



COMOX VALLEY

ElderCollege Connector

DECEMBER 2020

Greetings from the Chair

During the last holiday season we had no idea what 2020 had in store for us. At that time families were getting together and dreams for next year's excursions were being shared. We had heard that something was afoot in China but that was where previous bugs had arisen and the effect of those scares had been minimized before they came to our shores.

By March everything changed, the pandemic was here and with a vengeance. Our streets went silent, shops closed, and certain necessities became scarce. Then things changed; a new spirit arose in the community. We politely kept a distance when we passed in the street, face masks in stores became more common, and banging of pot and pans was heard in support of our frontline health workers.

Our ElderCollege volunteers got down to work, kept in touch with members, and organized a pilot project offering courses through Zoom. The response was gratifying, way beyond our expectation. We learned a lot and will be offering an enlarged course list in the winter semester. We know that this holiday season will be different and contact with many of our friends and families will be through means like cards and phone calls with the added personal contact using FaceTime and Zoom.

We wish all of you a safe and cheerful holiday season and hope you continue learning with ElderCollege in the New Year.

Happy holidays!

Don Axtell



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Winter Courses Preview

As we look towards the new year, let's resolve to stay active both physically and mentally. ElderCollege courses are a great way to keep our brains in shape. Here are some of the offerings that are coming our way soon (or should that be Zoom?).

Beautiful & Bizarre Ceremonies **Instructor: Dianne Volrich**
Assistant: Roland Semjanovs

Through images and videos, we'll view the rites of passage, marriages, a massive tomato fight, ritual body piercings, controversial baby jumping, and mythological creatures. Bizarre includes Monty Python and Carol Burnett. Duration: 2 weeks.



Forage Fish on our Beaches **Instructors: Virginia East and Jennifer Sutherst**

Forage fish play a vital role in the aquatic ecosystem as a primary food source for salmon and orcas. Little is known about forage fish species (Pacific sand lance and surf smelt). Join Project Watershed and partner groups to learn about important forage fish studies in our region. Duration: 2 weeks.



Foundations of Contentment **Instructor: Leon Hawrylenko**

Longing to experience inner peace and contentment? This largely experiential course uses simple mindfulness practices to turn within to the deeper reaches of our being. Examine seven foundational elements: inner peace; self awareness; gratitude; inner strength; choice; and well-being support. Duration: 8 weeks.



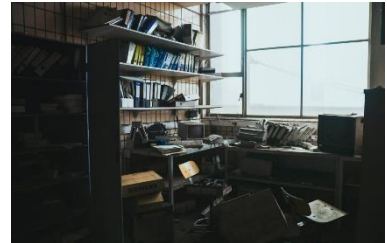
History of the Comox Valley **Instructor: Christine Dickinson**

An overview of the history of the Comox Valley during the 19th and 20th centuries, including early settlement, agriculture, forestry, military, and social history. We will also learn about many colourful characters. Duration: 8 weeks.



How to Organize Your "Stuff" **Instructor: Myrna Logan**

Explore your relationship with "stuff" and ways to sort it out and possibly let go of some of it. As well as downsizing, learn what to do with old love letters, collections, photos, and unwanted gifts. Duration: 4 weeks.



Investing Rules of the Road **Instructor: Aaron Macluskie**

Learn 10 principles for sound investing and discusses how to identify and avoid common investment mistakes. The class begins with a current overview of market performance covering the day and week of the course. Duration: 1 week.



Medical Overdiagnosis **Instructor: David Arnold**

In today's medicine, there is a lot of diagnosis and even more treatment, often of dubious value. Learn what doctors do and why they need to do it, the influence of statistics, the role played by academic institutions, and the Jekyll-and-Hyde personality of the pharmaceutical industry. Duration: 4 weeks.



Modern Chinese Legal System **Instructor: Clive Ansley**

The course covers the Republican Era (1911 to 1949), Soviet Era (1949 to 1958), Mao Era (1958 to 1976), and Westernization (1979 to present). Topics include the current human rights situation, the function of Chinese "courts," and involuntary organ harvesting as well as the impact of China's legal system on Canadian domestic and foreign policy. Duration: 8 weeks.



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Strata Basics **Instructor: Michael Naish**
Assistant: Marguerite Ancell

Thinking of buying, or already a strata owner? This course will guide you through the things you need to know, the questions you need to ask, and where to find answers. Duration: 5 weeks.



