

SPRING 2026

27th CVEC AGM on May 9th, 2026

2025-26 CVEC EXECUTIVE

Chair:

Sheila Borman

Vice Chair:

Jane Sterk

Past Chair:

John North

Chair, Communications:

Solweig Williams

Chair, Curriculum: Chair,

Member Support:

Beth Regehr

Finance Officer:

Jane Sterk

Chair, Volunteer Support:

Gary Priestman

Liz Morris

Members-at-Large:

Pam Munroe & Dave Young

Co-Secretaries:

Jackie Greening & Mary

Gray

At our recent AGM, 40 members were in attendance to hear about the events of our successful 2025-26 year. Some of the information included the following Operations Report:

2025-26 saw an increase in ElderCollege membership to 1079 from last year's 951. We offered a record number of courses each term and 13 Saturday lectures with high attendance both in-person and on Zoom. We registered a 25% return rate for our 2025 Member Survey, with many positive responses for the work of ElderCollege. However, comments critical of the NIC registration process, and their website led us to engage with NIC during the fall to improve both systems.

In November, we signed a one-year Memorandum of Agreement with NIC, in which we were required to reimburse 65% of our gross revenues instead of 50% as in the past. However, for 2026-27, we will be required to reimburse \$50,000 from our revenues each term, as well as operating costs for room usage; this is an increase of +/-100% over this past year. In addition, NIC requires us to use Teams and will no longer support the use of Zoom for our digital courses. We cannot run off-campus courses, thus reducing our income.

To try to meet the requirements, we have to raise our membership fee from \$20 to \$25 and the cost of our courses and lectures will rise 50%. The future of our 27 year partnership is in question and we are exploring alternate solutions. However, CVEC will continue at NIC for the 2026-27 year.

The changes to the Bylaws passed as did the election of officers:

Chair - Sheila Borman, Vice-Chair - Jane Sterk, Members-At-Large - Pam Munroe, Dave Young. We acknowledged the following members for their service on the Executive Committee: Geoff Battimelli, Gary Priestman and Beth Regehr. There were a number of questions along with positive comments before the meeting adjourned at 11:00.

Results of Member Survey in April 2026|

Sheila Borman, Executive Committee Chair

Over the years in April, we have conducted member surveys to help us with strategic planning and improving the CVEC experience. Our return rate has been in the 25-28% range each time, and we really appreciate the information you provide. Most useful are the General Comments, which we have analyzed as follows:

85 responses were positive about ElderCollege (40% compared with 24% in 2025)

Totally worth it at double the cost.

Great variety of courses and presenters. I like the option of participating in the Saturday series and some courses via Zoom. Thank you, ElderCollege.

How could you improve on such a finely organized and volunteer-driven effort? Thank you so much. Keeps me connected to the community – a great institution.

I am always very pleased with the ElderCollege courses. Registering works well and you offer an incredibly wide variety of courses. Thank you.

43 responses were critical of the registration system and/or access to the website (20% compared with 17% in 2025)

The website is quite complicated to manoeuvre around.

As usual the registration process is difficult and instructions don't work as written.

Info seemed buried too deep within NIC website.

The level of security required to access the NIC registration is way too complicated for the use ElderCollege.

9 suggestions were given for possible courses and there were 27 comments indicating "nothing to add".

29 comments offered interesting suggestions or asked questions. Here are a few for which we can provide some answers.

I have completed end-of-course questionnaires but would like to see what other respondents have said, after the response window has closed. Is there a way to do that?

For privacy reasons, the course surveys are seen only by the Curriculum Committee and the course leaders to help make decisions for future courses.

Get the course list out earlier.

There are many steps involved in producing the course guide and the list of courses on the website. Most importantly, the scheduling of classroom space by NIC in conjunction with the course leaders' availability takes a number of negotiations before the final guide can be created and printed. If a class is popular, it would be great to pivot to a larger room, or add another course. In fact, this is something that has been done on many occasions. It depends on the availability of a larger room and whether the course leader is willing to add a greater number of students in the course. Adding another course is more difficult and the usual practice is to offer it again in the next term.

Wish more courses were offered in the late afternoon/evening/weekend.

Unfortunately, the after-hours security costs make this option more difficult for us to offer.

Elder College Supports Students through Endowment Funds - Sheila Borman, Executive Committee Chair

In our last newsletter we reported on the four bursaries provided to NIC students by Comox Valley ElderCollege. We have received heart-warming letters from two of our four bursary recipients, expressing their gratitude and giving each of their stories. Emma K writes: Previously, I completed my Health Care Aide certificate with North Island College in 2022 and thoroughly enjoy the meaningful care I provide working in a local Long Term Care facility. I am currently studying in the Practical Nursing program and plan to pursue acute care while simultaneously working in long-term care, as I love making connections with residents and helping people die with dignity. I also hope to pursue hospice care one day. I want to continuously educate myself as I upgrade to Registered Nurse eventually. I am passionate about providing quality, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed care. I am extremely grateful to receive this award and for the support that makes it possible to dedicate myself fully to my studies without financial stress.”

