

The Lifelong Learner

November 2014 Newsletter

Volume 14, Number 1

President's Message



Carol Vaage, President

So many of us have found a 'kindred spirit' bond in ELLA, and the cohesion is created from our love of learning. It doesn't matter what our physical age is, because we are young in our quest for knowing and our search to uncover and discover the wonder that comes from learning.

As a retired educator, I am still being called on to share my knowledge of how young children learn. This past spring, when I was taking the Palaeontology course with Dr. Phil Currie and his grad students, I realized just how important early learning experiences and interests are in guiding an entire life career. I have incorporated this concept into a new Professional Development session for educators: *Is it play or are they really young scientists?* Because of ELLA offering this learning experience, I am now able to share this insight with hundreds of teachers, and subsequently, perhaps, influence the learning for thousands of young children.

Whatever the courses are that we take, we make connections to our past experiences and enrich the quality of our lives. The Program Committee spends hundreds of hours researching possibilities for course options for us. Like you, I am waiting with anticipation for the official course announcements. We can expand our minds and invigorate and stimulate our synapses once again!

I wish to take the opportunity to thank some fantastic volunteers that have supported the ELLA organization with their commitment and innovative work: Germaine Chau, who helped us with the launch of EventBrite for online registration; Jim Macdonald, who initiated online membership and the online survey; and John Chandler, who collaborated with them both with technological expertise and guidance. These improvements will have long-term benefits for our members and the ELLA volunteers.

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Thank you to those who participated in the membership survey and we, as your Board of Directors, will continue to analyze the results to guide us in our strategic and long-term planning. As always, any member can contact me directly with ideas, concerns or questions at president@my-ella.com.

Carol Vaage – President, 2014-15

ELLA's new 2014-15 Board Members

The ELLA Board of Directors has been fortunate this year to amplify its available talent this fall with a couple of new volunteers to fill the positions of Secretary to the Board and IT “expert,” to assist the Board with its several conversions to on-line registration, filing and membership purchase. We are still seeking someone to head up the Administration duties, which consist primarily of managing the office and its cadre of dedicated volunteers. More details are on page 10 in this newsletter.

The one thing all these individuals share is a dedication to lifelong learning and community service. It's a great group with whom to be planning ELLA's future. The interest and abilities of the individuals are so varied and strong. Careers have included adult education, nursing, engineering, accounting and taxation, health studies, entrepreneurship and human resources. The interests are wide-ranging too, from yoga to curling to camping to ballroom dancing to Toastmasters to webmaster to photography to reading and golfing...to mention some. Retirement has also provided an opportunity for most to travel more extensively, to connect with far-flung family and see many dream locations around the world. But all this is in addition to ELLA volunteer duties, of course, as the common focus for all Board members is their dedication to lifelong learning through ELLA.

This article will introduce you to four new directors for 2014-15. You may remember a few of them from the Annual General Meeting last May 2014. The 2014-15 Board members and their positions are listed on the last page of this newsletter. As well, you can read about the continuing Board members on the ELLA website www.extension.ualberta.ca/ella, on the Administration page and in the previous Newsletters for November 2013 and November 2012 on the Newsletters page.



Gay Maddin retired in 2007 from a 33-year career with the federal government and moved from Vancouver to Edmonton to enjoy a somewhat slower-paced lifestyle. She worked in a variety of positions serving the public in person and over the phone, and gradually became involved in staff training and development. Late in her career Gay completed a part-time Master's degree in Adult Education and worked in Human Resources as a Learning Agent and Internal Learning Consultant until her retirement. *"ELLA allows me to pursue my interest in learning."* Gay also volunteers as a Team Leader for the Hosting team at the Edmonton Fringe and curls three days a week in the winter. *"If you live in a winter city,*

embrace the ice!" Gay lives with her husband of 32 years and their surrogate children – two Abyssinian cats.

Dr. Campbell Ross came to Canada in 1965 on a graduate scholarship to Queen's University in Kingston from St. Andrews University in Scotland. For 20 years he was a public school teacher, and for another 20 years, a college instructor. He has many interests including fly fishing, carving, Aquinas, classical music and HMS Unicorn (an 18th century Royal Navy frigate). Campbell has been married to Judith for 44 years and has four grandchildren whom he dearly loves. This is his fourth year with ELLA.



