



The Lifelong Learner

November 2011 Newsletter

Volume 11, Number 1

President's Message

ELLA's Strategic Plan

The ELLA Board of Directors devoted a day in August to a strategic planning workshop to help set the direction and priorities for our future.



Although strategic plans are often considered to be primarily for businesses, strategic plans are also important tools to guide the operations of not-for-profit organizations.

In order to identify where to focus our efforts over the next few years, the ELLA Board, with the assistance of a facilitator from Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, went through a process to analyze ELLA's strengths and weaknesses; to evaluate our partnership with the University; and to consider external issues and opportunities.

Important parts of the process were the clarification of our Vision, updating the Mission Statement, and for the first time writing down our core Values.

Vision

A dynamic community of lifelong learners (adults aged 50 and older) who actively participate in learning

Mission

To offer adults, in partnership with the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta, high quality and affordable non-credit educational courses, seminars and workshops which stimulate both mind and body by exploring liberal arts, fine arts, sciences, humanities and physical activities.

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Photos by Art Brierer

Values

We believe:

- that maintaining intellectual and physical health by the continued acquisition of learning contributes to an improved quality of life for older adults.
- that the cost of attending ELLA programs must be maintained at a level that encourages the participation of retired individuals on a fixed income.
- in providing a non-threatening and physically accessible environment for ELLA programming.
- in the engagement and involvement of older adults in the planning, design and administration of their own programs.
- that volunteers are our most valuable resource.
- that a volunteer-led, not-for-profit organization independent from and in partnership with the University of Alberta is an excellent vehicle for providing ELLA programming.
- that an equitable relationship with the University of Alberta will enhance the university status in the community.

Having the strategic plan provides direction for both new and continuing Board members. It allows us to keep on track with our daily operations, finances, program planning and marketing. In addition, the strategic plan helps define our image and keeps our stakeholders informed.

The Board still needs to establish more definitive action plans, coordinate activities which overlap, and establish milestones so that we know when we are reaching our goals. We have approved in principle our Strategic Plan, which is a living document that will be added to, updated, and revised as we progress.

Have a look at the [Strategic Plan](#) and feel free to provide us with feedback. This is your organization so we appreciate input from our members to help keep ELLA strong and viable.

Nancy Rae – President, 2011-2012

Member Feedback on Favourite ELLA Courses

Program Implementation Chair, Germaine Chau, recently asked some members to write to us about their favourite ELLA course. The responses were overwhelming. Thank you to everyone who responded to Germaine, and our apologies to those whose comments we couldn't include. ELLA member feedback is the primary determinant of the mix of courses and instructors that make up Spring Session every year.

The feedback demonstrates that ELLA courses are as diverse as the interests of ELLA members and highlights that ELLA instructors and their courses are informative, fun, exciting and helpful.

Cecilia wrote that her favourite course was **A Journey through Science**. *“Torah Kachur and Rheanna Sand were very lively and humorous; the subjects very interesting; the videos fantastic. The participation in class was very enthusiastic and informative. I enjoyed every minute of it.”*

David’s Hall’s **More Topics in Canadian History** that covered the mountain parks, immigration and foreign and defence policy, was a favourite of Ed’s. *“As usual, Dr. Hall, led us through a very thorough and disciplined review, providing excellent examples of how history, culture and politics influenced the development of these important Canadian topics. A large associated reading list allowed as much further exploration as one could want.”*

Some of Lois’s most enjoyable courses have been the music ones. **“A Study of Opera: An Homage to Mozart, Jeff McCunes’s Play the Nice Music, and last session’s The History and Appreciation of Jazz by Larry Schrum, have all added to my enjoyment and understanding of these genres. Larry Schrum guided us on a nostalgic journey through the past eras of this music to a new appreciation of modern jazz arrangements. Larry’s knowledge and expertise and his passion made for an informative and most enjoyable class. Only at ELLA has one the opportunity to participate in such a diversity of music related courses!”**