Cayman writes: “I worked at the Glacier View Lodge as a housekeeper and food service worker. I learned so much, especially from the residents about my love for the elderly. I want to care for the elderly and provide support especially to those struggling with Dementia. I found great pleasure from brightening up a resident’s day, whether that be from cleaning their room, serving them lunch, or simply having a conversation. Providing them support made me want to do as much as I can for them in the future, so I decided I want to become a doctor and, more specifically, a geriatric psychiatrist. I believe my work at Glacier View Lodge has propelled me into a future career as a psychiatrist.”

Our third recipient is a mature student from the United States on a student visa and enrolled in the Social Services Diploma Program. His goal is to improve the lives of senior citizens, hopefully in the Comox Valley, after achieving a Master of Social Work. The fourth is in her second-year of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, having worked in long-term care facilities as a Health Care Assistant. She hopes to stay in the valley upon graduation, working at the hospital, perhaps in maternity.

CVEC VOLUNTEERS – Gary Priestman, Chair Volunteer Support

ElderCollege is entirely volunteer-run. Many of our volunteers operate within diverse committees and do double or even triple duty. We would like to acknowledge and thank the many volunteers who keep things running smoothly:

Executive Committee: Geoff Battimelli, Sheila Borman, Tom Gooden, Mary Gray, Jackie Greening, Patricia Harvey, Terry Hooper, Liz Morris, Pam Munroe, John North, Gary Priestman, Beth Regehr, Jane Sterk, Solweig Williams, Dave Young

Curriculum Committee Volunteers: Larry Bambrick, Doug Barr, Bob Coyne, Mary Gray; Terry Hooper; Janess Iverson; Barbara Moscovich; Jane Sterk, Roger Taylor; Karin Terado; Al Tippett; Judy Village; Gerald Wendland.

Communications: Barbara Bruederlin, Elaine Graham, Pat Grappolini, Patricia Harvey, Frank Lo, Jill Lunde, Solweig Williams, Evelyn Keith.

Volunteer Support: Christine Burke, Jim Langridge, Leslie Langridge, David Martin, Sue Martin, Kathy Penner, Gary Priestman, Barb Smith

Member Support: Marj Adams, Gillian Andrews, Karen Blank, Tom Gooden, Joyce Gordon, Kathy Ihde, Janess Iverson, Anne Massey, Pat Peden, Heather Pitman, Beth Regehr, Sarah Savage, Rita Timberley

Strategic Planning Working Group: Geoff Battimelli; Sheila Borman; Martha Gerow; Terry Hooper; Liz Morris; Pam Munroe

IT Support Group: John Black, Frank Blues, Brad Champagne, Terry Hooper, Roger Taylor

Governance Documentation Working Group: John North, Beth Regehr

MEET SOME CVEC COURSE LEADERS!

Pat Grappolini, Connector Editor

There were more than sixty courses offered in our Winter Semester. While a few course leaders presented more than one course, the majority of the course leaders led one single class. This means that there are more than fifty course leaders. It would be impossible for one person to take all of these courses, and meet all of the instructors, and so the Communications Committee decided to introduce just a few of them in a bit more detail than their published bios. More such introductions are planned for future editions of the Connector.

Janice Hayward

A vibrant woman, passionate about her subject, Janice Hayward taught photography composition for the first time in March (*From Snapshots to Stunners*) - with very positive reviews. "A photographer, writer,... sailor, lover of the sea", as she describes herself, Janice had been approached by a friend who thought that she might enjoy sharing her gifts with other seniors.

Her philosophy is simple - anyone can take a photo. Knowing how to compose your shot makes the difference between a good shot and a better one. But the most important thing is to get out there and do it.

But, you may say, I have mobility challenges. Perhaps I am in a wheelchair most of the time. How can I be a photographer? Notice what is near you - a flower on your balcony, a hummingbird coming close to a window - anything can become your subject. Adjust your expectations. Make the decision to be involved in life. Photography can open possibilities.

What is the best camera to use? Janice has been asked. The best one is the one that you will feel comfortable handling and use to get involved in taking photos. If your hands shake with a bulky camera, try your cellphone – technology has made amazing strides here. Whatever tool (camera or cellphone) feels good - get out and use it

Taking photographs keeps you actively engaged in life, says Janice. Your brain actively makes choices in content and composition. Being outdoors taking photos engages you in nature. If you are with a group taking photos, socialization becomes part of the process and helps keep all of you active and alive. Photography could become your purpose in life.