Fred Sawka is the Chair of IT (Information Technology). An entrepreneur for most of his life, Fred was also the Computer Literacy Outreach Manager at MacEwan University for 15 years before his retirement. He joined Toastmasters in 2008 and earned his designation as DTM. *“I am a firm believer in lifelong learning. Now that I am retired, I feel volunteering with ELLA will help satisfy my desire to give back from what I have learned through life.”*

Linda Smyth chairs the Bylaws and Policies Committee. She has her Master's in Health Studies (Leadership) from Athabasca University. Linda worked in strategic planning with Alberta Health Services and managed adult education programs including post-graduate dietetic internship programs, NAIT students and staff training. She has just retired in the past year and thoroughly enjoyed her ELLA experience in the spring. She also ballroom dances (and is on the board for the Edmonton Ballroom Dance Association), and enjoys many activities including biking, downhill and cross-country skiing, cooking, golfing, curling, working out and connecting with her two sons and their families.



DID YOU KNOW?

- ELLA now boasts 811 members. Not all members attend ELLA's Spring Session every year, and some never.
- 80 % of ELLA members are female and 20 % are male.

A Sneak Peek at Spring Session 2015

ELLA Spring Session 2015 is shaping up and looking better than ever! Here is a sneak preview of a few of the courses on offer for 2015. This year we have added four more courses for a total of 41. This will give even more people an opportunity to enjoy ELLA Spring Session 2015!



Liz McCord coordinates the team that develops the Spring Session program.

An area of great interest to ELLA students has been the Middle East. This year we are delighted to have Dr. Mojtaba Mahdavi, a dynamic speaker who presented one noon hour a couple of years ago. His course will include **the revolutions and evolution of the Middle East** through democratization, a nuclear Middle East and the United States, the Arab Spring from Tunisia to Libya, Gaza occupation and the ‘ Hamas Enigma’, Israel and Palestine, and the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf.

Dr. Serge Cipko will present an **historical overview of the Ukraine** leading up to the current situation with Russia, as conflicts in that area are top of mind for many.

To round out the political possibilities, Michael Phair is back discussing **Edmonton urban political issues**; Dr. Tom Keating is covering **global human security** in food, health, environment and personal politics; and Nermin Allam will discuss **women, religion, and social change in the Middle East**, as women have served as a potent symbol in the Middle East and North Africa.

Moving on from politics, you can choose **philosophy** with Dr. David Wangler or **anthropology of religion** with Dr. Jodie Asselin who will explore some of the diversity of religious belief systems around the world including the role of myth, ritual, and symbols. She will lead you to think: What is religion? Why is there religion as opposed to no religion?

Our science line up is also very exciting. We have engaged Dr. Anne Fanning, the recipient of the Canadian Medical Association’s highest honour, the Frederic Newton Gisborne Starr Award, and professor in the department of medicine at the University of Alberta! Also an ELLA member and participant, Dr. Fanning will be coordinating a series of **discussions on global health**, including health determinants, disease burden, health governance and global strategy, communicable and non-communicable diseases and child and maternal health. Our very own Dr. Torah Kachur and Dr. Margaret Ann Armour return by popular demand; Dr. Armour will be discussing **the food we eat**.

Issues of **alternative energy sources** with Dr. Frank Weichman, and **climate change** with Don Macdonald are two other timely courses being offered.

Exploring social media and **preserving and sharing photo memories** are the two technology courses, and to keep things interesting, you can learn about the **birds of Alberta** and **electricity and magnetism** – in separate courses of course!

Fine Arts brings back delightful Michael Roeder presenting the lives and music of **Mozart, Brahms, and Rachmaninov**, Jeff McCune will discuss **great virtuosos of classical music**, and D. T. Baker returns to discuss **protest songs** from the middle ages to the present, revealing many intriguing stories.

There will be **five art courses** and **three on fitness**. Art instruction will include Frank Haddock teaching beginner/intermediate watercolour; intermediate abstract painting with Scott Cumberland; beginner drawing with Susanne Lamoureux; introduction to soft pastel with David Shkolny, and soapstone carving with Pat Galbraith.