Jean, Ed, Ray, Liz and Glen all wrote that their favourite ELLA course last year was **Religion and Violence** taught by Maryam Razavy. Jean writes: *“She presented a wealth of information on world religions and the association with violence, continually exploring the various factors behind violence and whether violence is really a result of religion or rather a combination of many social, political and economic realities”*. For Ed: *“This class was exciting to attend every morning as more and more rocks were overturned, thrown and replaced”*. Liz and Ray said: *“Maryam is a very interesting, informative and balanced instructor”*. They agreed with Glen’s view that *“the instructor provided ground rules for discussion that provoked interesting debate on contentious topics but did not allow it to fall into rancour”*. Unfortunately, Dr. Razavy’s workload does not allow her to return to teach in 2012, but Dr. David Goa’s sessions should provide food for thought on similar topics.



Both Judy and Faith really liked Michael Gravel's course on **Getting More out of the Internet**. Judy wrote: *“This man has the patience of Job with all of us techno-challenged individuals. He has a wonderful sense of humour so that we did not feel stupid with our many questions. We did not need to take notes as he summarized each class and posted it to our very own website before the next class”*. Faith said that *“Michael defined a lot of terms that made it easier to search Help sections of the programs on my computer; he demystified subjects like cloud storage, and helped me decide what hardware would be most appropriate for my needs”*.

Ken's favourite course last year was Margaret Ann Armour's **Famines: Past, Present and Future**. *"The combination of history, environmental issues and current political issues made this class fascinating. I'm really looking forward to her class next year on water issues, since the world water shortage is of critical importance"*.

Gary Delaine's Putting the Funny in the Funny Pages was Noma's favourite in 2011. *"I learned many things about cartoons which I had never even suspected. It was a great way to start a day. Laughter was a common thread for all who attended. Gary taught us also how to draw a simple cartoon and how to animate it. Great class!"*

Grace wrote: *"This year I enjoyed the **Beginner Watercolour** with Willie Wong. I found it very relaxing and fun. Willie is very patient and always willing to share his knowledge with the students. I enjoyed his great sense of humour, too"*. Janet agreed, writing: *"Each class I've taken has been very informative and enlightening. One I enjoyed and learned a lot from was the **Beginner Watercolour** course with Willie Wong. His teaching style is very conducive to learning as he shows each step of the process, then the class tries the techniques on the picture they have started. Willie then helps each student "one-on-one" with any issue they may have"*.

Bertha's favourite was **Writing the Personal Essay** with Shirley Serviss. *"I have taken her class before, but she always has new ideas for writing. She has helpful advice and is very encouraging to all the students to help them keep writing"*. In this newsletter you can read the personal essay, "A Serving of ELLA" written in this course by Milli Murray.

Lorne shared his experience with Tom Keating's 2008 ELLA course **Globalization and the Future of Canada**. *"He provided a reading list, an outline for the 15 classes, and always started his lectures with questions from students. During the first class he offered to talk about relevant topics requested by ELLA members. He was most accommodating, but seldom (maybe never) wandered off-topic. I learned a lot about how the world sees Canada and I was alerted that our future foreign policy was going on a different track"*. Tom Keating returns in 2012 with **New Issues in Canadian Foreign Policy**.

Most of the instructors of favourites named in this article are offering new courses in 2012. Please read Ted Snow's article [A Sneak Peek at 2012 Spring Session](#).

Barbara Leung, Communications Chair

A Sneak Peek at 2012 Spring Session

Because of the big increase in enrolment at the 2011 Spring Session, we are adding four courses to next year's line-up. In each of the time-slots you'll have an additional course from which to select. Here's a sampling of courses that have been approved so far:

Michael Roeder taught Music History for 31 years at the U of A. He will be teaching an ELLA course of the same name as his widely acclaimed book – **A History of the Concerto**. He is also looking forward to offering three noon-hour music appreciation sessions.

