



ElderCollege Connector

November 2020

Greetings



November is a month of reflection, both honouring the past and planning for the future. If there is one thing we can be sure of in life, it is that changes will happen. And have they ever! With the onset of COVID-19, all in-person courses and lectures were cancelled for the year, leaving only online possibilities. Undaunted, the volunteers who make ElderCollege happen have hung in, determined that our institution will continue to thrive and remain relevant to our members.

For the fall session we dived into online learning, offering 25 courses and three lectures and even more have been booked for the winter session. We can proudly say that there were 625 membership registrations – not our usual number but

HOW TO REACH US

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impressive considering the significant changes. Stay tuned in future Connectors for member feedback.

We were so pleased to offer the online courses, but we also realized that socializing would be dearly missed. Being able to see and talk to each other in person is a human need. To this end, we upgraded our Connector from an occasional, purely informational, newsletter to a monthly one with a more personal focus. We decided to use a “getting to know you” format, with relevant information about CVEC happenings, biographies of our volunteers, information of general interest, and lastly, a little light-hearted amusement. Feedback on the “new” Connector has largely been very good, but there has been a question of

relevance, especially with the “For Your Entertainment” section. No, it has no relevance to ElderCollege other than we want to generate some smiles in this serious time. We have been gleaning material from the immense amount of information we receive in general and we select the videos, witticisms, memes, and pictures that we hope our members will enjoy.

We encourage your participation in the Connector. If you have something to contribute to the newsletter, something that will have broad, general appeal, please [send it to us](#). This may be some learning opportunities, a wonderful short video, or something humorous.

Message from Strategic Planning Working Group

The Strategic Planning Working Group of CV ElderCollege is asking for your help!

On a three-year cycle, this working group attempts to determine strategic directions for the operation of your ElderCollege. This enables our executive and standing committees to make operational decisions within the context of agreed overall priorities and desired outcomes. As we begin this exercise, we’d love to hear directly from you: your ideas, hopes and/or requests relating to your personal vision for ElderCollege moving forward. There’s no need for detailed argument or literary finesse – just enough to transfer your thoughts to us. We understand that COVID-19 tends to dominate our thinking just now, but we ask that you look beyond the current situation. Also, perhaps there are aspects of what we are doing differently this year that you’d like us to retain – such as an online presence? Please respond to us at CVECstrategicplan@gmail.com before November 16, 2020. We promise that all your input will be valued and considered within the context of our new plan.

Notes from the Volunteer Support Committee

A Fireside Chat by Email

We asked the current retiring chairs and co-chairs of the five standing committees for their reflections on their experience and the benefits of volunteering. Here’s a summary of what they had to say.

What attracted you to joining your committee?

“...a chance to help out in an endeavour which offers a worthwhile opportunity to a specific age group...”

“I thought I might be able to provide assistance. I had produced many communications in my

career.”

“As it turned out, my work experience and interests have been a good fit for the ‘behind the scenes’ work that is required to manage a program like ElderCollege.”

“Already being a fan and user of adult education, I was attracted by the opportunity to influence the range of courses we could offer.”

What do you consider to be the key requisites for a chair or co-chair position?

“Being a team player; the capacity to listen, share ideas...”

“Flexibility, open to change and an ability to appreciate the efforts of others...”

“The ability to coordinate, to see the big picture, to motivate others and be flexible.”

“Managing deadlines, chairing meetings, being adaptable and supporting colleagues.”

What fuels your enthusiasm and commitment?

“My volunteer work with CVEC has given me a focus in retirement... the satisfaction from playing some small part behind the scenes to bring joy and a sense of belonging to so many of our members.”

“I still get enthusiastic when a new instructor (or volunteer) with a lot to offer comes our way.”

“The satisfaction of a job well done as measured by positive feedback and strong member engagement. Also, the implementation of online courses and communication has been invigorating.”

“Volunteering for an organization that is held in high esteem within our community; being an enabler for adult education.”

When things get bumpy or challenging, what’s helped you get through it?

“Losing key committee members creates a challenge, especially if there is no one to fill in until a replacement is found. Good support from committee and executive members as well as NIC helps keep up motivation.”

“The support and encouragement of committee colleagues. You’re never left to fend for yourself.”

“...having committee members who often step up to fill a gap helps a lot. The switch from live to virtual classes has created new challenges... but support for each other has helped.”

