



Academy News



Special Edition, 2016

Welcome to the 25th Anniversary newsletter of the Academy for Lifelong Learning.

The Academy – History in a Nutshell

The Academy was launched in September 1991, with 8 workshops: Art, Economics, History, Literature, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, and Social Science. For the first 10 years, we operated on a per semester basis, with different workshops in the Fall Semester from what was offered in the Winter. Members paid fees per semester. The following workshops were offered for the Winter 1992 semester: Art, Asian Studies, Economics, History, Literature, Philosophy, Politics, Social Science, and Western Heritage.

In that first year, all workshops except one were held at the University Women’s Club. We moved to Victoria College the following year. The move to Knox College took place in the 2003/04 academic year.

In the meantime, the change to an annual calendar took place in 2001/2002. The growth in membership has been significant over the years, from 80 for our first semester in 1991 to over 360 now. But consider the number of workshops offered, from 8 in that first semester to 39 this year. That wouldn’t have happened without an even more significant growth in the number of members willing to step up to be workshop

facilitators. Well done, everyone who has ever been willing to facilitate workshops for the Academy.

In 1991, the registration fee was \$100 for the full year; new members joining for the winter semester also paid \$100 for the remaining half year. When you consider inflation over the 25 year period, our current rate of \$180 seems very reasonable, doesn’t it? We imagine the most significant cost-savings have been realized, thanks to our website. An organization can save a lot of money by not needing to print and mail calendars, newsletters and so on.

There is a lot more history available to the curious mind. Feel free to explore the website, especially the Archives!



Knox College – Current Home of the Academy

Charter Members

Through the past few weeks, interviewing charter members, reviewing interviews conducted by others, and chatting with various members, I am reminded of a number of things for which to be grateful. First and foremost, of course, is the Academy itself, its members, its programs, its diversity of opportunities to participate and to keep our brains active. But let’s face it, we would have none of that had it not been for the pioneers, those people of vision who got us started in the first place. And having some of those pioneers around 25 years down the road, to share their thoughts and their stories

with us, is a wonderful bonus. I hope you will read and enjoy their stories and agree with me that the Academy really does have a wealth of very interesting members.

In interviewing charter members, we first asked them why they joined the Academy when it was founded 25 years ago and what it was like back in the early days. All of the people we talked to had favourite workshops they remembered that they feel have enriched their lives, making life more interesting. We asked them to tell us about members whom they considered to be

truly memorable during the past 25 years. And what did they think about the changes that have come about since those early days? Finally, we asked whether they had any particular advice about facilitating workshops or making presentations or any special message in

I ♥ 1991

general for members who are new to the Academy. The following are abbreviated versions (for space reasons) of the interviews we conducted

with our charter members. For the full interviews, and more interesting material, please click on <http://www.allto.ca/interviewsfulltext.pdf>.

Laura Baldwin

Laura Baldwin recalls the excitement of the Academy's formative years. She and her late husband, Larry, found the Academy through a newspaper ad, and wanted the increased engagement it offered after attending lecture courses. They both served on the Academy's Board; also, Laura was called upon to form a committee to handle curriculum, special events, talks, and anything else that had to get done. With growing membership, these tasks led to the five main committees we have today.

Laura remembers Lyla Barclay steering us toward the move from Victoria College to Knox College, and mentioned other "stand-outs" such as Jean Iverson, who set us up with a two-year model for Board and Committee positions; memorable personality Finlay McKenzie; the musically indefatigable Peggy Sampson; and Helen Phelan's elegant spring luncheons held in



her home at her expense, until the numbers grew beyond the house and the garden canopy and had to be moved to rented venues. Laura also has a soft spot for Dugal Campbell, Linda Tu, Margaret Robertson and Josie Szczasiuk.

Laura has facilitated for many years on a wide variety of topics, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Islamic Literature, Poetry, Contemporary Authors, and Non-Fiction. She has been impressed with how the Academy adapts, continues to improve – for example, with our adoption of technology.

Advice to new members? Get involved! She loves to see our newer members volunteer, bringing a freshness and vitality to the Academy.

Thanks for helping make the Academy such a pivotal part of our lives, Laura!

Marjorie Ewing

Over a cup at David's Tea, Marjorie, beautifully attired as usual, remembered her transformative early Academy experiences. After she retired from a satisfying career in teaching, she was casting about for some stimulation. A friend pointed her toward the new Academy for Lifelong Learning and she jumped in, welcomed by like-minded people who were interested in learning and in one another. She fondly recalls entertaining evening shows prepared by and starring Academy members. The opportunity to socialize as well as learn was enriching.

The Academy motivated Marjorie to



read more, to especially enjoy the research of her own chosen topic. She found her interest in the world widen on many levels. After co-facilitating a workshop on Asia with Nancy O'Connor, she was more open to travel to exotic places.

