

DECEMBER 2024

2024–25 CVEC EXECUTIVE

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John North

Vice Chair:

Sheila Borman

Past Chair:

Don Axtell

Chair, Communications:

Solweig Williams

Chair, Curriculum:

Jane Sterk

Chair, Volunteer Support:

Gary Priestman

Chair, Member Support:

Beth Regehr

Finance Officer:

Liz Morris

Members-at-Large:

David Clark & Geoff Battimeli

Co-Secretaries:

Jackie Greening & Mary Gray

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

Best wishes from your CVEC Communications

Committee – Solweig Williams, Elaine Graham, Jill Lunde, Barbara Bruederlin, David Clark, Jim Peacock, P@ Grappolini

As the CVEC Fall semester winds to a close, we find our thoughts turning to festive gatherings with friends and family. It's a time to celebrate the glittering lights, cozy gatherings, and pretty parcels tucked under the tree.

In keeping with the giving season, your friendly CVEC Communications Committee would like to offer you the gift of the brand-new Winter 2025 Course Guide, coming soon to the CVEC website. For many of us, browsing through a new CVEC Course Guide is akin to poring over the Eaton's Christmas toy catalogue as kids. There are just so many choices, everything looks so fun, and we want it all.

For those who crave the tangible joy of leafing through actual pages, the Course Guide will also be delivered to libraries, recreation centres and various other locations around Comox and Courtenay.

Embrace the cozy during this festive season and take time to plan for a New Year full of learning, curiosity and camaraderie with fellow students.

See you in 2025!



Facebook: [@ComoxValleyElderCollege](https://www.facebook.com/ComoxValleyElderCollege)

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In Praise of ElderCollege Geoff Battimelli, Member at Large

I joined ElderCollege about 7 years ago at the age of 70. I was semi retired from a very successful career in business. And at that time, I was looking for new learning opportunities. Although if I'm honest, at that age I thought I had discovered most things I needed to know, at least about myself.

That was until I signed up for the writers workshop under the tutelage of Marvin Haave. I actually thought I was out of my depth in this class. The group seemed to be mostly retired academics, teachers, preachers, and published writers, etc. I was a minimally educated man who had left school at 14 years old and made my way in life mainly through hard work, perseverance, and a little intelligence. I actually only achieved my grade 12 certification very late in life at 30 years old. I did that through a long distance correspondence course with the university of Alberta, while still working in a construction camp in the Northwest Territories.

So yes, I felt out of my depth to be back in class after more than 50 years, but with Marvin's help and encouragement, I began for the first time in my 70 years to write again. First, I tried memoir, then added some of what Marvin called creative non fiction, and eventually some poetry.

That idea and that freedom to create my own stories freed my mind. I began to feel not only accepted in this accomplished group of writers, but I even had the confidence to write and share some of my poetry. These endeavours, this opening of my mind to creative ideas, would never have happened had it not been for Marvin and his gentle encouragement, his ability to install in me the idea that even at 70 years old I still had something more to contribute. But more than just that he opened up my mind to endless possibilities.

I am now about to turn 78 years of age, and since joining ElderCollege I have written a book and had three poems published. Now I have so many stories of my own and my family's life, written so that my children will be able to share them with their children hopefully through many generations.

These are the kind of stories I wish I had been able to read and share from the generations that came before me.

So thank you Marvin and ElderCollege for opening up a senior mind to endless possibilities. In my new life as a writer, and a poet.

Introducing...

Hi! I am P@, the new Editor of the Connector.

New to the Comox Valley as a full-time resident, my husband Giorgio and I have wintered here for the past 8 years – he for the possibility of winter golf and me for the cross-country ski trails!

My Dad (a journalist) said that even as a small child I had "printer's ink in my veins". He meant, of course, that I couldn't resist writing my own material as well as correcting others'. I have even been known to correct errors in signs at stores and in letters that teachers sent home with our children... I just can't help it! During the past several years, I have had the honour of being asked to edit work that friends have had published, as well as editing a few other newsletters. Editing the Connector has given me the opportunity to meet some of the wonderful volunteers who make ElderCollege happen. Getting involved in any aspect of this endeavour is so fulfilling. Give it a try!