Getting your Creative Juices Flowing

ElderCollege courses can educate; they can entertain; they can provoke thought. Sometimes they inspire. CVEC member Geoff Battimelli enrolled in the fall Writers' Workshop and shared his poem, *The Salmon*, which is a tribute to these magnificent migratory creatures and their importance to the Comox Valley.



The Salmon

By Geoff Battimelli

I've spent over three years swimming free in the seas
Escaping the Orca avoiding disease
Through all of this strife
I've had fun, enjoyed life
While Running from seals
Or Deceiving those reels
Not taking the bait and avoiding the fate
Of becoming the food that the fishermen ate
After food I have chased or just swimming for fun

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I know that someday I'll head home to that run
Home to the river where once I was born
My senses say go but my body is torn
I'll be challenged to swim by the end of the day
Cross lakes and up rivers where waterfall spray
And Knowing that someday
When I'm done with such play
Just as most beings do
I'll donate my DNA
At the end of my journey all tattered and torn
My body once silvery now blackened and worn
I await nature's fate and I'm happy to say
That the young ones who swim out
May come back here one day

Introducing the Curriculum Committee

Our Comox Valley ElderCollege is an amazing volunteer-run institution. Amazing because of the wide scope of volunteers, the breadth of courses and lectures, and the huge number of mature folks who participate in the offerings. It has been heard said that some retirees choose to move to the Valley in retirement because of ElderCollege's excellent reputation.

So, who are these wonderful volunteers? We got to know our individual executive board members in previous issues of the Connector and now it is time to recognize committees, beginning with the heart of ElderCollege, the Curriculum Committee. The following profile was submitted by Claudette Preece, who has co-chaired the committee for the last four years and is now passing on the torch. Thank you for all your efforts, Claudette. You will be missed.

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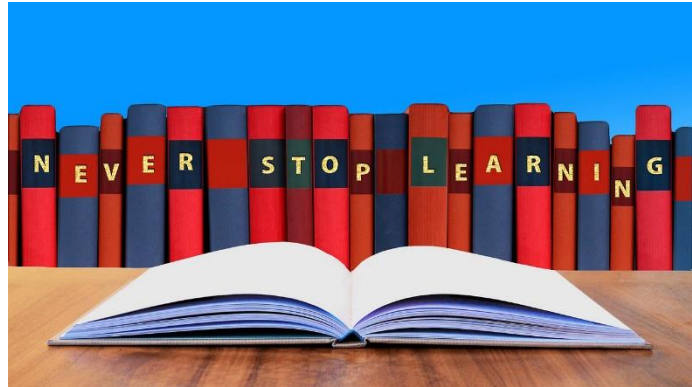
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The Curriculum Committee

By Claudette Preece, Committee Co-Chair

The Curriculum Committee has taken to heart a key goal of ElderCollege: to promote life-long learning. With that in mind, each semester our subject coordinators dive in and come up with a range of classes we hope will appeal. Current pandemic restrictions have created more daunting challenges than usual. Not everyone, and that includes instructors, are happy with the loss of live classes. We recognize that social interaction can be a large part of the appeal but have come to realize over this past term that, to a degree, it still exists virtually.

Our subject coordinators deserve recognition for having worked diligently to bring you a range of enjoyable classes. They include Elizabeth Johnson (short courses), Sheila Borman (math and science), Jean Sarrazin (creative computing), Gail Monckton (health and wellness), Barbara Moscovich (art and music), Tim Williams (history and social sciences), and Deirdre Longenecker (eclectic). New to our committee are Jan Slomp and Cathie Talbot who will be managing future lectures. Resource people include Norman Mathew (technical help with lectures), Al Tippett (database), Mary Sullivan (workshops), and Sharon Malone who compiles our spreadsheet listing all the classes. Additional resources are offered by Bonnie Luterbach, Stan Hartfelder, and Terry Hooper.



Changes in our body of volunteers for next term are Kathy Tae (health and wellness), Rose Webber, (history and social sciences), Virginia Philipson (literature and language), and Dyan Grant-Francis (math and science). Sheila Borman has stepped up to take over from Claudette Preece as co-chair with Roger Taylor.

We cannot forget our steadfast secretary, Mary Gray. She keeps us all connected and up to date.

Thank you to all of them!

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For Your Enjoyment

Enjoy some seasonal music with [André Rieu and his Johann Strauss Orchestra](#) performing [Hallelujah](#) as a tribute to Leonard Cohen live in London and the tongue in cheek [Twelve Days of Quarantine](#).



Signs of our Times



Happy Holidays and All the Best for the New Year!