Many of our members will be excited to welcome back **Torah Kachur** and **Rheanna Sand** for **Another Journey through Science** in which they will focus largely on areas they didn't have time to explore in last year's very popular course.

ELLA favourite **David Goa** will return after four years to animate a series of structured conversations modeled after the Philosophers' Cafes that he has been hosting roughly once a month at the Steeps Tea House on Whyte Avenue. People who love to jump right into discussions about a variety of challenging issues of the day will be in their glory!

In her examination of the progress of the feminist movement to date, **Cristina Stasia** will touch on everything from Playboy bunnies in the 60s to Sarah Palin, considering issues like gendered violence, bridal culture, women's work, the sexualization of girls, and representations of femininity in films.

This year we have invited **Ken Chui** to offer **Wu Style Tai Chi** an abbreviated version of the Yang Style we have offered in previous years. It is expected that people taking this course will be able to complete the entire routine on their own by the end of the Spring Session. People who were not able to make it to our 7:30 Tai Chi classes in the past will now be able to attend Ken's class at 9:00.

Michael Gravel will be doing two information technology courses for us in 2012: **Computer and Internet Basics** for people just getting their feet wet, or **Mobile Technologies and Social Media** for more advanced students.

Newcomer Bob Lamb will be teaching a course on the basics of digital photography, with an emphasis on travel photography. **Dave Ferraro** and **Jean Marie Ferraro** will be back with a hands-on course (in the computer lab) that will show you how to use free software to organize and edit digital photos on your computer, and share them with your friends.

You can also look forward to:

- two art history courses
- art courses from **Izabella Orzelski-Konikowski**, **Ron Wigglesworth** and **Willie Wong**.
- **David Hall**
 - **Topics in Canadian Native History**
- **Margaret-Ann Armour**
 - **Water: A Precious Resource for Life**
- **Tom Keating**
 - **New Issues in Canadian Foreign Policy**
- syndicated cartoonist **Gary Delainey**
 - **Introduction to Cartooning**
- **Laurie Greenwood**
 - **It's All about Books!**
- **Doug Hube**
 - **The Astronomical Universe**



Won't be long 'til May!

Ted Snow, Program Development Committee Chair

Registration Fees and Dates for 2012

If you have an ELLA membership or join before the end of January 2012, you will have advanced access to our new Course Guide and be able to register “before the rush”. ELLA members can register beginning Monday, February 6, 2012. Check the [last page of the newsletter](#) for office dates and times.

For only a \$20.00 membership and a registration fee of \$225.00 (for all courses including art), you can attend courses taught by University professors or other leading experts in their field, with up to four daily classes in each course for 3 weeks.

We are able to keep the registration fees low because of our team of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. The partnership with the University of Alberta provides us with classroom space, audio-visual equipment, office space in Enterprise Square, and administrative support.

Register For Spring Session Early And Win A Prize!

If you register for the inspiring ELLA Spring Session by March 30, 2012, your name will be entered in a draw. Two lucky winners will win an Early Bird prize that will make your adventure with ELLA even more rewarding and exciting.

First Prize: A ticket to ELLA's Wind-Up Party

Second Prize: A ticket to the ELLA Social Luncheon

So, watch for the Course Guide and register as soon as you can...not only will you be more likely to get into your favorite classes, but you might win one of our prizes, too!!

Meet the ELLA Board

Six new members joined the Board of Directors of ELLA at the May 2011 Annual General Meeting: Barbara Chapman, Susan Jacobs, Barbara Leung, Anna Luk, Liz McCord and Eileen Szakas. In October, Barbara Chapman resigned due to her many time commitments. Thank you to Barbara for her six months of service on the Board and Chair of the Communications Committee. This article profiles Susan, Barbara Leung, Anna, Liz and Eileen.