We will continue with the idea of the Interest Circles. Last year we piloted this idea – an opportunity for ELLA members to meet other students who share a common interest and have a desire to learn from each other. Interest Circles are student-organised discussion or activity groups, proposed and coordinated by those who participate. We had four groups last year, and a couple of groups that formed after Spring Session and met during the year. Look on the notice board on the first day of ELLA for instructions on Interest Circles.

Members will be sent the 2015 Course Guide the first week in February 2015. Three weeks later you will be able to register on line. For those of you who are not completely comfortable with computers, recruit a friend or plan to be at the library on the day of registration to reduce the chance of disappointment in not getting the class you want. Those of you who will be away at the time of registration can register from anywhere in the world! You just have to figure out the time difference, as online registration starts at 9:30 a.m. sharp, Monday, February 23rd.

We look forward to seeing everyone in May for another exciting ELLA Spring Session!

Liz McCord – Coordinating Chair, Program Development Team

Call for ELLA Public Speakers and Presenters!

Are you enthusiastic about your ELLA experience and interested in speaking about it to others? Occasionally, we get requests from local seniors' organizations and seminars for retirees to present ELLA. It is an opportunity to share your interests and our information, and to encourage others to join us in May. We provide advertising materials, displays and PowerPoint presentations as required.

Is this something you enjoy?

Contact: Jeanna Baty, Chair Marketing Committee:
jeannabaty@telus.net



Jeanna Baty chairs the Marketing Committee (formerly Communications and Publicity committees).

What's the Best about ELLA?

When we began to think about another year of ELLA, we thought we would ask some of our long-term members about what they thought had led to the amazing success of our lifelong learning program.



Long-time ELLA members and volunteers (from left to right): Faith Fernald, Bernice Armstrong, Helen Sirois, Pat Shields, Helen Mott and Noma Morrissey.

We chatted with Bertha Strembicke, Pat Shields and Ray Lieberman, three of the dedicated volunteer founders of ELLA that jumped into a lot of work in 2001 to save older adult learning at the U of A when the Extension Department could no longer afford to offer it and was planning to eliminate it. They have all been faithful ELLA students for thirteen years, and Pat served on the ELLA Board for eight years, Ray for nine and Bertha volunteered in the ELLA office for many years. Adding their voices and opinions are Inge Vermeulen who served on ELLA's Program Committee for seven years, and Faith Fernald, a relative "newcomer" as she has attended only ten ELLA sessions. But in that time, she has served on the Board for six years, has been the Board Secretary, a wonderful volunteer in the office, and Chairperson of a few committees.

What did they think was the best part of ELLA?

- The standard of teaching – the quality of lecturers and the content of courses is always so interesting and varied.
- Ideas and opinions expressed by ELLA students on annual feedback forms directly affects the courses offered and instructors chosen the next year.

- Intellectual stimulation is what keeps us young!
- No homework or exams – all the advantages of university with none of the pressure!
- Meeting others of similar age and interests, and joining in lively class discussions with students who have a wealth of life experience, is so invigorating.
- The time works well because classes are during daylight hours, so snow and ice on the roads is less likely. In the spring, the location is great as there is more opportunity to walk or bike to class!



Long-time ELLA member and volunteer – Ray Lieberman.

- You can take courses that update you in the field you studied for a career, or dip into something completely new. For example, Ray was an engineer in his working days, and had few opportunities for arts options “the first time around.” In his “second time around” he has explored arts courses like music appreciation and poetry, and ventured into classes on political science. Inge said she found it comfortable to take courses where the content was somewhat familiar.
- Meeting new friends and reconnecting with old ones is great fun. Events like the luncheon and wind-up social are especially conducive to socializing, but daily lunch times give lots of time for chatting.
- They all appreciated the flotilla of amazing volunteers that keep everything running smoothly. They all thrived on the opportunity to make friends and socialize by volunteering for positions varying from the President of the Board to answering phones in the office.

These are the reflections of five ELLA members with a combined total of nearly 60 years’ experience at our Spring Sessions. We hope they inspire you to join us in 2015 to enjoy the stimulation of learning new concepts, perhaps stepping forward to volunteer, discussing new ideas, meeting new friends, and truly recreating yourself.

Helen Gillespie, Volunteer

DID YOU KNOW?

- 506 people registered for Spring Session in 2014. 431 of those registered in early February, within a week of registration opening!!
- Of the 506 ELLA registrants last Spring Session, 387 were returnees....and 119 were new members.

