

# The Roundtable

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**March 30, 2017**

## Welcoming Immigrants

**W**hite.

Maine's population is very white. Carin Sychterz and Sean Faircloth told this morning's meeting how they are working to address the challenge of retaining immigrants in Maine, particularly in the Bangor area. Immigrants compose twenty-five percent of the physician workforce.

"The US is not producing enough physicians to meet our needs," Ms. Sychterz, Director of Maine Career Connect, said of the medical demographics. "Maine is a very white state (94.96 percent of the population) and by 2044, white people will no longer be in the majority."



Immigrants who come to Maine often feel isolated. Ms. Sychterz explained the efforts to retain physicians, in particular, who come for three years with a J1 Visa. After three years of working in their chosen field, they are free to stay or return to their country of origin. "We don't want to lose them after three years," she said.

Bangor City Councilor Sean Faircloth described the plans to create a Maine

Multicultural Center where immigrants can feel welcome and get information and assistance for establishing residence. He injected a historic note that about twenty years ago this April a group of people met in the Rangeley Hall meeting room where the club meets and charted the course for establishing the Maine Discovery Museum.

To counter Maine's aging population (it has the oldest median age in the nation) and the third worst population growth, Mr. Faircloth and Ms. Sychterz promoted increasing the working population. "We can ask people to make more babies but they are not making more babies."

"Thirteen percent of the immigrant population starts twenty-five percent of new businesses," she said.



The proposed Maine Multicultural Center will provide professional facilitation of immigrants that will include unique strategies to retain them. “We will present Bangor as an opportunity,” she continued. The University of Maine at Augusta’s Bangor campus will provide office space.

Mr. Faircloth did not skip over the divisiveness spreading in Washington and Augusta. “We have to work together to fix the economy.” There was also discussion about addressing ethnic stereotypes that can impede immigrant retention.

### **Announcements and Pronouncements**

The Mostly Dynamic Duo of **Wahlstrom/Myers** sang the birthday ode to two members in the higher level of club management, President **Kristy Kimball** and Vice President **Doug Townsend**. Keeping always on the cusp of birthday dates, Kristy’s is tomorrow.

**Stacy White**, standing in for **Caroline King**, said the American Red Cross needs two volunteers to go to Machias where the organization will install fire and smoke alarms. Contact Caroline if you can help on April 15 from 9am – 4 pm.

Kristy is already psyched for the Annual Holiday Dinner and Auction. She distributed flyers listing sponsorship opportunities in seven categories. You have time (deadline is November 17), but why wait? She reminded us also about donating to Polio Plus by depositing in the cans on the tables.

The challenging Maine Trivia Tournament is coming to Eastern Maine Community College on April 13, 6-9 pm. at Rangeley Hall. **Jen Khavari** says food to keep your brain sharp will be available. The ultimate cash prize is \$500. She can tell you about sponsorships and team registrations. Proceeds benefit the EMCC Foundation.

The Philip Strickland House will benefit from your participation in “Dancing with the Stars.” Director **Wayne Woodford** said the event will be held at the Anah Shrine in Bangor on April 8.

After five days in Florida, **Lisa Wahlstrom** had to return to Maine so she could participate in the Good Samaritan Agency’s “Bowl-a-Thon” that raised \$9,000. She will also sing in the Chamber Choir at St. John’s Catholic Church for its Lenten concert this Saturday, April 1 at 7:30 pm., to which you are all invited.

Lisa gave good news about Cathy Hunt, a colleague of Jeff Wahlstrom’s. Jeff visited her last week in Portland and she is improving.

*Les Myers- March 30, 2017*