What does the Curriculum Committee Do?

Jane Sterk, Chair Curriculum

The role of the Curriculum Committee is to provide courses and lectures consistent with the ElderCollege Mission Statement and policies established from time to time. We recruit Course Leaders (CLs) or potential CLs, liaise with them to see what course(s) they are interested in teaching and assign them to the appropriate Subject Coordinator who assists them in completing and submitting the Course Information Form (CIF).

We have six Subject Coordinators (SCs), responsible for finding courses in the following areas:

- Art and Music
- Eclectic
- Health and Wellness
- History and Social Sciences
- Language and Literature
- Science and Computers

SCs use a number of strategies to identify potential courses and CLs. First, they will approach people who have offered courses previously to see if they are interested in offering a course they have done in the past or a new course. They will also reach out to the community to recruit new CLs. Sources for names and topics include courses and instructors from neighbouring elder colleges, articles from local media that highlight current issues and local groups that may have possible instructors like the newcomers or arts' and writers' groups. And then there's the arm twisting of friends, family and acquaintances. The creativity of our team at finding people is pretty impressive. Each term, we like to have a 50-50 balance of repeat and new courses and we generally offer around 60 courses.

In addition to the SCs, we have a small team of Lecture Coordinators who organize and schedule the Saturday Morning Lecture series each term. They choose a theme and then reach out to a number of people who might be able to give a two-hour lecture on some aspect of the theme. It is a really challenging process. They might contact two to three times the number of people needed for the required six lectures. It's a daunting puzzle to put together who's going to give a lecture for each date.

All of these people are supported by a technical support team and a Workspace Data Manager. The tech support team manages the technology for the lectures – both on Zoom and in the theatre. They occasionally provide assistance to the CLs with classroom technology as well. The Workspace Data Manager compiles all the course and lecture information. He also creates and distributes course evaluation surveys for each course and collates the feedback, to be shared with the CL and the SC.

One of the challenges we experience in doing our work is the time between when we need the course/lecture information and the term during which the course or lecture will be offered. Fall courses which are offered in October and November are planned in March and April and Winter courses (February and March) are planned in August and September.

We are like the initial cog in a well-oiled machine. Once a CIF is submitted to a SC, they make sure we have all the information we need. It then goes to the Chair of the Curriculum Committee for review. Then, it's on to the Communications Committee editor for editing to make sure the descriptions are well written and succinct. Once she gives the okay, the information is entered into a spreadsheet by our Workplace Data Manager. By mid-May and mid-October, the spreadsheet of the upcoming term's courses is sent to the NIC Liaison who ensures all of the information is correct and meets the requirements of programming. Once her analysis is done, she submits the courses for scheduling. After the schedule is complete, each CL must be contacted to ensure they are okay with when and where their course has been scheduled and that their requests have been incorporated into the final schedule.

At that stage, the Communications Committee takes over and uses the course information and schedule to create the Course Guide for the term. Course Guides need to be printed and are distributed in late August/early September for the Fall term and late December/early January for the Winter term. Course Guides are also available in pdf form.

Winter Course Preview

Our course guide will soon be available in locations throughout the Valley. In the meantime, here's a sneak peak of some of the new courses we have planned.

Paths to Artful Living (4 weeks on campus) Presenter: Dean Bauche



Discover why people believe they are unable to draw. This course is a four-step process that teaches you how to see in order to draw, design and paint simple watercolours. You will gain understanding and confidence through demonstrations, and individual and group activities. Explore foundational concepts in art and discover how emotion underlies design and colour theory. For beginners through intermediate, the content applies to growth in any medium.

Home Solar PV Systems (1 week on campus)

Presenter: Nick Fielding

Why are so many Comox Valley homeowners choosing to go solar? Explore how residential solar PV systems work, how they are connected to your home and the BC Hydro grid, and how they generate value for you and the community.