From Then to Now



Inge Vermeulen, ELLA's oldest member, shares her thoughts on ELLA.

During the 2014 ELLA Spring Session, I thought it would be interesting to talk with the oldest ELLA member at Spring Session and the youngest one, and ask them about their experience at ELLA. I was told that the oldest student was Inge Vermeulen (based, of course, on the age our members admitted to...). Inge is an engaging woman who has been going to ELLA since its earliest days.

How long have you been enrolled in ELLA?

I started going when the university ran a Spring Session for Seniors back in the 1990s. Then the university was going to stop offering it, and volunteers (including myself) stepped forward to save it. We became the Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association and cooperated with the university to run the Spring Session. ELLA was born. That was a long time ago. It is amazing that it has lasted so long. It is so good, and that is what has made it grow.

Tell us about some of the classes you have taken over the years?

This year I am taking Cora Taylor's **Freefall Writing**. She and I have been writing like that since the 1960s. We enjoy each other's company since we both come from similar writing backgrounds. I don't like opera on the stage, but I do like it on the radio. This year I am especially enjoying Jeff McCune's class, **Modern Opera: A walk on the Wild Side**. I have taken two of his other ELLA courses, and I like his sense of humour and the fact that he is so well prepared. I come from Europe and starting when I was 16, I have seen every Wagnerian opera because I have the patience to watch them.

Tell us more about your ELLA experience?

I have very little planning in my life and mostly I enjoy that, but there are times when I want discipline, and ELLA gives me that. I also like the people around me even if I do not know their names. We're all in the same boat!

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

One thing everyone should remember – old age is a privilege!

After talking with delightful Inge Vermeulen, we sought out the youngest member of ELLA and asked her about her experience. Although many ELLA members look young when they are sprinting to their classes at Spring Session, Jamie was the person with the fewest years, and she was enjoying ELLA’s stimulating variety of classes for the first time.

How did you get involved in ELLA?

I volunteer at Santa’s Anonymous where I wrap gifts for boys before Christmas, and that is where I met Germaine Chau whose enthusiasm got me involved. (Germaine is a former ELLA Board member and was the chair of the Program Implementation and Administration committees).

What courses are you taking this year?

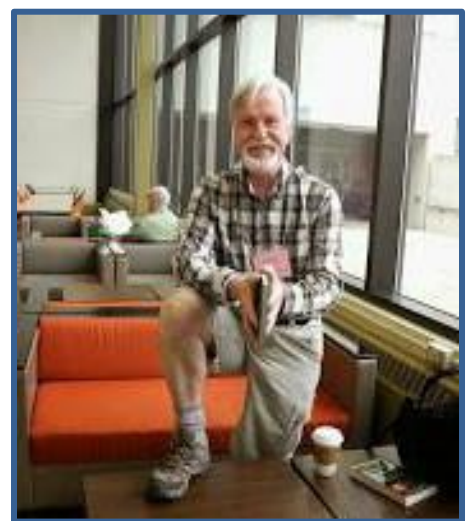
There were so many choices in the calendar that it was hard to choose. I had recently visited the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller and bought the dinosaur T-shirt, so I thought I’d better take **Palaeontology: Bringing the Past to Life**. I am also finding **Social Media** to be great fun, and I’m proud to say that after four years of having Facebook, I now have profile picture and a cover photo.

What more can you tell us about your ELLA experience?

One of the best things is that the people who are at ELLA want to be at ELLA. it’s not like regular university courses where you are forced to take certain courses whether you are interested in them or not. ELLA is fantastic, and I’m recommending it to every person I meet. My husband is still working, but when I told him I had learned the “Rule of Thirds,” he immediately wanted to take **Digital Photography for Compact Cameras** with Bob Lamb.

I really enjoyed connecting with these two young ELLA students who have both a generation-sized difference in age and a wide difference in years at ELLA. They reflected my own experience of ELLA and were so similar in the enjoyment and enthusiasm they found at ELLA. Both are looking forward to returning for many more years in the future!

Adrian Pierce, Volunteer



ELLA member and volunteer writer – Adrian Pierce.

Needed - Chair of Administration Committee

ELLA needs a Chair for the Administration Committee.