Some facilitators and workshops stand out: Poetry with Nancy Hall, Cities with Bill Hall, Books Without Borders with Sandra Gold. An honourable mention goes to Arnie Bowers, the film buff who devised quizzes for Spring Luncheons and entertained Global Village workshop members in his home. Joan Campbell also got kudos.

In her ninetieth year, Marjorie still finds the Academy a significant life experience. The importance of discussion in workshops and the opportunity to engage everyone is as important as the presentation, she says. Marjorie

expressed a wish for flexible workshop expectations for our older elders.

It's a pleasure to have you in the Academy, Marjorie!

Don Hillhouse

After graduation in 1950 from the U of T, and apart from his business career, Don lectured in university courses for over 30 years in Business Organization and Strategic Planning. As a result he became involved in several Continuing Study initiatives, including the early stage planning for a self-directed "Life Long Learning" program. He worked with Eileen Ward and Mort Rashkis in drafting the By-Laws, Operating Rules and some aspects of a financial plan. Dr. Colin Woolf brought the concept to Toronto, which originated at Harvard and then was adopted at McGill. The team that came together was quite diverse from both academia and business, but recognized the opportunity and quickly moved forward to establish the Academy.



The workshops that Don has most enjoyed include Art with Robbie Robinson, Contemporary Film with Doug Wilson and The New Yorker with Jean Waller. At 87, his focus and interests are in the Now more than the Future or the Past!

Don believes the most important feature of the Academy is the remarkable diversity and accomplishments of the members, and their workshop contributions based on personal life experience, curiosity, world travel, education and intelligence.

Thank you, Don, for your early contributions to the Academy and your ongoing participation.

Jean Iverson

Jean had recently retired from a full-time job at the ROM and was looking for interesting ways to use her new-found freedom. She responded to the Academy's ad in the Globe and Mail and registered for the first year of workshops. She tells us she was busy for the next 15 years.

It soon became apparent to Jean that this was an organization with a future, meeting the needs of retirees through the commitment to peer learning.

The workshops Jean remembers most clearly are English History, Movers and Shakers, and Literature. They were all great learning experiences, Jean says, particularly doing the research necessary for preparing the presentation and participating in the discussion. She believes that learning enriches one's life.

Jean's interest in the early years was in the structure of the organization and how to make it work, with no office, no paid staff, and dependence on volunteers who changed every

year or two. She says that developing a workable system was endlessly interesting.

The English History facilitators were definitely memorable – Jim Torrie and Bill Hall. Jean also recalls an early Literature facilitator, Rivanne Sandler, and Arne Bower, who facilitated the foreign movie workshop The Global Village. And the Academy would not have survived without people like Margaret Robertson and Josie Szczasiuk.



Jean's advice for new members is to enjoy the Academy in all its educational and social activities. Do your part in making presentations, participating in the discussions and volunteering. You'll never look back.

Thank you, Jean, for your wise guidance, careful decisions and great strategic mind. You have been described to us as having been the Academy's "Alpha and Omega" through the early years.

Bonnie Lawrence-Shear

A single working mother of four, Bonnie received a notice as a U.of T. alumna about the Academy. The opportunity to do something outside of her responsibilities, to challenge her mind, was very appealing. Because of her job, lunchtime was the best option. She enjoyed the challenge and learning and just never left.

As soon as Film was offered, Bonnie chose that plus one other course. She has taken many other courses, often relating to Architecture. One that stands out in her mind was "Buildings of U.of T.," where they visited many buildings around the campus.

Bonnie states she has met many intelligent and very friendly people through the Academy. She says the Spring Talks are a particular favorite of hers, as are the luncheons at Christmas and the end of year.



The most memorable member to Bonnie was Helen (Gardiner) Phelan (and her husband Paul). Every spring they would so graciously open their beautiful house on Forest Hill Road and everyone was welcome. There was food, music, flowers, waitresses, champagne. They were unbelievably gracious to all of us.

Bonnie tells us that at first she was very apprehensive about speaking to any gathering, but the friendly receptions she received in the Academy have given her the courage to go out in the "world" and "try her wings." She recommends all new members take advantage of that opportunity.

Thank you, Bonnie, for your frankness and your ongoing commitment to the Academy.

Ross Linton

Ross first heard about the idea of an Academy for Lifelong Learning from Dr. Colin Woolf. He then attended the general organizational meeting which launched the Academy, and he volunteered then to be a facilitator.

He was a facilitator in Philosophy in Year 1, and has been a facilitator since then, covering a variety of subjects, including Jurisprudence / Legal, Churchill, Words that Changed the World, and many others. During his working life, this meant scheduling workshops from 12-2pm.

He credits the Academy for encouraging him to study a variety of subjects in depth to prepare the workshop agenda and assist with presentations.



members of the Academy and within workshops has been greatly improved thanks to email and the Academy website.

One member of his philosophy workshop he remembers well is the late Helen Phelan. She provided him with a DVD which dealt with *raison d'etre* for the founding of Women's College Hospital and its history. He remembers her coming to workshops in a chauffeured limousine, and continuing to come although fatally ill until she could no longer attend. There are many others who have attended his workshops that he remembers well.

Ross has enjoyed his many years as a member and facilitator and is pleased to be taking part in the celebration of the Academy's 25th Anniversary.

Thank you, Ross, for your many years of dedication to facilitating workshops.

Nancy O'Connor

Nancy joined the Academy because she had a strong interest in adult education, saw an article in the paper about this new organization and felt it was a perfect fit. The fact that the goal was for members to participate and not simply listen to lectures was particularly important to her. She also likes the fact that this model of learning has continued and emphasized that she would not have stayed a member if the subjects and people had not been interesting and her life had not been enriched.

Nancy feels the Academy has many bright, interesting, and wonderful people, and while she didn't specifically name anyone in particular, she did say that she learned a great deal from various facilitators and presenters, often things that encouraged her to carry on in her own work and activities. When



asked what advice she would offer to newer members of the Academy, Nancy said, "Be interested in doing. It's important to go into adult learning with a very open mind, to participate fully and to be willing to take a chance. Don't say no."

One final question was how it happened that Nancy started hosting the annual potluck picnic at her farm. She said it started over 20 years ago because members were looking for something social to do during the summer when there were no classes. And we don't want to jinx it, but the picnic has never been spoiled by a

rainy day.

Nancy, thank you for being an exemplary hostess and a guiding light to Academy members!

Wendy Warrillow

Wendy's involvement in the Academy was thanks to the great Jean Iverson. They had worked together at the ROM and were old friends. Wendy was working three days a week in Etobicoke and Jean asked her to come to a workshop on a non-work day just to make up the numbers. It is rather difficult to say "no" to Jean, so she signed up without much thought, got hooked and the rest is history.

Wendy has always loved Bill Hall's English History workshops and rarely missed a year. There was a wonderful China workshop facilitated by Nancy O'Connor, who was a consultant to Chinese business at the time.

All the workshops have enriched her life and have made it more interesting by opening up so many possibilities, persuading her to do



research on subjects she knew little about, and by meeting so many interesting people.

Wendy feels that the talks, the forums, the walks, the social events and the newsletter represent the most positive changes in the Academy.

Some of her most memorable members include the late Lucy Potts, for whom the words "charming" and "twinkling" were invented; the late Dugal Campbell who was an extraordinary member, participating in everything and full of life, intelligence and humour until the end; and Jean Iverson, who was the most superb administrator in the early days when it was sometimes a thankless task.

Wendy's advice for new members is simple: "Enjoy yourself."

Thank you, Wendy, for your continued support of the Academy and its members.

Founders

We would be remiss if we did not also acknowledge the outstanding contribution of our founders, the organizational committee behind the beginnings of our Academy. Without them, we may not have the Academy for Lifelong Learning and the wonderful educational and social opportunities it provides to all of us. These founders were Eleanor Burke, Ruth Ellenzweig, Audrey Herrema, Cynthia O'Beirne, Morton W. Rashkis, Colin Woolf, and Eileen R. Ward.

A Look Back in History

Significant International Events of 1991

- April 3 – Cease-fire ends Persian Gulf War
- April 15 – Europeans end sanctions on South Africa
- June 5 – South African parliament repeals Apartheid
- July 1 – Warsaw Pact dissolved
- July 10 – Boris Yeltsin becomes first freely elected President of Russian Republic
- December 25 – Soviet Union breaks up

Significant Canadian Events of 1991

- January 1 – the Goods and Services Tax comes into effect
- January 15 – Canadian forces begin participation in the Gulf War
- April 2 – Rita Johnston is elected Premier of B. C.; the country's first woman premier
- June 19 – the Dobbie-Castonguay commission is appointed to look into the constitution
- September 21 – the Academy for Lifelong Learning is founded in Toronto
- September 24 - the Dobbie-Castonguay commission recommends an elected Senate and recognizing Quebec as a distinct society

New Canadian Literary Works

- Rohinton Mistry - Such a Long Journey
- Douglas Coupland – Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture
- Margaret Atwood - Wilderness Tips
- Dave Duncan - Faery Lands Forlorn
- Hume Cronyn - A Terrible Liar
- Spider Robinson - Starseed

The Big Movies of the Year

Terminator 2: Judgment Day	TriStar Pictures / Carolco Pictures / Lightstorm Entertainment
Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves	Warner Bros.
Beauty and the Beast	Walt Disney Pictures
Hook	TriStar Pictures / Amblin Entertainment
The Silence of the Lambs	Orion Pictures

Song of the Year

"(Everything I Do) I Do It for You" Bryan Adams

Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (Burma)

Phyrne Parker author of the text and Assistant Editor of the Academy Newsletter
Brian Gaston Designer and Producer
With files from Laura Hill, Janet Broadley and Michael Foss
Liz Guccione Newsletter Editor