

Comox Valley ElderCollege

July 2020



Lifelong Learning for Adults (55+)

Greetings

We certainly live in interesting times and none of us will ever forget 2020. COVID 19 was enough to justify this sentiment, but now we have also been thrust into major social upheaval, both of which will chart new directions for our society. Whew! This will be very stressful for many seniors and we will do everything we can to keep ElderCollege relevant and accessible. There will be more Connectors sent out to members (hint: renew your membership at a mere \$5.00) and we will be offering on-line classes and lectures, free in the Fall semester. Why free you ask? First, we are experimenting with on-line and hope you will be patient with us if there are some glitches. And, second, we want to entice you to try on-line learning as it will probably continue to some extent even when we can get back to physical classrooms. We welcome feedback regarding the Connector (solwilliams@shaw.ca.)

As Doctor Bonnie would say, "Be kind, be calm and be safe."

Meet Our Executive



Don Axtell, Chair

was born in the United States and has a curriculum vitae that is an impressive mix of fascinating experiences which would define him as very much of a polymath.

Don played competitive tennis and won multiple championships on tennis courts around the world, as a result of which he was recruited by Idaho State University, from where he graduated with a BA degree in history, government and English.

After university he joined JFK's newly created American Peace Corps, and during an intensive three-month training program, which included a 5BX exercise regime, he and other recruits learned poultry keeping, Hindi and Indian Studies. He was then

sent to Tonk, India, 80 kilometres south of Jaipur-- a small dusty town where summer

temperatures soar exceedingly high. There he worked with small farmers as part of India's effort to establish a more modern poultry industry - a fascinating, frustrating and fulfilling experience. He used the opportunity while there to travel through other districts in Northern India.

After his two-year Peace Corps assignment, he returned briefly to the United States, and then moved to Canada. He took up a teaching position in a small rural town in South Eastern Saskatchewan where winter temperatures plummet to below 35 degrees. From one extreme climate in India, to the other in Canada! Don's sense of humour is evident when he speaks of the Canadian versus American interpretations of who actually won the War of 1812, as well as learning to pronounce words like "lieutenant" and the letter "Z".

Don has worn a variety of different hats, working in the Ministries of Social Services and Finance, Crown Investments Corporation, which included the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Sask Power, Saskatchewan Fur Marketing Services, and later as CEO and Board chair with different Crown entities.

When he retired, he and Glayne moved to the Comox Valley in 2009 where social and outdoor opportunities beckoned. They became members of ElderCollege, and he gave a short course entitled, "Understanding the US Electoral College". Their son Robert, an immunologist specializing in Multiple Sclerosis research, lives in Oklahoma City with his wife and identical twin boys.

Don says that ElderCollege is a great institution, a real addition to life in the Comox Valley -- sentiments we would all agree with.

Dr John North, Vice-Chair has enjoyed a distinguished career chasing after viruses. Or rather, perhaps, worked at developing drugs to kill viruses, fight infections and control inflammation.

He grew up in the industrial midlands of England, attended local state schools and won a scholarship to Cambridge University to study Natural Sciences.

He majored in Chemistry and Biochemistry, and then did a PhD in Immunology at Cambridge.

Post doctoral research took John to numerous eminent research centres, such as the Salk Institute.

He has published numerous scientific articles and holds several patents. After leaving the university

environment, he devoted the rest of his career in industry to develop new and better drugs and medical devices.



He was closely involved in the first treatment for Age-Related Macular Degeneration, as well as in the development of a new type of drug to fight infections and control inflammation

Unlike his parents and sisters, he avoided teaching as a career. Yet he gave many presentations of his academic research work at conferences and honed his presentation skills in trying to convince Venture Capital investors to provide substantial amounts of money for drug development.

In all of these situations, the challenge is to communicate complex and detailed information convincingly to intelligent individuals who have little background knowledge of the specific subject. This eminently qualified him as an instructor at Elder College.

He was considered to be outlandishly forward-thinking in 1992 when he insisted that all his scientific staff learn to use their own computers to write their reports, rather than handing them to a secretary.

John has always loved the outdoors and has sailed 4 trans-pacific races.

He enjoys reading and likes to keep informed about significant new findings in the biological sciences. John and Lois moved to the Comox Valley in 2012, since when he has developed a popular course “Your Microbiome” – fondly called “Good Bugs/Bad Bugs”.

A Sample of More On-line Offerings for the Fall Semester

More courses and lectures will be featured in future Connectors – stay tuned

Foundations of Contentment

Leon Hawrylenko takes us on this eight-week journey towards inner peace and contentment. The course is largely experiential; simple mindfulness practices are used to turn within to the deeper reaches of our being. We'll examine seven foundational elements of contentment: clarity; inner peace; self-awareness; gratitude; inner strength; choice; and well-being support.

