



# COURSE PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

## WINTER 2026 SESSION

### **Mali Bain - Refine & Release Your Work**

Mali is a former high school teacher, who has also worked in university, philanthropic, and non-profit settings. She loves seeing new books enter the world. She is a certified guided autobiography facilitator and founder of NextGen Story: Custom Publishing.

### **Dean Bauche - Keys to Artful Living and How We Rediscover Beauty**

Dean is a professional artist, consultant, curator, and educator. He was the founding director of the Allen Sapp Gallery in Saskatchewan and was director of galleries for the City of North Battleford. His award-winning educational publications are recommended by Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta Learning. Dean is known for his evocative portraits in acrylic, oil, watercolour and encaustic. His work can be found across Canada including, in the collection of former Prime Minister John Turner.

### **John Biehl - Scenic Hikes 2**

John likes to hike in the local forests and wishes to introduce others to these same hikes. He has been a scenic hikes leader since 2023.

### **John Black - Ideas with Legs 3: The Aether and 19th Century French Painting**

John taught in the interdisciplinary Liberal Studies BA program at VIU for 26 years, thus complementing his training in philosophy with exposure to the history of ideas as revealed in a wide range of academic and creative approaches. He has taught art history courses for CVEC for several years.

### **Julie Blais - Introduction to Meditation**

Julie started to meditate in 2001 at a monastery in Thailand and ordained as a nun for seven months. Since then, she has completed many retreats (including a three-month silent retreat). She has practiced many different types of meditation and undertaken many trainings to develop her skills as a meditation teacher and mentor. Julie is a former nurse and is currently a massage provider and a certified health coach.

### **Ann Brown – Growing Your Family Tree**

Ann has been researching families for more than 20 years. She started with a box of family documents and has learned, sometimes the hard way, how to build and validate family history. It has led her to some exciting stories, some sad

discoveries, and some travel to meet family she didn't know she had.

### **Linda Brune - Coming of Age on Film**

Linda has lived in Comox since 2011, doing volunteer work and working with the Comox Valley Transition Society until retiring a few years ago. She's always enjoyed watching movies and discussing them afterward and is pleased to be helping with the review and selection of films for this course.

### **Lyle Carlstrom - Role of the Executor**

Lyle has been a member of the Canadian Bar Association since 1983 and is a strong supporter of public legal education. He has taught with Athabasca University, Fairview College, Grande Prairie Regional College, the Alberta Real Estate Association, the Council for Lifelong Learning and the Rural Learning Network and helped create The Estate & Financial Planning Institute and FEP Institute Inc. He has given several courses for ElderCollege.

### **Lori Carpenter - Leadership, Learning and Life**

Lori has been an educator for the past 38 years, 30 of which were as a school leader. She was a principal in the Comox Valley, Cairo, Egypt, Kuwait, and Oman. She holds a Bachelor of Science from UBC, a master's degree from Gonzaga University and a doctoral degree from Nova Southeastern. Educational leadership is her passion.

### **Brian Charlton - Coming of Age on Film**

Brian has been a lifelong film lover and part of the ElderCollege film class since 2013. A retired postal worker, he became active in the Comox Valley community soon after moving here in 2002. His activities have ranged from being on the boards of the Cumberland Museum and the Art Gallery to helping organize Mayworks and Miners Memorial.

### **Oliver Clarke – Maintaining Your Singing Voice and Universal Devotional Chanting**

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

### **Chris Cottle - Stars, Time and the Cold War**

Chris was in the Royal Canadian Navy in the 1970s/80s and was trained as a weapons officer and later as a navigation officer. He did ocean navigation during the Cold War years using a sextant and accurate clocks when GPS was only an idea.

### **Robert Crosby - Chess - The Game of Life!**

Born on the prairies, raised on the west coast, Robert has lived all over Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. He received a master's degree in theology in Saskatoon, ministered in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and B.C. and has enjoyed volunteer work in all these places. Robert has been playing chess since he was 12 and has played in tournaments both locally and internationally. He brings a fun and refreshing approach to the game of chess.

### **Gordon Dann – I Hate Math**

Gordon is a retired telecom worker. He worked for 36 years in a plant as a splicer and later in engineering. He was interested in electronics at a young age and worked on airplane electronics and radios for small planes. He has built and flown two airplanes. He has always been interested in math and physics and returned to college after retirement.