Besides teaching composition, Janice would like to encourage her students to learn how to critique each others' photographs. In the process they will begin to understand even better the rules of composition and art as they apply to photography.

Oliver Clarke

Oliver Clarke teaches two courses with CVEC - *Maintaining Your Singing Voice* (vocal training for seniors) and *Universal Devotional Chanting*. He has been teaching these courses for about ten years. His initiation into teaching with CVEC came about when one of his choir members encouraged him to offer a course with ElderCollege.

Oliver has been singing most of his life, beginning with church choirs as a teen. His voice, at 80, is still strong, rich, melodious - even just speaking. Oliver's vocal training has included classical, operatic and chanting from a variety of church experiences, including Catholic, Baptist, Unitarian, B' Hai, Buddhist and Hindu. Some of his most memorable teaching encounters have included an all-Black Baptist church in California, a Benedictine priest and Tibetan Buddhist monks. He is currently one of the lead Cantors at a local Catholic church.

Oliver has been a chant leader since 2000 when he led chanting at retreats in California for Gangaji, an enlightened teacher, for about three years. He drew a universal chanting group together in 2003 for the purpose of cutting a CD, "Circle of Souls". That group, Mystic Valley Voices, is still gathering several times each year for special events.

When COVID interrupted live choir experiences, Oliver began and still continues hosting a weekly devotional chanting gathering on ZOOM. If you value your voice, Oliver's course would be a great place to begin.

Joanne Dunderdale

Joanne Dunderdale presented a new one-week seminar called *Advance Health Care Planning*. Joanne is a retired RN with many years experience in clinical nursing, teaching and health-care management. She has worked with current patient consent legislation, has volunteered with Hospices and facilitated many workshops to support individuals and groups in planning for their future health care.

Joanne had presented this course previously through Mid-Island ElderCollege and was asked to repeat it with Comox Valley ElderCollege as one of several reciprocal courses.

Her topic is one which most of us have never contemplated, but as she assured me, we all should. Much as we make plans for our financial future or our personal estate, this is something no one should skip.

What happens when someone has a health crisis and cannot speak for themselves? Who makes decisions about their future care? Does this person know you well enough – what is important to you, your values, how you would want to be treated – to make those decisions for you? Do they know what you think represents your best quality of life?

Joanne insists that we ourselves should be talking about those topics ahead of time with our loved ones – although this is one of the most difficult subjects to discuss. Her course approaches the process of thinking through the conversations we should be having with our family members. End of life decisions, steps to take in case of an emergency medical intervention and other similar topics are covered. Joanne hopes to repeat her class again with Comox Valley ElderCollege in the autumn session.

Ted Trueman

Ted Trueman teaches two courses - *Geology & Vancouver Island* and *Uranium & Nuclear Power*. He originally got involved with CVEC about ten years ago when a friend and CVEC member suggested that he offer a geology course. Ted is a geologist with degrees from UBC and Queen's. For Ted, geology offers a stimulating science that never ends. He has had a rewarding career in mineral exploration and production, having worked with private corporations and as a consultant throughout Canada and in about 40 other countries.

His geology course covers many aspects of the science, including plate tectonics, paleontology, mass extinctions, earthquakes, ore deposits, and how Vancouver Island came to be.

Ted's interest and experience in uranium and nuclear energy offers him the opportunity to present the facts and help calm fears about a subject that terrifies many of us. Ted's course presents a history of commercial nuclear power, comparing it to other methods of electricity generation, showing this method to be clean and safe.

Ted feels that there is a need for greater scientific understanding in our society, and this is but one step towards that end. Ted feels that it is gratifying to be able to give something back and also stay in tune with scientific developments.

Jane Kerr

Meet Jane Kerr, who has presented *Introduction to Home Gardening* for the past two years, after a request from Judy Village, a CVEC member.

Jane has been a gardener almost all her life, beginning with helping out her grandparents and having her own small vegetable plot. She learned by doing - whether in the dry conditions of Calgary or the much moister reality in the Comox Valley. Jane stated that one of the biggest challenges of gardening here is understanding which plants will thrive in wet soil conditions without rotting out. Researching what kind of soil is in your garden - whether heavy clay or sandy can make the difference between success and failure in gardening. Well-drained soil is crucial!

Jane's favourite aspect of gardening is the meditation aspect of being at one with nature - especially while weeding. Just being outside, being physically active and enjoying the experience of growing things makes it all worthwhile.

Jane is a past Director of the Calgary and Comox Valley Horticultural Societies and is also a past Director of the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association.

Since retiring, Jane worked towards and successfully completed her certificated Master Gardener designation from VIU. Since she graduated, the number of Master Gardeners locally has increased from 4 to 9 active CMG and 11 new interns.

