

August 2024

2024-25 CVEC EXECUTIVE

Chair:

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

Greetings!

By Barbara Bruederlin, CVEC Media Coordinator

As we crest the midpoint of summer and begin our glide toward a new semester, we are thrilled to bring you the latest Connector. To celebrate CVEC's upcoming 25th anniversary in September, we've given a little refresh to the Connector's appearance. Sharp-eyed readers may have already noticed that we are sporting a fresh new masthead, and we have made a few other changes as well. The Connector will be shifting publication from every two months to twice a year format. Starting with this edition, your brand-new Connector will be delivered to your inbox in early August and early December, to get you caught up on all the news before the start of each semester.

We also have a new editor at the helm. We are thrilled to introduce Pat Grappolini. Pat brings with her a wealth of experience in newsletter publication, and we look forward to working with her to bring you pertinent information, in-depth stories and the feel-good finale that will continue to conclude each edition. Sadly, though, we also bid farewell to our former Connector editor, Linda Hawk. Linda transformed the Connector into the professional-looking publication that it is today, making sure that we had something new and fresh to enjoy every couple of months. Linda set the bar very high, and we cannot thank her enough for all she has done for Comox Valley ElderCollege.



25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

By Don Axtell, CVEC Past Chair

On September 6, 2024 at 2 pm, Comox Valley ElderCollege will celebrate its 25th anniversary by holding an event in the Stan Hagen Theatre located in the Komoux Hall on the North Island College campus. Twenty-five years ago, a dedicated learning program for seniors was just an idea in the minds of a handful of forward-thinking people in the Comox Valley. Those founders, with determination, hard work and the support of North Island College, planted a seed that has grown into a thriving volunteer organization that inspires 1,000 seniors in the Comox Valley to pursue lifelong learning! In its first year in 1999 CVEC offered a modest four courses to its list of 100 members. By its 20th anniversary in 2019, CVEC had grown to over 1,000 members having a choice of over 60 courses!

During the difficult COVID years, when so many ElderColleges closed, CVEC continued to operate online using Zoom. Once the pandemic subsided, CVEC was ready to resume its traditional in-class courses with the added advantage of using Zoom where appropriate, and, as a result, membership has rebounded, and course offerings are back to pre-pandemic levels.

Along with the dedicated volunteers who have maintained and grown CVEC over the past 25 years, we acknowledge the many course conductors willing to share their knowledge and experience by offering classes for their fellow seniors.

We invite our CVEC members to attend the September 6, 2024 25th anniversary festivities! Following a few short speeches, we plan to take a large anniversary group photo. This will be followed by tea and coffee during which you can mingle with friends and enjoy a piece of anniversary cake!



When: 2 pm September 6, 2024 Where: Stan Hagen Theatre, North Island College

Become a Volunteer! *Chair, Volunteer Support, Gary Priestman*

It is through the work of its volunteers that Comox Valley ElderCollege has become a successful, vibrant and low-cost organization where learning for those 55+ is fun!

To learn more about volunteer opportunities and how to get involved, check the website or contact us at cvec.volunteers@nic.bc.ca

Curriculum Committee Update *by Jane Sterk, Chair, Curriculum*

The Curriculum Committee has worked hard to offer an exciting program of more than 60 courses for the fall 2024 term. Over half the courses are new. We know everyone can find courses of interest. We are grateful to the volunteer course leaders (CLs) who bring passion and expertise to their subjects and who work hard to make their courses interesting and informative.

We encourage members to attend the Information Forum on Saturday, September 14 at 9:30 am, either in person at the Stan Hagen Theatre or via Zoom, to hear the CLs talk about their courses. Surveys of members show repeatedly that people who attend the Info Forum decide to take courses they hadn't previously considered because of the presentations.

Courses start the first week of October and end early December and are from one to eight sessions. Most courses will be in person at the North Island College campus. A few are offered in the community or over Zoom.

Fall lecture series focuses on Island Life

There's something unique about living on an island. In this fall's six lectures we'll sample the enormous variety of Island Life, from the struggles of early miners to the challenges we face from fire today. We'll also celebrate some of the animals we share this amazing place with. Earth, sea, land, the past and the future—all are part of our Island Life.