### **Nancy Dawes - Beginner Zentangle Drawing 1 and 2**

Nancy is a Certified Zentangle Teacher™ (CZT) who focuses on helping students draw mindfully. She became certified to teach Zentangle in 2013. Nancy enjoys designing classes to help students along their own art journey. Her classes in Courtenay, British Columbia, on Zoom, and around North America include Zentangle drawing, eco-printing, book making, Celtic Knot drawing, and mixed media techniques.

### **James Derry - Cook Better, Taste Better**

Cooking was James' last career before retirement. He is a Red Seal chef, a member of the Canadian Culinary Federation and a board member for seven years of the local branch (NVICA). James was a chef for seven years at Berwick Comox and a teaching chef for the Canadian Mental Health Association Peppermill program for eight years. He also ran a B&B for 10 years.

### **JoAnn Dunderdale - Advance Health-care Planning**

JoAnn is a retired RN with more than 37 years experience in clinical nursing, teaching and health-care management. She has experience working with current patient consent legislation. She volunteered with Oceanside Hospice and facilitated many workshops to support individuals and groups to plan for their future health care.

### **Alan Freeland - History's Artful Pets and The East India Co. 1600-1874**

Alan is a fugitive from the world of IT where he spent his career. Post retirement he spends his time discovering the world of art and history and sharing his newfound knowledge with others. Alan gives talks for the u3a Farnham Art History and World History Groups, for u3a Regional and National events and later-life learning groups in Canada.

### **Stewart Goodings - Bureaucrat's Confessions**

Stewart was a career civil servant for 40 years, in both Ottawa and Victoria. He started as a researcher and ended up as an assistant deputy minister in provincial and federal governments. He worked for Liberal, Progressive Conservative, and Social Credit administrations. In retirement he has coached federal managers to prepare for executive interviews. He is also the author of a post-Cold War novel set in Russia.

### **Ted Grainger - Scenic Hikes 1**

Ted is a BC native who has done surveying and worked for towboat companies as well as BC Ferries. He enjoys forest walking and enjoys introducing ElderCollege participants to the various forest trails this region is so blessed with. Camaraderie, exercise (moderate) and contemplation of nature are the purposes of scenic hikes.

### **Giorgio Grappolini - Energy Production**

Giorgio is a chemical engineer with 40 plus years experience in design, operations and development of legislation in nuclear and oil refining industries.

### **Marvin Haave - Writers' Workshop**

Marvin 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.

### **Sharon Harris - A Famous Art Forger**

Sharon had a career in education as a teacher and administrator while she simultaneously pursued a successful career as a fine-arts photographer. Since retiring she has been actively involved in the Academy for Lifelong Learning Toronto, where she has facilitated numerous courses and has participated in the administration of the organization for many years. Sharon's personal interests involve most of the arts; however, she is insatiably curious about almost all subjects.

### **Leon Hawrylenko - Living Consciously**

Living consciously has been Leon's passion from an early age, including daily practice of meditation. He worked as a psychotherapist in the Vancouver area for 30 years and ran a weekly group on living consciously. In 2017 he moved to the Comox Valley, drawn by the beauty of the outdoors here. He loves hiking, biking, swimming and kayaking. Latin dancing has also been a passion of his for many years.

### **Janice Hayward - From Snapshots to Stunners**

Photographer. Writer. Mother. Grandmother. Daughter of a logger. Dog lover. Sailor. Lover of the sea. Beach walker. Curious. Adventurous. Vancouver Island gal. Doer. Leader. Follower. Outdoor is the best place to be. Bluewater cruiser. Interviewer. Student. Teacher. Compassionate. Never-say-never. Cup half full. Of course, I will help you. Love

technology. Hate technology. Dreamer. Traveller. Published. Shoots from the heart. Loves to laugh. Future looks bright. Pay it forward.

**Terry Hooper - Cloud Drives: Lifting the Fog, Repel Hacks, Hoaxes, Scams, and Assistive Listening in Theatre**

With a 40-year background in IT, and dozens of years assisting many people in IT-related tasks, Terry looks forward to sharing his wide set of experience and expertise to inform/improve other peoples' technology experiences.

**Jane Kerr - Intro to Home Gardening**

Jane's greatest accomplishment as a young gardener was to grow a small watermelon. Of course, the frost got it before it was ripe (this was the Prairies after all) but Jane was hooked. Many decades later, plants still provide Jane with a sense of well-being and nourish her body and soul. Jane is a past director of the Calgary Horticultural Society, the Comox Valley Horticultural Society and the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners.