There are several sources of information for inquiring gardeners locally - the Vancouver Island regional library offers webinars, most local nurseries have well-qualified gardeners who can answer questions, and there is a garden advice line through the Milner Gardens in Qualicum. This resource is owned by VIU, with certified Master Gardeners providing answers to questions. Happy Gardening!

Marvin Haave

Marvin Haave facilitates *Writers' Workshop*. He has had a career in adult education as a minister, university lecturer, international development officer, and counsellor. He writes memoir, poetry, essays, and dreams, and is committed to lifelong learning.

Marvin was born on a farm in Saskatchewan, where he spent his first five years. His family then moved to Vancouver, and after WW2, to North Surrey. Marvin attended UBC and then set off to Saskatoon to study Theology. For the next forty years, he ministered in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, enjoying the sunshine, and time with friends, but not the harsh wintery weather.

Marvin moved back to the milder climate and family connections near Comox when he retired. In 2003 he registered for a writers workshop begun by Jan Bush. One year later she became seriously ill and asked him to complete the class. By the next year she died and Marvin inherited the class. For more than twenty years (forty sessions), Marvin has continued the workshop and fully intends to stay on. Going on 89 and still filled with curiosity for learning new things, Marvin embodies the goals of ElderCollege.

Mike Yip

Mike Yip teaches *Vancouver Island Birds*. He is a retired elementary school teacher who began birding and bird photography in 2003. Since then, he has been active in educating the public about Vancouver Island birds with his articles, books and PowerPoint presentations. Mike was invited to do bird presentations by past course coordinators, about fifteen years ago. Butterfly presentations came next.

Mike lives in Nanoose Bay but developed a connection with the Comox Valley while teaching at Village Park (Comox) in 1968. Inspired by friends to move to the Arctic, Mike taught for six years in Inuvik, then one year in Vancouver, and finally 25 years in Parksville. In all, he taught elementary school for seven years, and then then moved to middle, secondary, and special needs classrooms.

In 2003, after spotting a strange-looking duck, he became obsessed with birds and self-published his first bird book in 2005. He wrote a bird column for the *NORTH ISLANDER* from 2005 until 2015 when it folded. About ten years ago, Mike noted a decline in the numbers of birds to be observed, and became interested in butterflies, observing that they were rare and hard to find. So began his fascination with butterflies.

Because of his notoriety as a birder, photographer, author, and columnist, he was invited to speak at many clubs and events from Victoria to Cortes Island, and that also included presentations for the Profession Photography and Access courses at NIC. Since 2005 he has self-published six books about birds and one about butterflies.

SPRING IS GROWING SEASON – LET’S ALL GROW!

I can't help but think that people today would be much happier if they listened to 70s music more often



"The only way to avoid criticism is to do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing." - Aristotle

DID YOU KNOW?

174 years ago, Roget's Thesaurus was first published. And for that I am truly - [flip flip flip] - "grateful; thankful; affording pleasure or comfort; fulfilled; appreciative; obliged; down with that; sweet on it; fist bump-ready; engorged with the sweet nectar of gratification in a small cabin in Saskatchewan where the only sound is the bugling of the elk."

EVER WONDER...

Why is 'abbreviated' such a long word?

Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavoring, and dish washing liquid made with real lemons?

Why isn't there mouse-flavoured cat food?

Eggs are fantastic for a fitness diet. If you don't like the taste, just add cocoa, flour, sugar butter, baking powder, and cook at 350 for 30 minutes.

I bought a little bag of air today. The company that made it was kind enough to put in a few potato chips too.

SENIOR'S TEXTING CODE:

BMH- Broke My Hip	OMMR- On My Massage Recliner
TOT- Texting On Toilet	ROFLACGU- Rolling On The Floor Laughing, Can't Get Up
LOL- Little Old Lady	TTML- Talk To Me Louder
LMDO- Laughing My Dentures Out	BTW- Bring The Wheelchair
DWI- Driving While Incontinent	ATD- At The Doctors
FWIW- Forgot Where I Was	BYOT- Bring Your Own Teeth
CBM- Covered By Medicare	WTFA- Wet The Furniture Again
HGBM- Had Good Bowel Movement	WNWO- Walker Needs Wheel Oil
WAITT- Who Am I Talking To?	OMSG- Oh My! Sorry, Gas.
BFF- Best Friend's Funeral	GGPBL- Gotta Go, Pacemaker Battery Low
GHA- Got Heartburn Again	FMI- Found My Insulin
IMHO- Is My Hearing-Aid On?	BFF- Best Friend Fell



If you don't have a sense of humour, you probably don't have any sense at all.

Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail.

KEEP SMILING!