The Chair is on the ELLA Board of Directors and attends Board meetings one morning a month from September to June; and manages ELLA's office in Enterprise Square by leading a team of volunteers.

Administration Committee volunteers:

- Respond to inquiries by telephone, email, letters or in person
- Maintain the membership list
- Distribute correspondence, newsletters and course guides to members
- Assist with Spring Session registration...data entry, filing, copying

Do you have the following skills?

- Experience in management and human relations (anyone who has run a six-year-old's birthday party has great human management skills!)
- Computer skills
- Database management

Please consider volunteering for this important role. Apply to Judith Hibberd, Chair of ELLA Recruitment Committee at jmhibberd@shaw.ca.

Have Fun with Bones!

DINOLAB
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA



Last year during the Palaeontology course with Dr Phil Currie and Eva Koppelhus and their terrific students, they mentioned volunteer opportunities to work with dinosaur discoveries in their lab. They are very interested in having ELLA members join their volunteer contingent.

Eva said: “Volunteers can pretty much come and go as they wish”. People who would like to volunteer during the day,

between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., should email Clive Coy, the head technician at ccoey@ualberta.ca.

Those who would like to volunteer in the evenings, between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, should contact Michael Burns, a PhD student in the Currie lab at mburns@ualberta.ca.

ELLA Limericks

You're never too old to learn
And at ELLA wherever you turn
Are experiences new
Way more than a few
And you can choose what to learn

You can learn to carve or to write
Salsa and yoga delight
Those who wish to re-find
True peace of mind
And a body that's way “out of sight”

Each year many more come to find
New knowledge and some peace of mind
Those minds are still young
There are songs to be sung
For those of us still so inclined

As you age you can walk or can dance
And if you just give life a chance
Your mind still retains
Knowledge and gains
A new focus towards which to advance

Each year more folks find their way
To the ELLA classes each day
For three weeks in May
A special “holiday”
Before summer takes them away

Helen Gillespie, Volunteer

Get Linked into Info for Seniors

Are you connected to Edmonton Seniors Co-coordinating Council's (ESCC) Link-Letter yet? No? Well the ESCC compiles and distributes Link-Letter as a service to the senior sector. Anyone can subscribe to receive it and there is no fee or membership necessary. Of particular interest are the category headings: Items for Seniors, Volunteer/Work Opportunities for Seniors and Work Opportunities in the Senior-Serving Sector.

People can sign up to receive Link-Letter at: <http://www.seniorscouncil.net/sign-up-to-receive-escc-communications>

Information Centre

ELLA Board 2014 – 2015

President: Carol Vaage
Vice-President: Jill Swann-Lussier
Past President: John Elliot
Treasurer: Shirley Zylstra

Committee Chairpersons

<i>Administration:</i>	VACANT	<i>Program Development:</i>
<i>Advisory:</i>	Carol Vaage	<i>Coordinator:</i> Liz McCord
<i>Bylaws & Policies:</i>	Linda Smyth	<i>Evaluation:</i> Betty Grudnizki
<i>Documents and Records:</i>	John Elliot	<i>Humanities:</i> Jill Swann-Lussier
<i>Finance:</i>	Shirley Zylstra	<i>Ripple:</i> Gay Maddin & Campbell Ross
<i>IT:</i>	Fred Sawka	<i>Sciences:</i> Karen Mills
<i>Marketing:</i>	Jeanna Baty	<i>Recruitment:</i> Judith Hibberd
<i>Program Implementation:</i>	Colleen Burton-Ochocki & Roger Delbaere	

How to Contact ELLA

Phone:	(780) 492-5055. <i>Please leave a message.*</i>
Email:	exella@ualberta.ca
Visit or Write:	Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association (ELLA) University of Alberta, Faculty of Extension Suite 2-936B, 10230 Jasper Avenue Edmonton, AB T5J 4P6.
Office Hours:	<p>October 14 to December 11, 2014 Open Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>January 6 to February 19, 2015 Open Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>February 24 to February 27, 2015 Open Tuesday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.</p> <p>March 2 to April 24, 2015 Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Closed December 12, 2014 to January 4, 2015 February 16 (Family Day) February 23 (first day of registration) April 3 (Good Friday) & 6 (Easter Monday).</p> <p><i>* Our office is run entirely by volunteers. 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></p>
Website:	www.extension.ualberta.ca/ella