Fundamentals of Photography

Norman Mathew leads this eight-week non-technical look at how to improve your photographic composition. Although many of the concepts presented apply to adjustable cameras, they can also relate to point-and-shoot cameras and phone cameras. Students should be familiar with the basic operations of their own camera and should have it on hand at each session. A tripod is useful but not mandatory.

Geology of Vancouver Island

This introductory course looks at the types of rock on Vancouver Island: where they originated as well as when and how they all got put together. Instructor Ted Trueman will discuss our active

seismic region and look at what history tells of earthquake and tsunami risks. The economic mineral deposits and groundwater resources of the region will also be examined

. Strata Basics (The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly)

Downsizing to a strata property has positives and negatives. 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. Topics covered: owners' rights and obligations according to strata legislation; governance; who pays for what; insurance; how to ensure you are being treated fairly; and the Civil Resolution Tribunal. Michael Naish leads this five-week course.

What Am I Doing Here?

All religions nurture their followers as they involve themselves in the belief system. However, in a multicultural society, all faiths are but one among the many. In this six-week course, instructor Jack Duckworth invites us to consider some basic characteristics of eight major world religions and aspects of their spiritual practices. This inquiry considers how these might influence us as we ask, "What am I doing here?"

Exercise and Diet for Arthritis

Sarah Henckel leads this two-week WebEx course. Learn more about how to take an active role in managing your arthritis as we review the types of arthritis, benefits of staying active, and the role of nutrition. Includes an overview of assistive devices.

Taste of GAB (Guided Autobiography)

Guided Autobiography (GAB) is designed to help people recall, write about, and share meaningful memories with others in a small group. The focus of the two-week course is content; writing experience is not needed. Instructor Wendy Bancroft says we will learn, reflect, write, and share. We'll laugh, and we'll think a lot.

Additional Interactive Workshops

In addition to our virtual courses, we will also offer two virtual interactive workshops this fall.

We will run three lectures that were cancelled this spring under the No Time for Complacency theme:

- Environmental Law with Andrew Gage;
- Disaster at the Crossroads with Dr. Richard Guthrie;
- Local Students Involved in Environmental Action moderated by Will Cole-Hamilton.

<http://www.nic.bc.ca/eldercollege-cv> - 250-334-5000 ext. 4602
[email:eldercollegeCV@nic.bc.ca](mailto:eldercollegeCV@nic.bc.ca)

Paying It Forward in COVID Times

What volunteering for ElderCollege has meant to me

As soon as I arrived in the Valley in 2010 I wondered how I might be able to *pay it forward* in my new home. I discovered the Comox Valley ElderCollege. For me, taking CVEC courses and volunteering a few hours each month, with summers off, has added enormously to the quality of my life.

It is now time for me to move on and give others the opportunity to volunteer. Oh, how I love CVEC and I will still take courses, but I have been thinking about how I can still keep *paying it forward*. Let's be honest, not all committee work is sexy nor is it rocket science, but I have had a wonderful opportunity to work with a team and lead the 'behind the scenes' administrative work that is essential in any well-managed organization. CVEC is one of the largest and most successful volunteer-led ElderColleges in Canada. It has good bones and a talented Executive team.

So, come on ... help me fulfill my dream. I'd love to have a coffee, real or virtual, with would-be volunteers about the benefits of volunteering for CVEC. **Help me pay it forward.**

Submitted by Sandra Harrison, a former Chair of CVEC Executive Committee.



CVEC needs to fill several leadership positions, all requiring a team-player with strong communication and organizational skills. Two positions we would like to highlight are:

- Co-Chair, Curriculum Committee, supporting those who deliver CVEC courses and lectures.
- Co-Chair, Finance and Administration Committee, ensuring that CVEC policies are reviewed, drafted and approved under the general direction of the Executive Committee.

The best part? Neither of these positions require specialized knowledge or experience AND both committees have the resources available to provide training and mentoring on an on-going basis. We also have our 10-year volunteer ready and available to personally mentor a few volunteers from now until Christmas to gradually assume the helm of one of the standing committees. Please contact cvec.volunteers@nic.bc.ca if you, like our long-time volunteer in the personal testimonial above, are considering how you might *pay it forward*.

<http://www.nic.bc.ca/eldercollege-cv> - 250-334-5000 ext. 4602 [email:eldercollegeCV@nic.bc.ca](mailto:eldercollegeCV@nic.bc.ca)

For Your Enjoyment

Sir Tom Jones and grandson, Mike, sing “Green Green Grass of Home”

Tom Jones married his expectant 16 year old bride at the age of 17. Their son was their only child. She stayed in Wales while Tom struck out in the world with his singing career, but he always returned to his family. She had been the love of his very young life before he was known and regardless of lifelong distractions, they never parted until her death in 2016.

<https://youtu.be/O1suiNZ-IlU>

What happened when wolves returned to Yellowstone Park.

<https://youtu.be/X8nyIyPZy68>

“I stepped on my scale this morning and it said: Please use social distancing, one person at a time.”

“Never in a million years could I have imagined going to a bank teller with a mask on and asking for money.”

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