Susan Jacobs is an active volunteer on the Program Development Committee and the *ad hoc* committee working on the new agreement with the Faculty of Extension. She has lived in Edmonton since 1977, and is currently approaching the end of her career as a Physiology professor at the University of Alberta. Susan is bilingual (French/English), and has lived in several cities in Canada, as well as in the UK and Switzerland. She has three children and four grandchildren. Among her interests are wine, music, driving, herpetoculture and collecting antique clocks.



Barbara Leung just assumed the role of Chair of the Communications Committee. She has a Master's degree in social policy planning and worked in the public policy fields of education, community health, immigration, and adult learning. *"I was attracted to ELLA by the warmth, energy and high quality of Spring Session 2011, and I am very impressed by ELLA volunteers."* Barbara also has over 20 years of experience volunteering for not-for-profit boards (both working and policy).

Anna Luk is the ELLA Secretary. Anna trained as a psychiatric nurse in Hong Kong, and accepted a position with Alberta Hospital and came to Edmonton in 1982. For the last 20 years, Anna has worked as a financial advisor after obtaining her B.Com. degree from University of Alberta in 1991 and Certified Financial Planner designation in 1994. An active participant in the community, Anna has volunteered for charitable organizations, and is an avid lifelong learner, *"I rejoice in the discovery of ELLA."*





Liz McCord chairs the Recruitment Committee and is the lead on the *ad hoc* committee negotiating ELLA's agreement with the Faculty of Extension. Liz has worked for over 30 years in the management of not-for-profit social services agencies in areas that include family planning, women in conflict with the law, mental health, deaf and hard of hearing, and community investment at United Way. She started her working career as a nurse and midwife, and completed her paid career as a consultant. Liz loves music and plays the cello in a community orchestra. *"I am excited by the opportunity*

to be involved in an organization that promotes continued learning."

Eileen Szakacs is the Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee. For the past ten years, Eileen has worked as an administrative assistant at an accounting firm. *"I attended the ELLA spring session for the first time this year and thoroughly enjoyed the courses and friendly atmosphere. I am a firm believer in lifelong learning and am happy to support ELLA by volunteering on the Board."*



These new members joined nine continuing Board members: **Germaine Chau** – Chair, Program Implementation; **Nga de la Cruz** – Chair, Bylaws; **Faith Fernald** – Chair, Administration; **Enneke Lorberg** – Chair, Publicity; **Nancy Rae** – President; **Chips Reid** – Member-at-large; **Ted Snow** – Chair, Program Development; **Charles Toth** – Member-at-large; and **Peter Wightman** – Chair, Social. Their profiles can be found in the [November 2010 newsletter](#).

“A Serving of ELLA”: Milli Murray’s Personal Essay

Milli was a participant in the ELLA course **Writing the Personal Essay** with Shirley Serviss. Thank you Milli, for sharing your personal essay.

My dear friend Leona met me for lunch one warm spring day last year. She was an ELLA enthusiast and was now on the recruitment committee. I naturally asked what ELLA stood for, and she explained it was the Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association. She didn't have to work hard to sell me on joining the growing throng of Edmontonians keen to feast on a vast display of delicious ELLA courses!

A few weeks later I happened on the package of ELLA information Leona had sent me. I picked up the phone and spoke with a pleasant voice and soon became a proud ELLA member.

The summer slipped in to fall with Thanksgiving, Halloween and Remembrance Day, then the excitement of Christmas and New Year. I had pretty much forgotten about ELLA by this time. February dawned and my computer screen lit up with correspondence from ELLA. I was amazed at the choices of courses a person could take and instantly wanted to take them all! I read a little closer and discovered that four courses would be a pretty full day and if I included the lunch hour programs, I would be a very busy woman.

I finally made my choices, some of them by eeny-meeny-miney-mo. I sent my course request along with my payment and soon had my confirmation in the mail. Applying for and paying for parking proved to be just as efficient.

