitude that conveys "Of course you can do this. There's no reason you can't do it." He's very encouraging.

**CCLC:** What did you like most about taking the blacksmithing class?

**Betsy:** I lost myself in it. And I really enjoyed the physical part of blacksmithing, hammering and having to keep the bellows going. And, you always need to think ahead to the next step.

**CCLC:** After taking a blacksmith class, what have you come away with?

**Betsy:** I find I can't go anywhere without noticing how things are made.

**CCLC:** What comes next?

**Betsy:** I plan to take more classes and eventually I hope to have my own shop. I know that a couple of classes doesn't make a blacksmith. I want to practice, make mistakes, attend more classes and spend lots of time puttering.

## Taking That First Step Toward a College Degree

Just thinking about a post-secondary education can be stressful, and actually pursuing that degree can seem like a daunting task. Thankfully we have a new and wonderful resource in our area that can help bridge the gap between talking about an education and actually getting that diploma. That resource comes from the relationship that the CCLC has with Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, New York.

Mercy College has a variety of online degree programs to offer. Just visit [www.mercy.edu](http://www.mercy.edu) or speak to Kara McCrimmon at the CCLC to discuss your options and what would be the best fit for you. If you choose to enroll in a program at Mercy College through the CCLC there are many benefits to eastern Maine residents. First and foremost is a large tuition discount of 30%. There is also assistance available with financial aid and scholarships above and beyond the 30% discount, not to mention free access to high speed internet onsite at the CCLC.

If you are used to the idea of classroom work, taking an online degree program may seem like a foreign concept, at least it did for me. When I looked at the cost of a traditional program, the driving, wasted time on the road, disruption of my career and life, it just did not seem worth the effort. An online program that had a flexible schedule was the best option for me. So, despite my apprehensions about an online degree, I enrolled in the Master of Science in Organizational Leadership program in May 2006. The best part about this program is how it is operated. The class sizes are small, usually less than 15 people, and I take one class at a time. Because of the one class at a time format, each is offered at an accelerated pace. The program runs sequentially through the course listings, with each course having a similar schedule. On the first day of each class, students receive all readings and homework assignments along with the due dates. This is where the flexibility comes in. I am able to plan ahead based on the course schedule to get my work done on *my* schedule.

Overall, my experience at Mercy College has far exceeded my expectations, particularly in the quality of the education. Each of the professors has been excellent in choosing applicable course material, setting an appropriate pace, and being flexible. It is by far the best money I have ever spent on my education. If you would even consider pursuing a degree, I would urge you to look at Mercy College and take advantage of their relationship with the CCLC. —*Felicia Newman, Expected Graduation: May 2007*

### The Uniqueness of Education

**"If we value independence, if we are disturbed by the growing conformity of knowledge, of values, of attitudes which our present system induces, then we may wish to set up conditions of learning which make for uniqueness, for self-direction and for self-initiated learning."**

—Carl Rogers

My name is Stephanie Bailey, and I am part of the CCLC team as a board member and volunteer. I am also a Passamaquoddy mother living at the Indian Township reservation. When I think of the programming at the CCLC, I think about how lucky we (the people of this region) are to have such wonderful visionaries working together to offer the "uniqueness" of education. I believe the programming we offer spans the gaps regular education tends to miss, and that's about people, life, relationships, and environment. I think Carl Rogers would agree with me if he could've had the CCLC experience.

Recently, I have been working on trying to make the CCLC more accessible to the Passamaquoddy community, particularly at Indian Township. We have to begin here for now because this is my locale, and we will work on branching to the Pleasant Point reservation in the near future. We are planning to provide transportation to/from the reservation and the CCLC, so the people of this community can better access the Center. There is also talk of trying to bring some of the CCLC programming to the reservation, which I think is very exciting! Stay tuned!

### Maine Education Opportunities Center Offers Services through the CCLC

Interested in applying to college, but not quite sure where to begin? Is the thought of financial aid paperwork daunting and preventing you from applying to school? Let the Maine Educational Opportunity Center guide you.

The Maine Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) is a federally funded program dedicated to helping individuals access postsecondary education. Continuously funded since 1991, MEOC has advisors throughout the state who travel to different learning and career centers and hold workshops educating participants on the steps they need to take to successfully apply, enroll, and remain in school. MEOC provides free assistance with college applications, financial aid paperwork, career exploration, and study skills. While MEOC's target population is first generation students, MEOC can assist anyone who does not hold a baccalaureate degree and who is not connected to a high school guidance office.

MEOC is excited to announce it has recently reestablished services at the Cobscook Community Learning Center (CCLC). If you reside near the CCLC and are interested in participating in MEOC services, please call 1-800-281-3703 and ask to speak with Randi Paine to set up an appointment and start your journey in higher education. Even if you don't live near the CCLC, but are interested in attending a workshop, you can call to find out when and where workshops are held in your local area.

—*Randi Paine, MEOC Advisor*

## Growing Our Community Garden

Thanks to a recent grant awarded by Maine Initiatives, the CCLC will expand the garden area this spring, focusing on an organic community garden that includes fruits, vegetables, herbs, perennials, and a butterfly garden. Children and adults are all invited to join us in planning the garden, planting seeds indoors this spring, transplanting seedlings, and cultivating the garden when the weather grows warmer. There is plenty of space available for individual and family garden plots.



