



ALL News

Something to say?

We want to hear from you! Do you have comments on this issue or ideas for future issues? Drop us a line. Do you like to write? Are you an illustrator or cartoonist who could contribute to future issues? Tell us who you are and, if you wish, attach a sample of your work. Email us at allinfo@acadiau.ca or call 1-800-565-6568. Submissions published are subject to the discretion of the ALL Board and available space. ALL News is available online at all.openacadia.ca in a printable format.

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Where have all the flowers gone?

by Peter Eaton

Changes in the climate of Atlantic Canada can and will be measured in changes in the vegetation of the Acadian Forest ecosystem. Some plants will disappear and others will move in as weather patterns shift.

To help track these changes, the ALL Centre is joining once again with the KC Irving Environmental Centre and Open Acadia to send an expedition in search of rare plants. From July 27 to August 7, enthusiastic ALL members, botanists and other scientists will collect plants on Campobello Island, New Brunswick; in Maine near Baxter State Park; and in central western New Brunswick.

Plants will be collected sustainably for the EC Smith Herbarium in the Irving Biodiversity Collection at Acadia University. Where possible, a second collection will be offered to a herbarium in New Brunswick or Maine.

As well as having fun on this 12-day expedition, participants will learn how to identify rare plants in the field, how to prepare them for herbarium collections, and other general naturalist skills.



July 2008 excursion to Cape Breton Highlands
(photo: Peter Eaton)

The project will also take its messages about rare plants and changing ecosystems to schools and the general public through presentations, information sessions and a final report.

The expedition builds on last summer's trip to the highlands of Cape Breton, where several new and rare species of plants were found. This summer's longer trip is made possible by a grant from the New Horizons for Seniors program.

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Member spotlight

by Jan O'Hara

When you first meet Gisela Westphalen, what strikes you is her extraordinary strength and energy.

Gisela loves nature. But it is more than that. Her philosophy is to enjoy nature and make it a part of her life. She bikes, practises organic gardening, and skis. She also swims, but only in the bay or in lakes, where she can experience the natural setting in its infinite manifestations.

Keep on surfing

Here's one more reason to keep surfing the net: it can help you stay mentally sharp as you age. A study from UCLA showed greater brain activity among people aged 55 to 76 who were experienced searching the Internet compared to those with no Internet skills. Researchers suggested that addressing the complexities of searching the net, and sorting that information, might help keep the brain healthy and active. (Source: www.drweil.com/drw/u/TIP03137/Another-Reason-to-Use-the-Internet.html)



Gisela Westphalen and semipalmated sandpipers (photo: Neil Tampolis)

Gisela shares her love of nature with ALL by leading winter outings of cross-country skiing. In fact, she has been involved in ALL nearly from its beginning. After returning to the Wolfville area in 2000, she became an ALL board member. With an interest in the humanities, Gisela, with David Wandler, helped to organize an ALL course, "Ideas in Literature." Her literary interests continue to be strong: this summer's reading project focuses on German literature.

Her enthusiasm is a gift to us all.

ALL on call

Whatever the weather, you may never have to miss an ALL class or seminar again. For information on storm days, course updates, cancellations, room changes and ALL announcements call:

902-585-1434 press 1
or
1-800-565-6568 press 1

This information line is a recorded message of ALL events only and will be updated daily Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm.

Diggins named Volunteer of the Year

by Rachel Cooper

ALL board member Claire Diggins has been named not only Volunteer of the Year for Annapolis County this year, but also a Provincial Volunteer of the Year. Nominated by the Clean Annapolis River Project, Diggins has served on its board of directors for six years and collects water samples as one of CARP's Annapolis River Guardians.



Claire Diggins

She has volunteered at the elementary school in Middleton, helping with enrichment sessions, and at the Middleton Baptist Church in many capacities. She has sung with the Middleton Choral Society for many years and supports the Middleton Lions Club. As part of the Blomidon Naturalists Society she has helped plan and execute provincial and federal nature conferences in Wolfville. Diggins is also involved in the Maritime Breeding Bird Atlas update and keeps a regular count of the chimney swifts at the Middleton chimney.

Annual meeting draws a crowd

by Rachel Cooper

The ghost of Robert Burns elicited laughter and applause at ALL's Annual General Meeting, courtesy of Michael Binns' literary imagination and skill with accents. Binns' reading of a lively piece of historical fiction, featuring the spirit of the 18th-century Scottish poet, was a highlight of the April 21 meeting at Centreville Baptist Church. About 50 people came to mingle, find out what ALL has been doing over the past year, and enjoy the lunch.