X-country Skiing/Snowshoeing (6 weeks off campus)

Presenter: Pat Grappolini



Join the facilitator (and *Connector* editor!) for an afternoon of either cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, depending on weather and snow conditions. Having at least basic skills in either or both sports is required. Plan to improve your skills and stamina as you marvel at the winter landscape. A great option if you are reluctant to get out on the trails alone.

Diggers of the Ancient World (4 weeks on campus)

Presenter: Jim Moscovich

Put on your pith helmets and hiking boots! This course examines the archaeological adventures of Heinrich Schliemann at Mycenae and Troy, Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos, Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur, and Howard Carter in Egypt (King Tut). The legends of the diggers themselves rival those of Indiana Jones: what they found is even more spectacular. Lots of pictures and stories to match!



Crafting True Narratives (7 weeks on campus)

Presenter: Dave Flawse



A course on writing creative nonfiction, from reported stories to memoir. This workshop-style course is divided into two parts. The first outlines our tools: research, interview, immersion, and memory. The second part discusses craft: structure, dialogue, POV, and specific details. Expect to read and submit feedback on one participant's story each week. Expect to write one 2,000-word story in this course. Small class size.

Call for Volunteers Gary Priestman, Chair, Volunteer Support Committee

Comox Valley ElderCollege needs your help. If you want to ensure the future viability of the wonderful learning opportunities that CVEC provides, please consider donating your time. Currently CVEC is looking for individuals who might be interested in the following:

Member Support Committee – Member at Large

Communications Committee - Community

Outreach Coordinator

Volunteer Support Committee – Recruitment Coordinator

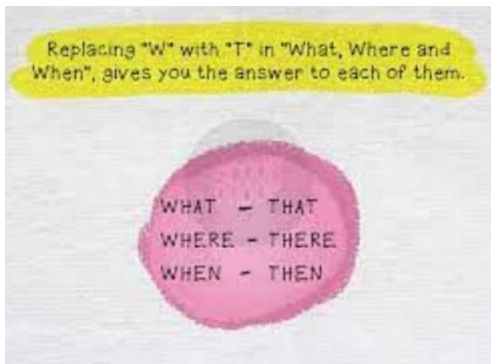
Should you want a more overarching role, many of our committees are looking for co-chairs. To learn more about these opportunities, go to the NIC/ElderCollege website and complete the Volunteer Information form. Thank you for your consideration



As you consider new ideas for the New Year, think about these:



“And that’s when you told her knitting is for old women?”

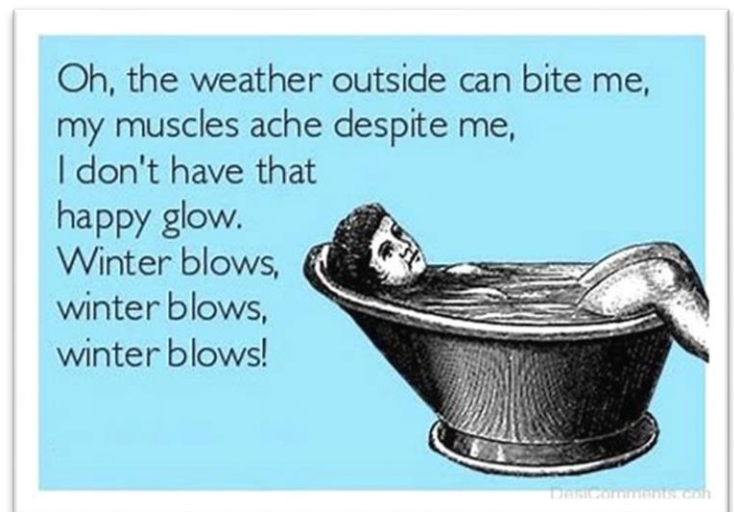


“One kind word can warm three winter months.” – Japanese Proverb



Who wants a blizzard?

“To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold.” Aristotle



Get out there – Vitamin D is still available with the winter sunshine!