I couldn't wait to phone my family and tell them their mother/nana was going back to school. My daughters were proud, and my grandkids thought I must have lost my mind. Who would willingly go to school? I explained that this time I had it right. There was no homework. I could skip class and wouldn't get in to trouble. I could go late or leave early, and if I didn't like a class I could change it. That being said, I also told them that if I really wanted to learn something, then I would respectfully maintain the times of the classes and not skip classes. The only reason I would miss would be if I had appointments to keep. ELLA was something I **wanted** to do, and I intended to be there every day soaking in all the learning opportunities that ELLA afforded me.

My first year at ELLA has been a very positive experience. I have been blessed with the opportunity to meet many great people from all walks of life. I have been instructed by very knowledgeable and enthusiastic people on a variety of different topics which has whetted my appetite for next year's feast. I gladly paid my membership for next year's classes and I eagerly anticipate the Menu of Gourmet Courses to be served at the U of A in the spring of 2012.

It is true that retirement is the great equalizer!



Milli Murray, ELLA Participant

Volunteer Profiles: Meet Mary Anne King and Lois Pawl

An innovation in the 2011 Spring Session was the introduction of Ambassadors. Ambassadors are ELLA members who volunteer to welcome and assist participants to Spring Session. The two volunteers profiled in this newsletter are Mary Ann King and Lois Pawl who were the Ambassador Team Leads. Many thanks to Mary Anne and Lois for their excellent work in inaugurating the very successful Ambassador program!

Mary Anne King

Mary Anne trained at the University of Alberta majoring in Special Education. For five years she taught English as a Second Language courses to children and adults in León, Spain. She used her ESL experience in Alberta to design and teach at Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women, and to elementary and junior high students in Grande Prairie. She spent the last twenty years of her career with Edmonton Public Schools, specializing in Early Childhood and Special Education.

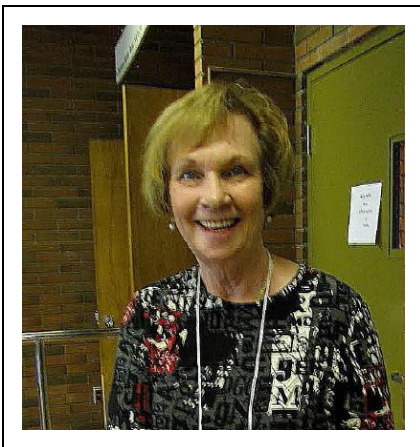


Mary Anne particularly enjoyed her volunteer work with Edmonton Working Women, a women's collective organized to address better wages, working conditions and job security for women. Since retirement, Mary Anne takes great pleasure in volunteering, practicing Tai Chi and yoga, going to the gym, gardening, reading, walking and spending time with friends and family. Lately travel for Mary Anne has been combined with her interest in music, taking her to Bradford, England for the Raise Your Banners Festival of Political Song, and to Cape Breton Island for the Celtic Colours Music Festival.

Mary Anne has been impressed with the quality of instruction and the level of debate in the ELLA courses. She attended the 2010 ELLA session and was so stimulated by the experience that she volunteered in the ELLA office and during the 2011 session. She found working with ELLA ambassadors rewarding, in large part due to the dedication of all involved and the positive feedback from session participants. *“As a lifelong learner, ELLA is tremendously valuable to me because it provides intellectual stimulation, references to unique areas of study and new and positive social connections. I recognize that the success of ELLA lies with the tremendous dedication and hard work by the Board members and other volunteers.”*

Lois Pawl

Lois Pawl is a lifelong learner who clearly demonstrated her commitment to learning while juggling many other life responsibilities. Lois began her studies at the University of Alberta when the youngest of her five children entered grade one! After receiving her B.Ed., Lois taught junior high school students for 17 years. Teaching young people at this level was a particularly satisfying period of Lois's life.



During her retirement, Lois has been active in many volunteer activities. Among those that she has found the most rewarding were working with the Youth Justice Committee where she heard cases of first time young offenders, and hosting Fringe Festival Theatre performers during their stay in Edmonton.