**Joel Kositsky – Mammals and Topics in Ornithology**

Joel received his MIT degree in physics, though his expertise and interests span many sciences: particularly biology and astronomy. After a successful science career, mostly researching radar applications, he now enjoys organizing and presenting courses in many scientific fields, designing them for the interested layperson, usually with only little mathematics. His courses focus on imparting a general understanding of the subject, rather than on esoteric details that would require prerequisites.

**Karen Langenmaier - Listen/Talk Live Long Prosper**

Karen is a retired speech and language pathologist who lives in the Comox Valley. Her background is in communication skills, language development and improving speech skills.

**Ian McIntyre - Writers' Workshop**

Ian moved to the Comox Valley in 2016 after a full career in the military and in the field of aviation training and simulation. After joining the Writers' Workshop in fall 2016, he was asked to run a new class in winter 2017 to meet increased demand and has been doing so since then.

**Linda McLean - Author & Podcaster – Who Knew?**

Linda settled in the valley in 1982. In the workforce she was a teacher, legal secretary, entrepreneur, Rotarian and continues as an active volunteer. She created and facilitated a popular course, *Be Kind To Those You Leave Behind*, first offered in 2013 at ElderCollege. She recently self-published her memoir, *Route 1-75* and has recorded her stories on a podcast, *My 75-Year Road Trip*.

**Russell McNeil - Ideas with Legs 3: The Aether**

A physicist, Russell taught in the interdisciplinary Liberal Studies BA program at VIU for many years, thus complementing his disciplinary training with exposure to the history of ideas as revealed in a wide range of academic and creative approaches.

**Jim Moscovich – Democracy: An Athenian Dream?**

Jim is a retired professor of classics at Western University in Ontario with a specialty in Greek and Roman history and mythology. Over the past 20 years, Jim has given a variety of ElderCollege lectures and courses in his field of study of classics and in his retirement passion of cryptic crosswords.

**Susan Moscovich - Seniors Travel the Cyberworld**

Susan is a retired pharmaceutical sales rep. She and her husband came to Campbell River in 2001. For 14 years, they founded and ran a music scholarship for voice and piano and an art scholarship at NIC. She is involved in the arts community founding Friends of the CR Art Gallery. She has twice been president of her rotary club and is currently its public image director.

**Frank Nicholson - Assassination in History**

Frank has a PhD in history from the University of Toronto and has been active in later-life learning since retiring 10 years ago. He has co-facilitated two dozen history study groups, including this one, for CVEC "sister" organizations in Canada and the UK.

**Mick O'Keefe - Condo Maintenance Committee**

Mick is an Australian Canadian who held senior business manager and directorship positions as well as consultant roles from 1972 to 2016. His areas of expertise include IT systems design and development, skills training development and delivery and 19 years serving on strata councils. He is the co-convenor of the BC not-for-profit society Collaborative Condos Components Knowledgebase Association, which has developed an array of online toolsets for strata property knowledgebase and maintenance programming by volunteer owners, strata councils and appointed committees.

**Nathanial Lenard Paisley - Estate & Probate Planning**

Nathan is co-owner of Nathina Financial Services and a financial planner. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in international business and has lived and studied abroad in Chile, Spain, Norway, and Austria. Born and raised in the Comox Valley, Nathan combines local understanding with global experience to help students master probate bypass strategies and effective wealth preservation techniques.

**Shawn Peters - Graceful Aging & Self-Care and Natural Dementia Prevention**

Shawn Peters is a naturopathic doctor, certified in acupuncture, prescribing, and IV therapy. He also has a keen interest in helping those with mood and mental health

challenges, skin conditions, and men's health concerns. Shawn believes in engaging people in their own health, while listening to their concerns as an individual. He knows that support, patience, and empowerment are crucial to helping people feel better.

#### **Sandra Petrie - Who Knew Writing Could Be Fun**

Sandra came to Canada in 1962 having trained as a teacher in Scotland. She has worked in both public and private schools in Canada and Scotland. Since retirement she has taught this course at ElderCollege.

#### **Jenny Porter - How to Prevent Dementia**

Jenny, a registered nurse working in a long-term care facility and hospice, believes that health is not at the doctor's office, hospitals, but rather in people's homes and communities. She has been studying "how to prevent dementia" for five years and has conducted many presentations that were well received. She is passionate about the topic and strongly believes the best cure for dementia is through prevention and public education.

