

## Instructor Bios for MSAC Adult and Youth classes, updated for Fall 2021

(A few more will be added soon for Fall; let us know if you can't find one you're looking for!)

*The Community Services Department is lucky to be able to offer classes and workshops led by such knowledgeable, qualified and caring instructors. Our instructors come from all over with a variety of interests and backgrounds, and we're so thankful that they are sharing their knowledge and expertise with our community.*

**Joan Barrett** has been a member of the Senior Center for over 15 years. She has been an active participant in a variety of courses focused on wellness and aging well. She started taking the Strong Living Courses when they were first offered and eventually took the Leader Training for Bone Builders and has been leading a class since. Joan likes to bring new ideas to her classes to keep the courses fun and interesting for the participants. She also leads a weekly walk and participates in the Craft Group and can usually be found working at the annual Rummage Sale.

**Barbara Dall** is a fan of reading and thinking, an active library patron, and someone who wonders if she'll ever be able to read all those books on her bookshelves.

**Monica DiGiovanni** began her yoga and meditation path over 30 years ago. Her practices are based in Kripalu Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Mindfulness Meditation techniques and Buddhist practice & philosophy. She completed her 200 hour yoga teacher

training from the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health. She earned a BFA in Performance Art from Massachusetts College of Art where she studied creative movement and contemporary performance art techniques as well as a variety of multi-media and fine art disciplines. Monica took refuge in the first five Buddhist precepts in the Japanese Zen tradition July 2017 and is currently on the path to becoming a formal student with Reverend Tahaiku Priest, Abbot of the Soto Zen Shao Shan Temple.

**Pam Finnigan** is a certified rug hooking instructor who teaches both traditional and non-traditional techniques.

**Naomi Flanders** began her singing lessons in college with Professor Jill Levis in 1972 at Vermont College. During that time, Jill Levis held two Master classes at UVM with Alan Fast a world class counter tenor and Professor at McGill University in Montreal. Inspired by these teachers, Naomi moved to New York in 1987 to train with Marcy Lindheimer a renowned voice professor for over six months.

When Naomi came back to Vermont she continued training with Nan Nall in Ludlow Vermont, another outstanding voice teacher for a year.

She began teaching voice from her home in East Montpelier Vermont and went on to direct six operas in Central Vermont, and numerous Gilbert&Sullivan operettas at Unadilla Theatre in East Calais Vermont.

She knows that everyone can sing well, when given the correct technical training, and has cultivated exercises that are fun and sometimes silly, but they work! She has expertise in training people how to sing in tune and

continues to be inspired by her students success in learning to sing well.

**Ellie Hayes** has been teaching Tai Chi and practicing Chinese calligraphy since the 1970s.

**Shannon Hepburn** is a certified instructor who studied at the Stott Pilates Corporate Training Center in New York City. She has been teaching Pilates in Montpelier for more than seven years.

**Linda Hogan** is a fine arts photographer and visual arts painter. She has taught many workshops and classes in Central Vermont including Open Door Arts, U-32 and Montpelier High Schools, the Basement Teen Center, Washington County Youth Service Bureau's "out of school time" programs in several cities and towns, Heaton Woods and Lincoln House and the Extension School at Vermont College where she was also the Artist in Residence for one year. Her work has been exhibited throughout the area.

**Amy Lepage** has extensive training in clinical somatics, functional movement, and yoga therapy. Learn more about her group classes and individual sessions at [www.emergeyoga.com](http://www.emergeyoga.com). Contact Amy at: amy.emergeyoga@gmail.com or call: 802-778-0300 with any questions.

**Theresa Lever** retired in July 2019 after 38 years as a social worker at CVMC's cancer center and nursing homes. She's been a Montpelier resident since 1979 and is delighted to be currently living with her daughters and grandchildren in the heart of downtown. Theresa loves Bone Builders and is very happy to co-lead a rowdy class with her long-time friend, Laura Brown.

**Lisa Mase** is a culinary medicine educator, nutrition consultant, food sovereignty activist and folk herbalist from Italy. Her teaching focuses on traditional nutritional philosophies such as Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, Macrobiotics and her own Mediterranean Diet.

Details: [harmonizedcooking.com](http://harmonizedcooking.com)

**Laura Morse** has been leading Bone Builders classes at MSAC since she was certified in 2017. She is also a certified Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program leader. You may have seen her on one of the MSAC trips, some of which she helps coordinate, lead, or drive the van. She also attends the Wednesday craft group where you can get craft related advice on knitting, sewing or your project. You never know what the topic of conversation will be. Laura is a member of the MSAC Advisory Council. It isn't unusual to find her in a corner somewhere knitting.

**Tina Muncy** began taking a Living Strong class before the program came to the Senior Center and was still a Tufts University Study to determine how weight bearing exercise improved the life of older Americans. At that time, Tina was still working as an instructor in a graduate school principal certification program. More recently, she became certified to teach the Bone Builders program which has the same goals as Living Strong. Her class at 5:00PM was established to encourage people who were still working to join MSAC and explore classes that were available. Most of the participants in the class are now retired but we welcome those of you who are still thinking about retirement. Outside of pandemic time, Tina also coordinates the trips offered in spring, summer and fall by not only making arrangements at

the venue, and pricing but often driving our bus.