Besides Binns, ALL members who shared creative pieces were Susan Paddock, displaying three art quilts that combined piecing and appliqué; Heather Millett, who showed a painting, "Visiting the Cabin"; and Rachel Cooper, who also read a short piece of fiction.

Outgoing board chair Peter Eaton welcomed everyone and introduced old and new board members. Eaton, Trudy Ward and Janet Muttart were retiring from the board, and Jan O'Hara and Barbara MacKay were joining (MacKay has since had to resign, but we hope she'll be back). Anthony Harding thanked the retiring board members for their work and dedication. Rachel Cooper is the new board chair.

Members were invited to talk about ALL courses and seminars they've taken, and many did. Positive comments ranged around courses on Shakespeare, painting, writing, economics and comparative religion.

Eaton thanked Open Acadia staff Debbie Kiely and Susanne Winters for their support and hard work on behalf of ALL.

"This has been a bumper year for ALL," Eaton said. "A strong board has been working for you, and it has been a treat working with Open Acadia. The Brown Bag Lunches have been a huge success, and we're starting to connect with other 50-plus learning centres across the region."

ALL strengthens regional links

by Rachel Cooper

ALL is working to promote cooperation among Atlantic Canada's eight English-language learning centres for people over 50.

A conference call in March, initiated and hosted by ALL, got people from five of them talking about how we might help each other. We shared ideas about programs, combining travel or outings, and looking for joint projects. Also taking part was the Mahone Bay Area Seniors Project, which wants to start its own learning centre this year.

A face-to-face meeting this summer, also hosted by ALL, is in the works.

Summer potluck

Watch for details of ALL's "lunch & launch" potluck in August. Bring your potluck favourite and pick up your course calendar for 2009-10. If you can help us distribute the calendar by leaving a few at your local businesses, post office and community centre, please call us at 585-1434 or 800-565-6568 or email allinfo@acadiau.ca.

Can't make a seminar?

Please let us know if you've signed up for a seminar and can't attend. If there's a wait list, you'll be helping another ALL member, because we'll give them your spot. Even if there isn't a wait list you'll be helping the environment – we won't be printing more hand-outs than we need. Please phone 585-1434 or email us at allinfo@acadiau.ca.

Visit our website

Check our website often to find out what's new in Acadia Lifelong Learning: all.openacadia.ca

Call for courses!

Send us your ideas for ALL courses, seminars or other events. Know someone who might teach or lead? Email, phone or write us a letter to make your pitch. The ALL Board will consider every suggestion.

Brown Bag Lunches

Look for the start of the popular Brown Bag Lunch program again in September. Every Thursday at noon, bring your lunch and a healthy curiosity to the beautiful Fountain Learning Commons (upstairs). You'll enjoy exciting topics and speakers and lively company. If you have an idea for a speaker or topic, or would like to be a speaker yourself, email us at allinfo@acadiu.ca or call 1-800-565-6568.

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Instructor spotlight

by Anthony Harding

Bruce Matthews points to a large map of Sri Lanka to explain how, in 1970, his life took a new direction. He was studying ancient religious texts at what was then the University of Ceylon, preparing his doctoral thesis on Buddhist spirituality. But the quiet progress of his research was interrupted when a Maoist-style insurrection provoked by class and caste inequalities nearly tore the country apart.

At the same time, Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism was becoming increasingly strident, and the combined forces of economic, political and religious distress opened up a whole new way to understand how the Buddhist faith was involved with real-life needs and concerns.

Since then, Matthews has concentrated on the fascinating subject of religion and politics in Buddhist Asia.

Everywhere in the last two decades, "religion has come back into the public space," he says.

He hopes that by teaching such courses as the upcoming six-week ALL course on Buddhism, he can show something of the grace and power of classical Buddhist teaching and the faith's involvement in today's world. A final aim is to help build cross-cultural understanding.



Bruce Matthews in Burma

ALL helps shape international summit

by Rachel Cooper

An international summit on the "Silver Economy" is slated for Halifax next year, and ALL has a voice in its planning. The summit is being organized by the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors.

In its invitation to ALL and others, the Department said it wants the summit to give delegates tools and contacts that will help them plan for an aging population.

On behalf of ALL I attended the Partners' Forum in Halifax on June 24. About 35 people from many different organizations brainstormed ideas and initiatives for the Nova Scotia they'd like to see in 25 years.

Participants also voted on topics and themes for the summit to address. Key choices included sustainable rural communities, a cultural shift about ageism, and changes to the reliance on volunteers – all topics that dovetail one way or another with ALL and its members.

The Department of Seniors will keep participants informed as plans proceed. If the Silver Economy Summit is something ALL can contribute to and benefit from, then we'll be there.