#### **Gary Priestman - Bridge: Intermediate Bidding; Bridge: Modern Bidding Intro; and Bridge: Play the Hand**

Gary is a Silver Life Master in the American Contract Bridge League who has taught these courses for many years.

#### **Cal Reeks - Stock Chart Analysis**

Cal is a graduate of Online Trading Academy (a seven-day intensive live-in classroom). He has been doing online trading from home since 2006. Cal has taught ElderCollege courses several times in Nelson and more recently in Campbell River.

#### **Kelley Romeril - Reimagining Seniors Care**

Kelley is the director of site operations at Providence Living. She oversees all non-clinical operations. Her priority is to ensure each resident has a day well lived and each team member has a day well worked.

#### **Peter Shostak - Studio Visit 1 and 2**

Peter began his career in 1969 teaching art education at the University of Victoria. After 10 years, he left teaching to pursue a full-time career as an artist. Peter's art is inspired by his Ukrainian heritage and his life growing up on a farm in eastern Alberta. In 2003 Peter received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for his contribution to Canadian art.

#### **Heather Soos - Introduction to Drawing**

Heather is a self-taught wildlife artist, working in several mediums including acrylic, oil and scratchboard. She has been creating fine art paintings of animals and birds, along with other subjects, for over 35 years. Heather works in detail to create paintings with high realism. She shows her work locally

and internationally and is a signature member of the Society of Animal Artists, an international organization of animal painters and sculptors.

#### **John Sterk - Dutch History to 1830 and Dutch Monarchy After 1830**

John practiced corporate and commercial law in Edmonton. He also taught real estate law in the Faculty of Law, UofA and is the author of a legal text. With a BA, an LLB, and an MA in Dutch History, he is also a Kings Counsel and a former president of the Canadian Bar Association in Alberta. Recently, he taught Canadian Business Law at University Canada West.

#### **Lucas Stiefvater - Mindfulness Meditation**

Lucas was introduced to meditation in 2004 while vacationing in India. He found an inner contentment, joy and happiness he had been seeking all his life. This created a passion to share his practice with others. He has shared many meditation sessions to schools, groups, and spiritual centres.

#### **Roger Taylor - Cloud Drives: Lifting the Fog**

Roger has 30 years of IT experience, ranging from supporting apps on mainframes, via hardware and software support of PCs, to training clients on specialized software for the oil and gas industry.

#### **Ted Trueman - Geology & Vancouver Island and Uranium & Nuclear Power**

Ted is a geologist with degrees from UBC and Queen's. He's had a rewarding career in mineral exploration and production, having worked throughout Canada and in numerous other countries.

#### **Allan Vonkeman - Astrology Charts and Journey into the Mystical**

Allan is a retired police officer whose journey of healing and transformation engaged many modalities and spiritual traditions. He has collected teachings and technologies in the quest for purpose, compassion, and healing. These experiences provided sharable tools to gift in service to others. He is an accredited coach, a healer, a student of the ancient wisdom traditions, an astrologer, and an Elder and pipe carrier in the Cree tradition.

#### **Thierry Vrain – Biofilia and Life as We Know It**

Thierry is a retired soil biologist and genetic engineer who spent his research career with the Department of Agriculture in Canada. He led a research group of 40 professionals in biotechnology, was the vice president and president of national and international associations of soil biologists, and an associate editor of several scientific journals in Europe and

the USA. He now lives and works in the botanical garden in Royston.

**Pat Wickware - Colour is Magic**

Pat has been in the field of design for over 40 years. She completed her Interior Design at Ryerson in Toronto and taught night courses at Camosun and Malaspina colleges. She continues to give consultations at homes and offices.

**Valerie Wiens - Age in Place**

Valerie has a wide range of RN experience including ER, community, hospice and instructor. Caregiving for her parents for four years added a new layer to her understanding and she wrote *What do we do about Mom?* She is the owner of Keystone Eldercare Solutions, which offers BC-wide consultations and local care.

**Alpha Woodward - Music and Your Brain Mike Yip**

Alpha holds a PhD and a MTA and is a certified music therapist whose clinical work with seniors centres around listening, and our relationship to our environment. She has directed music therapy trainings in higher education in Ireland, Canada and the USA and is a featured speaker at conferences.

**Mike Yip - Vancouver Island Birds**

Mike is a retired 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.