Steller Sea Lions: Boom and Bust Lecturer: Andrew Trites Oct. 5: 10 am - noon

Ecological detective work has revealed some surprising findings to explain the rise of sea lions in British Columbia and their collapse in Alaska. Hear the latest from an expert in the field who has spent many years researching this phenomenon.



Geology of Vancouver Island Lecturer: Rafael Rachid Barbieri Bacha Oct. 19: 10 am - 12 noon

Join us for an exciting journey through time. This lecture covers aspects of the geological evolution of British Columbia with a focus on Vancouver Island. Investigate the multiple terranes accreted to ancestral North America, understand why there are fossils and seafloor rocks on Vancouver Island, how the Coastal Mountains and Rocky Mountains are a product of tectonic convergence, and how glaciers shaped this beautiful coast.

Community Preparedness & Resiliency to Wildfire Lecturers: Greg Boyachuk, Alan Berry, and Kimberly Kelly Oct. 26: 10 am - 12 noon

An overview of how the Coastal Fire Centre executes its mandate to deliver effective wildfire management on behalf of the Government of British Columbia, protect lives and values at risk, and encourage sustainable, healthy, and resilient ecosystems. The session will also include resources and information available to governments, First Nations, businesses, and individuals to help prepare communities for the potential of wildland-urban interface fire.



Killer Whales and Acoustic Noise Lecturer: Rianna Burnham Nov. 2: 10 am – 12 noon

How harmful is noise in the ocean? Marine life relies on acoustic senses for orientation, communication and searching for prey. Underwater noise pollution poses a threat to our marine wildlife. We will consider the changing soundscape of the Salish Sea and its impact on marine mammal species, with a focus on killer whales.



Humpback Whales – History & Future Lecturer: Felicia Vachon Nov. 23: 10 am – 12 noon

Once hunted to near extinction, humpback whales have made an incredible comeback in the waters around Vancouver Island. Organizations like MERS (Marine Education and Research Society) are working to ensure we understand and protect these gentle giants. Felicia will talk about the humpback's past and future—and the vital role we all play in keeping them safe.



A History of Cumberland Through Letters Lecturer: Caroline Kazdan Nov. 16: 10 am – 12 noon

Cumberland Museum & Archives houses a vast collection of archival documents and photographs that give us a glimpse into the daily lives of residents beginning in the late 19th century. Through an examination of these documents, we will discuss topics such as colonization, immigration, and labour history, and how Cumberland has evolved into a haven for nature enthusiasts.



Fall course preview

Watch your in-box for our course guide, which will be out in early September or pick one up at a library or a recreation/community centre. In the meantime, here's a sneak peak of some of the new courses we have planned to whet your appetite.

Five from Flanders (5 weeks online) Presenter: John Black



An exploration of painters of the Flemish Renaissance including the fascinating works of Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Hugo van der Goes, and Hieronymus Bosch.

The course deals with the innovative approaches of the place and time: the use of oils, glowing colours, decorative detail, portrayal of emotion, and fantasy representation. Participants will be encouraged to discuss their own reactions to the art presented.

Growing Your Family Tree (3 weeks on campus) Presenter: Ann Brown

Learn how to build branches and twigs and find your ancestors. This is a three-part beginner's course to help you start your tree online or on paper and find free and subscription resources. Session 1 gets you started, session 2 addresses your roadblocks, and in session 3 we make plans to continue. Family history research can become addictive and take up all the time you can spare!



Nutrition for Health as We Age (1 week on campus: Nov. 20, 10-11:20am.) Presenter: Erin Roman

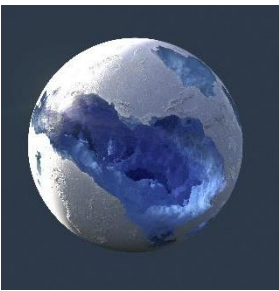
Do you ever wonder if you are getting enough nutrients for your overall health and well-being? Do you find yourself hungry, experiencing cravings, or struggling with digestive issues? In this course Erin Roman will answer your questions about nutrition, cravings and digestive issues, and provide nutrition tips to support your health with easy and practical strategies that you can incorporate right away into your daily living.