“No volunteer stands alone. I draw on the wisdom, experience, and support of the rest of the CVEC team – past and present. They have always been there for me.”

We hope these reflections might inspire you to consider taking on one of the co-chair positions listed below. If you are thinking, “What, chair a committee? I’m not sure I could take that on,” we currently have a co-chair who had no previous experience with ElderCollege and his positive comments are part of the summary above.



join our team

Co-Chair, or Chair & Vice Chair, Finance and Administration Committee

You and your team facilitate the development of CVEC policy and participate in strategic planning. Please do not let the Finance area deter you. This is currently being well taken care of.

Co-Chairs, or Chair & Vice Chair, Member Support Committee

You and your team host activities that provide a friendly atmosphere for all members of ElderCollege. For example, welcoming members to Saturday lectures, handling sign-in and providing refreshments.

Co-Chair, Communications Committee

You and your team promote the mission of ElderCollege both within the membership and in the wider community. For example, writing articles for either online or print publications such as the ElderCollege Connector and The Comox Valley Record.

If you think a co-chair position is still a bridge too far, please consider one of the following roles.

Subject Coordinator, Curriculum Committee

You act as the primary point of contact for course leaders in a designated subject area with respect to completion and submission of course data for publication.

Secretary, Volunteer Support Committee

The Volunteer Support Committee seeks out new volunteers and refers them to appropriate committee chairs. The secretary prepares the minutes of meetings, forwards them to the chairs for approval, and subsequently distributes them to the committee members.

Members-at-Large

Consider becoming a member-at-large on one of ElderCollege's five standing committees: Communications, Curriculum, Finance and Administration, Member Support, or Volunteer Support. A great way to find out about that committee and find your fit.

Zoom Technical Support, Curriculum Committee

You will demonstrate/teach core Zoom skills to course leaders as they move to provide online instruction.

For more information on any of these positions please e-mail clarkkate989@gmail.com and we can put you in touch with a current co-chair to discuss these openings further.

A Sampling of Some of the Winter 2021 Session Offerings

Winter 2021 lecture series

Armchair travellers rejoice: We're off to London! Blue Badge guide Annamaria Dall'Anese is spearheading our virtual travels to the British capital this winter. In her eight-part lecture series, we'll get to know London inside and out, visiting well-known as well as off-the-beaten track sites. Topics include architecture, museums and galleries, Roman influences, street art, and much more.

Winter is coming! And with it a new season of virtual courses

While many ElderCollege members are just settling in to their fall classes, our curriculum committee is already hard at work on the winter session. Read on for some of what will be offered then. (More offerings will be featured in future Connector issues.)

Visiting More Uncommon Corners

Popular presenter Gregg Strong is back with this series that visits Nigeria, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sarawak (Malaysian Borneo) and Papua New Guinea.

Strong Landscape Paintings

This series is designed for novice to intermediate painters wanting to understand or strengthen the fundamentals required to produce strong landscape paintings.

Craft Beer: Styles & Pairings

With so many good beers available, how do you decide which one to try? This course offers advice.

Exercise for Older Adults

This course will give you a good base knowledge of exercise physiology, prevention and treatment of orthopedic injuries, and will discuss why and how to get fit.

Ready, Set, Garden

Join Leslie Cox for this four-part course that will prepare you for returning to the garden in the spring.

Cognitive Impairment & Dementia

Dr. Roger Wong will discuss the effects of aging on brain health and introduce the health conditions of cognitive impairment and dementia.

Comox Valley Paleontology

Gain a basic understanding of our prehistoric environment and some of the marine creatures that inhabited the area 85 million years ago.

Retirement Outlook for Women

This course shares perspectives on financial concerns facing women who are getting ready for or have transitioned to retirement.

Forage Fish on our Beaches

Join Project Watershed and partner groups to learn about important forage fish studies in our region.

For Your Enjoyment

Remembering and Honouring our Veterans: [D-Day Darlings take on the Vera Lyn classic.](#)

Courage: [Inflight replacement of biplane's damaged main wheel.](#)

Inspiration: [The Life Story of Mr. Bean](#) (Rowan Atkinson): a personal story of overcoming adversity.

Smiles

- I get most of my exercise these days by shaking my head in disbelief.
- Just once, I want a username and password prompt to say, "Close Enough".
- Don't you hate it when you see some old person and then realize that you went to school together?
- How to parallel park: park somewhere else.

And finally, truthful signage:

