



Collegium News

Volume 10 Issue 3

Newsletter of the Cannon Valley Elder Collegium

July 2007

"A Questing Mind Never Retires"

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Executive Director

Lori Stanley
Associate Director

(Unfilled)
Operations Director

Myron Solid
Curriculum Director

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Ron & Bettye Ronning

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Organization

Northfield Retirement
Community

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Hoelt Family Foundation
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Kathy Mellstrom
Writer

Ray Eng
Publications Layout

Ten Years of Ĕl 'dər Kə - lē ' jē - əm*

by Kathy Mellstrom

Ron Ronning, co-founder of the organization sometimes abbreviated as CVEC in print, requests that we do not refer to it as "Sī 'vək," which he associates with the seasonal call of certain loud insects. Having said that, he went on to tell the tale of the Collegium's beginnings to the large gathering at the Spring Meeting last May.



Ron relaxes with the crowd while George Soule takes the Hot Spot.

Back in 1996 some friends and ideas came together around the theme of life-long learning and life-long teaching. News of a grant from the Minnesota Commission for the Humanities with a 10-days-out application deadline fueled the flame, and on the ninth day Ron fired off a draft proposal for an organization to bring liberal arts education to seniors in Northfield and surrounding areas. Funding was granted on the strength of the proposal. The City of Northfield also provided a start-up grant.

Four people comprised the first administration: Ron and Bettye Ronning, and Keith and Bev Anderson. Seventeen educators were recruited to teach for the three terms of the first academic year, fall 1997, winter and spring 1998. Many of them were emeritus or current professors from Carleton College and St. Olaf College, others were educators of

various backgrounds. These were dubbed "Northfield's Remarkable Brain Trust" by the Washington Post during a brief period in the national media spotlight.

For adults who went to college earlier in life, CVEC provides a second chance to take those courses that could not be squeezed into their undergraduate schedule. For those who did not attend college, it affords the opportunity to savor the intellectual stimulation enjoyed by thousands of young people in Northfield every year. And for instructors like Ron who "have the teaching disease," it is the gift of a full classroom eager to share their insights about a favorite subject. As Irish Poetry instructor Stan Frear put it, "It's like I've died and gone to heaven!"

The combination of those passionate learners and teachers, along with dedicated organizers and volunteers, has kept the Collegium going and growing. Now about twice as many courses – eleven next fall – are being offered per term and almost 500 students enroll in a year. Funding cuts, expansion and experimenting with different ways of delivering learning have tested the strength of the organization and have been managed gracefully. Many thanks to those who have invested their "brain funds" and time in what we all benefit from so abundantly.

*Elder Collegium, per the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 1975



From the Director, Bill Carlson

Our 2006-07 year has been another success with strong classes and considerable enthusiasm. We began the year with the news that the Minnesota Humanities Commission would no longer support programs such as ours. We ended the year stronger than ever, as was highlighted at our stimulating Spring Meeting, where co-founder Ron Ronning reviewed our 10 year history, and long term professor and leader George Soule shared some important perspectives. A beginning that involved great hopes and great uncertainties 10 years ago has developed into a strong program that provides outstanding learning opportunities. The Collegium is admired as a model for senior education, and our lost funding has been replaced by generous contributions from our members. We are strong in both financial and human resources.

I would like to commend George Soule for his excellent leadership of the Board during the past two years. It has been a pleasure working with a thoughtful learner and teacher who has contributed his skills to the smooth running of the Collegium. We are now fortunate to have Vern Faillettaz as the new Board Chair. Vern's work as Curriculum Committee Chair has been excellent, and central to a substantial increase in the number of courses offered.

Dramatic increase in enrollment levels and number of courses offered over the past two years demands additional staffing. Fortunately Myron Solid has agreed to be our first Curriculum Director. He will recruit new instructors and work with faculty to develop courses and class schedules. Myron spent many years in the Education Department at St. Olaf and has led international study groups. Thus, he comes with both a clear understanding of liberal arts and experience in organizing programs. Welcome aboard, Myron!

As Teresa Ballentine retires we will also be working on the staffing and organization of our other administration activities. Lori Stanley will be the key person, but we will be looking for an additional staff person who has administrative experience and is comfortable with the computer applications. Our goal is to enable students and teachers to concentrate on learning: the administration process should be invisible.

I continue to be impressed with the Collegium and with its commitment to learning and teaching. We are a model for the entire state and I am honored to be working with and for all of you.

Bill

Some Burgundian Elders

by Kathy Mellstrom

While on a recent research trip to the Burgundy region of France I did not manage to check out senior education per se, but I did observe active elders in action. Many were taking bus tours to other places to visit historical sites, museums and other points of interest, sampling a local restaurant along the way. This sometimes interfered with their volunteer work, as one of the librarians at the tiny village library open only on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons seemed to be gone on excursions about half the time.

There seemed to be a strong desire among seniors to organize projects that benefited the entire community, as in establishing the above library and also in restoring the 11th century Romanesque chapel in the hilltop hamlet. And while I was there, a group of them set up an evening "Walk in the Woods" in search of information about Little Red Riding Hood, in which people of all ages participated.

(Continued on page 4)



Everyone meets by the chapel before setting out

CVEC Classes
 Fall 2007
 September 17, 2007 - November 10, 2007

Title of Class <u>Time of Class</u>	Professor <u>Location</u>
Shakespeare's Tragedies in Film Monday 9:30am-11:30am	James McDonnell NCRC Room 106
Stories of Survival Monday 1:30pm-3:30pm	Jane McDonnell Millstream Commons
Discover Northfield Area Treasures Tuesday 9:30am-11:30am	Brynhild Rowberg Northfield Retirement Community
The Journey from Chant to the Britten War Requiem Lecture Course Tuesday/Thursday 9:30am-11:30am Begins Sept 11	Robert Scholz Northfield Retirement Community Chapel
The Psalms: Texts For Our Times Tuesday 1:30pm-3:30pm	Dave Quarberg NRC Parkview West
The War in Iraq: History, Origin and Evolution Wednesday 9:30am-11:30am	Hartley Clark Village on the Cannon
Arguing About Art Wednesday 1:30pm-3:30pm	Gary Iseminger Three Links Conference Room
Pasternak's Dr Zhivago Thursday 9:30am-11:30am	James Walker Village on the Cannon
Bauhaus to Our House Thursday 1:30pm-3:30pm	LaVern Rippley NCRC Room 106
The African Experience Thursday 6:30pm-8:30pm	Joseph Mbele Village on the Cannon
The History of Northfield Friday 9:30am-11:30am	Marie Gery Millstream Commons
NCRC Northfield Community Resource Center NRC Northfield Retirement Community	<u>Start of Registration</u> August 9, 2007

NOTE: For a description of the courses, go to the CVEC web page (www.cvec.org).

Detailed descriptions of Fall 2007 trimester courses and instructors are also available immediately on the web page, even though the course brochure does not come out until August. Click on "Course Descriptions and Brochure" under "Fall 2007" near the top of the page. Get a jump on your plans, or keep up to date while away from Northfield, through the web site.



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Some Burgundian Elders (Continued from page 2)

Over the course of two and a half hours and ending in darkness, we trekked along an established trail through the forest with stops for costumed storytellers along the way. We heard some local stories, several about wolves; we heard a couple of updated and original versions of the Red Riding Hood tale; and finally we were read the “original, true” version of the tale as set down by a French fabulist some centuries back.

I was impressed by the the intergenerational participation and by the initiative of the elder population in preserving and sharing local history in ways that are meaningful and interesting to younger generations.



This “Grandmère” tells what her own grandmother did when a wolf followed her home—she clapped her wooden shoes together to keep him back.

This Inspector Clousseau-like detective tells our Red Riding Hood that the original RRH, a suspected terrorist and highway robber, has never been caught and may be hiding in South America somewhere.



Misc. News

George Soule – he is faculty, remember – revealed what CVEC taught him at the spring 2007 meeting. His revelations have been posted on our web page www.cvec.org. Just click on “George Soule Spring Meeting 2007 Talk” and the link will take you there.

Volunteers How would you like to spend a little time with a few interesting and interested Collegium members (like you!)? We occasionally need a few extra people to help with basic tasks (mailings, etc) or events. Contact Lori Stanley at 507-645-9790 if you are willing to be called from time to time to volunteer. Thanks!