A Brief History of Beer (4 weeks on campus: Oct. 29 – Nov. 19, 4-6:50 pm.)
Presenter: Adam Chatburn

Beer has a fascinating history, and we'll look at how it has unfolded around the world as well as across Canada, BC, and Vancouver Island. Learn about the diverse collection of styles (lagers, dark ales, tart sour beers, etc.) in Germany and Eastern Europe. Turn your attention to classic beer styles and unusual serving techniques in Britain and Ireland that are now more popular than ever. And discover brewing for fun: what ingredients, equipment, and steps are needed to brew a drinkable beer. \$10 +/- collected by the course leader for tasting.



Finding Climate Solutions (5 weeks on campus: Oct. 28 - Dec. 2, 11:30am - 12:50pm.)



Joan Gillies and Celia Laval present this fast-paced, interactive, action-oriented workshop focused on what we can do personally and publicly about climate change. Highly interactive and collaborative, you'll learn from each other and build a sense of community during this light-filled journey through a dark subject.

Botany: The Story of Plants (7 weeks on campus) Presenter: Joel Kositsky

The course will begin with an exploration of the features that are necessary for life in general, and for its evolution. We will then elucidate the properties that characterize plants, and the features that have allowed them to significantly alter the Earth's environment by oxygenating the atmosphere. Finally, we will survey the main types of plants, and study their structure, composition, physiology, reproduction, and evolution.



So You Want to Write a Movie? (3 weeks on campus: Oct. 8 – 29, 4 to 5:50 pm.)

In this interactive course, Larry Bambrick presents an overview of the core concepts behind screenwriting, including developing an idea, the difference between plot and story, creating compelling characters, and writing strong dialogue. You'll analyze some popular movies and TV shows (including some the instructor has written). Participants will also have the opportunity to try their hand at writing scenes in a supportive, risk-free environment.



IS IT REALLY 25 YEARS? *By Elizabeth Fussell*

It was by chance we saw the ad inviting anyone interested in third-age learning to a meeting in the Stan Hagen Theatre. As I reflect on those 25 years, I realize how important that first meeting was and I also realized that many of us have a lot of very amusing stories; easier told than scripted.

In the beginning, it seemed like we were constantly running to catch up with both ourselves AND the increasing number of members wanting to sign up for courses. Our flagship course, “The Saturday Lecture Series,” was the result of panicking because we didn’t have enough regular courses to offer the growing number of members. We wanted to offer at least one class for every 20 members. The lecture series was our answer.

The first lecture series was “Age Makes a Difference” (Year of the Older Person); 109 members signed up. Five years later, 212 registered for our lecture series; a number which has continued. In the fall of 1999, 120 members registered in the other six courses, and by the winter of 2007 there were 417 registered in 31 eight-week courses! After that we started offering workshops and courses of different lengths. Registration numbers continued to soar.