**Erik Nielsen** is a composer who has created works for chorus, orchestra, wind ensemble, solo instruments, chamber music, works for dance, film and electronic music. His pieces have been performed all over the world by ensembles including A Far Cry; the Amabile, Chiara, Emerson and Ying String Quartets; the National Symphony Orchestra; the Killington and Manchester Chamber Players; Bread and Puppet Theater; the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble; Vermont Opera Theater, Vermont Symphony; Vermont Philharmonic, Montpelier Chamber Orchestra, Vermont Youth Orchestra and Village and Northern Harmony. He has won awards from ASCAP, the Vermont Arts Council, and the Vermont Music Teachers Association. In September 2015, his opera, A Fleeting Animal, a collaboration with poet/playwright David Budbill and premiered in 2000, was performed in a newly revised edition to great acclaim in six locations in Vermont. Recent commissions include a film score for the 2019 Green Mountain Film Festival; a new work for chorus and brass or organ; All This Night ShriII Chanticleer, a commission from the Vermont professional chorus Counterpoint, premiered in December, 2018; and a new work for the Northern Third Quartet, premiered in October, 2018. He was elected a Fellow by the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2016.

As a teacher, Erik is Senior Composition Mentor with Music-COMP (formerly the Vermont MIDI Project). He also teaches music theory and composition with the Green Mountain Suzuki Institute, the Monteverdi School and privately. He has taught music appreciation classes at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center since 2013,

classes ranging from opera to jazz and The Beatles. He lives in Brookfield.

**Sarah Parker-Givens** specializes in breath-focused yoga for beginners and seniors. Visit [heartcenteredyoga.weebly.com](http://heartcenteredyoga.weebly.com) for more information about Sarah and her teaching.

**Jean Phillips** has been participating in Bone Builders at MSAC since 2015. She received her instructor training in 2017 through the Grafton & Sullivan Counties NH updated training program (exercises, updated exercise manuals & supporting class materials) for Senior Bone Builders classes.

**Claudia Pringles** was awarded the Juris Doctor by the University of Wisconsin Law School. A member of the Vermont Bar, this is her 12th year practicing law in Montpelier.

**Ragan Sheridan** is an experienced yoga teacher (E-RYT) and certified yoga therapist (C-IAYT) with 14 years of experience working with seniors and individuals with chronic pain, injuries, illness, anxiety and depression. In addition to leading group classes she is also a wellness practitioner working with clients 1:1 to achieve their goals of feeling stronger, calmer, decreased pain and increased well-being. She incorporates energy healing, process depth transformational work, mindfulness, yoga therapy, nutritional and herbal support in her wellness sessions. For more information visit [www.rootsofsupport.com](http://www.rootsofsupport.com) , email [ragan@rootsofsupport.com](mailto:ragan@rootsofsupport.com) or call 802-552-8995 with questions.

**Dyne (Deanie) Sapp** began learning Tai Chi five years ago and has taught in Vermont and Florida. She is a certified Tai Chi Vermont Fall

Prevention Tai Chi Instructor and practices Qigong as well as Yang and Sun Style Tai Chi. She lives in Montpelier but spends most of the winter in Florida.

**Nancy Schulz** appreciates the opportunities provided by MSAC to share her enthusiasm for international folk dancing, bicycling, kayaking, and the Bone Builders program. In addition to these activities, she has offered Long Life Qi Gong, Readers' Choice, Full Moon Walks, ASL Song Signing, and evenings of parlor games. Nancy also enjoys proposing and leading active day trips to interesting places in Vermont. Prior to her retirement, she worked in a variety of fields including book publishing, sales, marketing, social services, and non-profit management.

**Samn Stockwell** is a poet from Barre. She has published in *Agni*, *Ploughshares*, and the *New Yorker*, among others. Her two books, *Theater of Animals* and *Recital*, won the National Poetry Series and the Editor's Prize at Elixir, respectively. Recent poems are in *Antigonish*, *Poet-Lore*, and *The Literary Review*. Poems are forthcoming in *Smartish Pace*, *Plume*, and others. She has an M.F.A. from Warren Wilson College and has taught poetry and English at the New England Young Writer's Conference, and Community College of Vermont.

### **Ron Sweet**

Ron is a 200-hour RYT who first made his journey into yoga and meditation in 1968. In 2010, after raising a family, Ron made a beeline back to a more formal study of yoga, with a particular focus on body alignment, heart-centered practice, affirming philosophy, and strong community. Ron loves a yoga class that guides students to mindfully and safely

work at their edge physically and mentally, which is where strength, flexibility, and balance grow, and a place where transformation happens.

**Janice Walrafen** is a working artist who makes handmade tiles and sculpture from clay and teaches art to people of all ages. She also co-creates at AllTogetherNow! Community Arts Center in East Montpelier.