Two of her favourite pastimes are her daily walks with her rescued greyhound through the river valley, and the three weeks at the annual ELLA Spring Sessions! *“I appreciate the opportunity to choose from an array of courses and enjoy the high level of instruction, discussion and interaction, as well as the camaraderie of other members.”* Lois has volunteered with ELLA in a number of ways, including lead for the Ambassadors and the Spring Session luncheon. Lois also enjoys reading good books, travelling, monitoring the political scene and spending time with her family.

“Working with Germaine Chau and Mary Anne King helping to organize the ELLA ambassadors has been a fulfilling experience and I look forward to continuing the work with this group during the 2012 session.”

In Memoriam: Professor Abu-Rabi, Chair of Islamic Studies, University of Alberta

ELLA was privileged to have Professor Ibrahim Abu-Rabi as a noon hour speaker during the 2011 Spring Session. Sadly, Professor Abu Rabi died suddenly of a heart attack this summer. Enneke Lorberg, Chair of the Publicity Committee, shares her thoughts on this internationally acclaimed Islamic scholar.

I had attended a few of Professor Abu-Rabi’s public lectures at the University of Alberta and found that he had an ability to engage both the public at large and his regular students in stimulating discussions on controversial topics, always clarifying the interplay between religious and political factors. I was impressed with how easily he was able to tackle complex religious and political issues.



Deeply inspired by his lectures, I invited Professor Abu-Rabi as a noon hour presenter. He was originally asked to speak on the topic **Muslim Communities in Alberta** but at the last minute I requested that he broaden the topic to address the “Arab Spring”. He readily agreed. Professor Abu-Rabi explained how the Islamic religion differs in various countries, depending on the respective ethnic composition, local traditions and customs. This broader perspective provided ELLA students with a synopsis of the different manifestations of Arabic nationalism.

Following his presentation, some of us bought his most recent book: **The Contemporary Arabic Reader on Political Islam**. I find that I consult it frequently, and that it is absolutely indispensable for students of current affairs.

Enneke Lorberg, Publicity Committee Chair

Information Centre

ELLA Board 2011-2012

Board Members		Committee Chairpersons	
<i>President:</i>	Nancy Rae	<i>Administration:</i>	Faith Fernalld
<i>Vice President:</i>	open	<i>Publicity:</i>	Enneke Lorberg
<i>Secretary:</i>	Anna Luk	<i>Program Development:</i>	Ted Snow
<i>Past President:</i>	open	<i>Program Implementation:</i>	Germaine Chau
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Eileen Szakas	<i>Communications:</i>	Barbara Leung
		<i>Bylaws & Policies:</i>	Nga de la Cruz
Members-at-Large		<i>Finance:</i>	Eileen Szakacs
Susan Jacobs, Chips Reid, Charles Toth		<i>Social:</i>	Peter Wightman
		<i>Recruitment:</i>	Liz McCord

How to Contact ELLA

Email	exella@ualberta.ca
Telephone	(780) 492-5055
Visit or Write	Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association (ELLA) U of A Faculty of Extension Suite 2-936B, 10230 Jasper Avenue Edmonton, AB T5J 4P6.
Office Hours	Oct 5, 2011 – Dec 14, 2011: <i>Open every Wednesday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm</i> Dec 14, 2011--Jan 3, 2012: <i>Closed for Christmas</i> Jan 4, 2012 – Feb 5, 2012: <i>Open every Wednesday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm</i> Feb 6, 2012 – Feb 10, 2012: <i>First Week of Registration: Open every day from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm</i> Feb 13, 2012 – Apr 27, 2012: <i>Open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm</i> Apr 28—Sept 30: <i>Closed but volunteers will check phone and email</i> <i>When the office is closed, volunteers check regularly for voice mails, emails and Canada Post letters. Efforts will be made to respond promptly to all messages.</i>
Website	www.extension.ualberta.ca/ella

Important Dates

Course Guide Available:

Members	first week in February
Non-members	third week in February

Registration:

Feb 6, 2012 to April 27, 2012