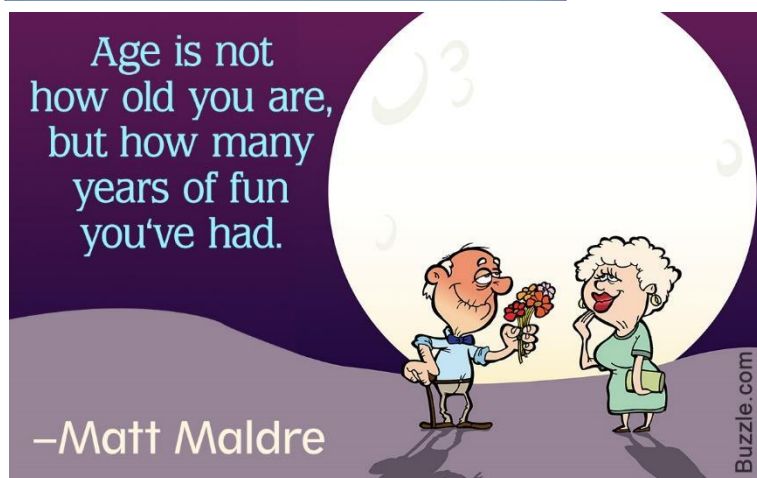
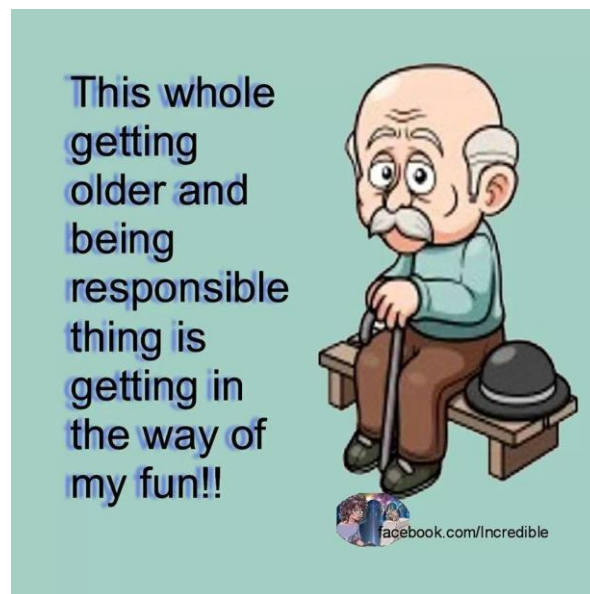
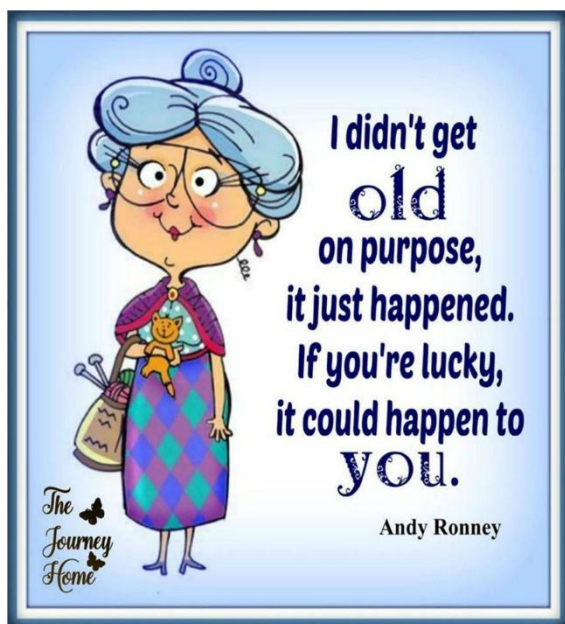
These were the years before handbooks. Slowly but surely each committee defined its focus, developed timelines and guidelines, and we emerged even stronger. Timetabling was a challenge. Once the NIC master timetable was complete, we were given a schedule of the empty rooms. By then, the Communications Committee was trying to get the final draft of the newsletter/calendar published, and we (the Curriculum Committee) were still trying to edit course write-ups and ensure course leaders were happy with their appointed time slot.

Basic computer courses were in big demand. In fall 1999, four of the six courses were computer classes. In the first eight years (16 semesters), we offered 72 basic computer courses plus another 26 “subject specific” courses on computers. These computer courses filled up very quickly, which led to some interesting and sometimes heated conversations during registration!

Registration days were a wonderful opportunity for socializing! Line ups started building before 8 am, and we finally had to hand out numbers to keep to “first come first served” as best we could! We provided coffee and doughnuts for people waiting; committee members took turns helping with the line up, which lined both sides of the entrance hall and out the door. (I have since learned that some folks actually went up to register on the Campbell River campus to ensure they could get into their chosen courses.) Appreciation teas were held at the golf club, the officers’ mess, and at the college. We handed out books as token thank you gifts until returning course leaders begged us to stop!

There is so much more to our story, but the strength of ElderCollege was and is volunteerism. No committee member or course leader is paid. Thanks to the cooperation and support of NIC, we continue to offer exciting and interesting opportunities for third-age learners.

Ode to being an “Elder”



"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Authenticity is the key to living a joyful life. Embrace who you are, let go of the need for approval, and watch happiness unfold." - Brené Brown