Based on the concept of our country's historical Victory Gardens that were encouraged in a time of need, this project is intended to provide fresh fruit and vegetables for all that participate, with extras to share with friends, family, and neighbors. We would like to be able to preserve, can, and/or dry some of our produce for future use, plus save seeds from this year's crop to plant in next year's garden. We plan to offer resources and seminars for beginners and more experienced gardeners in the community and invite people who are interested in sharing their ideas, favorite varieties, and expertise to join us in this exciting endeavor.

- Nancy Williams

## Maine Community Foundation Grant Supports Backcountry Programming



As those of us who live in eastern Maine or visit the shores of Cobscook or Fundy Bays know, this region is rich in natural beauty and wild places. For some of us, the call to explore these places is nearly audible. Offering wilderness immersion programs that support the spirit of adventure and exploration has been a goal of the CCLC from the start. With funding from the Maine Community Foundation and support from area partners including the Regional Medical Center in Lubec, Washington County Community College's Adventure Leadership Program, and local environmental educators and Maine guides, we're ready to add backcountry courses to the slate of activities.

Funding from MCF allows the CCLC to purchase gear—backpacks, tents, water filters, stoves, sleeping bags, etc.—to support family, youth, and other backcountry programs. Program development is underway and new courses will be added soon. Those interested are invited to keep an eye on the website or call to express their interest. — Kara McCrimmon

## Thanks to

### Backcountry Programming Project

Maine Community Foundation

### Caretaker's Residence Construction Project

Lubec Hardware  
Patty Quillen & Reed Hastings

### Community Commons Construction Project

CF Adams Charitable Trust  
Community Foundation, Silicon Valley  
JTG Foundation  
Lubec Hardware  
Machias Savings Bank  
Maine Humanities Council and  
Maine Library Fund  
State of Maine - Community  
Development Block Grant  
Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation  
The Betterment Fund  
University of Maine - Machias &  
Aramark (donations of furniture  
and kitchen equipment)  
USDA Rural Development

### Community Garden Project

Helen & Marty Saccone  
Maine Initiatives

### Gabe Lowery Memorial Music Scholarship Fund

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Pat Mallar  
Kara McCrimmon  
Jim Miner  
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### Jimmy Soctomah Memorial Scholarship Fund

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Pat Mallar  
Georgia Mitchell  
Suzie Neptune  
Northeastern Blueberry Company  
Wayne & Lorraine Rice  
Madonna Soctomah

*Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -- over and over announcing your place in the family of things.*

-- Mary Oliver, from *Wild Geese*

# all those who contributed in 2006.

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Please make your check payable to the Cobscook Community Learning Center. You may also call or visit [www.theccclc.org](http://www.theccclc.org) to make a credit card contribution. Gifts of any amount are needed and appreciated. As a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization, contributions are deductible per current income tax law.

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*Additional thanks to all those who volunteered their time and talents in 2006.*

*Thanks also to all those who helped the CCLC get off to a good start with gifts in early 2007. These contributions will be recognized in our Winter / Spring 2008 Cobscook Currents.*



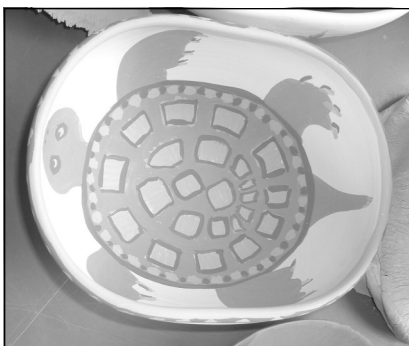
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## Mud Season Bowl Extravaganza one of the Highlights at the Commons Grand Opening on March 24, 2007

It all started when Connie Harter-Bagley, owner of Connie's Clay of Fundy and pottery instructor at the Center, approached CCLC staff with an opportunity. The Maine Arts Commission had awarded the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts of Newcastle, Maine a grant to support potters throughout Maine in implementing community ceramics projects. Watershed offered potters a bit of financial support and a one-day workshop on how to initiate such a project. With Watershed's support, Connie suggested that we organize free ceramics workshops where participants could learn to make and decorate ceramic bowls. Folks would have a chance to give pottery a try, and all of the bowls would go to a "Soup & Salad" fundraiser. When we heard about it, we thought this would be a wonderful event to weave into the grand opening of the Commons.



**One of the many community members who helped make nearly 200 bowls.**



**Turtle Bowl: Part of the Silent Auction Selection.**

Through January and February, Connie and CCLC resident potter Kevin Thompson facilitated four workshops where nearly 20 community members volunteered their time and creative energy to fashion nearly 200 one-of-a-kind ceramic bowls. According to Connie, "The idea is to increase community awareness, access and involvement in ceramic arts. We had such a great turnout for the workshops, and people had a lot of fun." These bowls will be available for a donation of \$10 each at the potluck meal during the Grand Opening. Additionally, Connie created larger serving bowls and recruited local fine artists to decorate them. These bowls, along with other donated art, will be auctioned off at the Grand Opening. All the money raised through the auction and meal will support programming and scholarships at the Center.

*Thank You Bowl Makers!*