
*This issue of **And By The Way, Retirees.** was assembled and edited by Deborah Blacklock, Judy Boxler, Patricia Cia, Martin Gerson, and Dave Lidstone with contributions by Alan Cooper and Kevin Craib. Current news & updates are available at <https://lcar.ca/>.*

LCAR UPDATE

LCAR WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Langara College Association of Retirees (LCAR) is a network of all former faculty, staff, and administrators who have retired from Langara College. LCAR was created to allow us to stay connected with each other through the pursuit of activities of common interest, and to facilitate retirees' continued engagement with the College and its students.

Please register as an LCAR member to receive information about member benefits, and to hear of our upcoming events. Membership is free and it's never too late to join! Register at <https://lcar.ca/>.

Retirees who joined LCAR since the last edition of this newsletter include

Diana Low

LANGARA SUPPORTS FOR LCAR

The LCAR Board was sad to see Shannon Eekhout leave Langara at the beginning of January. As Executive Assistant to People & Culture, Shannon had been our primary connection to Langara. She supported us in meetings, worked with Print Shop, Catering, and Facilities to ensure our events went smoothly, helped manage our formal society registration and documentation, and so much more. We held an informal "Thank You" gathering for Shannon at Dublin Crossing in March.

We are happy to report that Caitlin Van Kesteren has joined Langara as Executive Assistant to People & Culture. She has taken on the duties to support LCAR while learning about us and our members. Caitlin will monitor the retirees101@langara.ca email.

The approved LCAR Minutes are at <https://lcar.ca/our-society/meeting-minutes/>.



LCAR GRAND GALA 2025

By Roger Holdstock, April 2025

Dedicated to the memory of Courtenay Dobbie, Studio 58 Artistic Director, 2021-2024

Not to be confused with a mini gala, the GRAND GALA reflects the grandeur of the traditional Langara Gala of the previous century. We don't have Tom Meikle resplendent in two different tuxes during the evening, but Robert Leaf paid a great homage to Tom by saving a, well, remarkable change of suit for the last act of the evening. If you thought last year's mirthless, over-earnest emcee wore a tasteless jacket (thank you, Dave, for saving us from a repeat of that)*, Rob definitely upped the ante this year—with trousers to match. But more of Rob later.



Robert Leaf, Photo AM

The sixth iteration of the LCAR Grand Gala opened with the *Gala Grand Band*, and the audience already had their money's worth after the opening numbers. Dan Nykon on blues harp and Bob Walker on sax exchanged riffs on Nat Adderley's "Work Song" like a conversation written in blues. And in every number that followed, the band played at a high level and showed they love what they do. Dave Lidstone has brought together some regulars and some newcomers who all played their hearts out and clearly had a good time doing so. Besides Dan and Bob we had Brian McGibney (forever) on keyboard and vocal, Dave Lidstone (band wrangler) on lead and rhythm guitar, and two very welcome guests: Bud Currie on drums and Ross Nichol on bass guitar.



Grand Gala Band: Dan N, Dave L, Bud C, Bob W, Ross N, Brian MG, Photo: AM



Dan Nykon, Photo: AM



Goodbye to Rosie, Photo: AM

Dan Nykon led off the acts with two solo blues harp numbers. The first set a new standard for informative introductions. Charles Danes, Dan tells us, received a Nobel Peace prize after WWI but also wrote a tune ("Melody in A Major") which later became the song "All in the Game." Dan played it with the pure tones associated with orchestral instruments.

Next up were the duo *Goodbye to Rosie*—not a reference to a dead dog they assure us. Stacey Collins from Modern Languages and her partner Neil Thompson are seasoned performers with a lively delivery. On the Beatles "Ticket to Ride" Neil showed that he not only plays fine rhythm guitar but can sing with a nice falsetto. Their second number was a Neil original, "Only You Can Take Me Home," and after 25 years together that's probably true.

Kathleen Oliver (current English Department Chair) told a story that she has done for *The Flame* storytelling group. You had to have been there (Why weren't you?) to experience the way her well delivered candid details about her 39th birthday party loosened up the audience. Her kissing party with a circulating Kissing Fairy taught her she had "nothing to fear but life itself."



Kathleen Oliver, Photo: PC

Between performances two Studio 58 pros, Carol Chrisjohn and Bruce Kennedy, who go all the way back to the original Gala, managed the stagecraft as only they could—flawlessly.



Just Retired & Long Gone, But Hangin' On: Susan C, Bob W, Tim H, Caroline M, Photo: PC

The next performers were tagged *Just Retired & Long Gone, But Hangin' On*. The bluegrass sound to that name forecasts the music of Susan Calvert, Bob Worcester, Tim Higgs, and Caroline Murphy (guest). Guitar, mandolin, and fiddle accompany three songs as interesting and relevant as their titles: “To Work In Tall Buildings,” “In Troubled Times,” “Floods of South Dakota.” These songs and the group’s style of harmony suggest what we would be missing if we turned our backs entirely on American culture “in troubled times.”

And then, YOUTH! The Studio 58 Term C tap class under the direction of Shelley Stewart Hunt brought on their incomparable energy. After a solo piece by Joel Bakajika, the whole class tapped their hearts out to two numbers often associated with competitions: “Shim, Sham, Shimmy” and “BS Chorus.” Wearing t-shirts saying “No Tappy, No Happy,” these dancers reminded me of what I most miss about teaching—the students.



Joel Bakajika, Photo: AM



Studio 58 Term C Tap Class, Photo: AM

After an intermission where nonalcoholic cocktails and beer were served by Alan Cooper and Meena Wong (guest), the band fired us up for Act II with Brian McGibney featured on Dan Penn’s “The Dark End of the Street.” Those familiar with Brian know that he can channel Van Morrison (and Joe Cocker), and he convinced me that this was a Van Morrison song—even though Morrison never recorded it.



Brian McGibney, Photo: AM



Poole and Craib: Gary P, Kevin C, Photo: AM

First up in Act II were a pair we Gala regulars have enjoyed before, and they get better every time. *Poole and Craib* are a symbiotic duo. Kevin Craib plays ever-tasteful guitar fills and harmonies while Gary Poole (guest) plays guitar and sings original lyrics. As Meena Wong commented after the show, they are “songs for our stage in life.” Gary ‘sells’ his songs in the best way, convincingly, as though he were performing them for the first time. I’ve heard “Breath” a few times now, and it never fails to affect me. I understand that Kevin gave Gary a tune and Gary provided the words, like Lennon and McCartney, and the result is an organic whole.

Then Keeley Coleman, Daniel Marte, and Emma Tow gave solo tap dance performances, each in a different style. Keeley led with “The End is Here”: what I would call dramatic interpretive tap (but I just made that up), including athletic springs from the floor. Daniel brought another style—more a stomp—strong and percussive. Emma concluded with the “philosophy that jazz is for ordinary people”—a more traditional expression of tap.



Keeley Coleman, Photo: AM



Emma Tow, Photo: AM



Daniel Marte, Photo AM

I’ll be honest, I’ve attended Galas that seemed longer than needed. This was not one of those. When Rob Leaf introduced Edgar Avelino as the final performer, I felt that one of the best of all Galas was wrapping up. Edgar is simply astonishing (I still find it a secular miracle that Dave Lidstone and Edgar Avelino—two of the best guitarists in my acquaintance—shared a Math office all those years). After diverging last year, Edgar returned to his roots with *Violoa Brasileiro*—sambas e bossas. He gave us a master class in Brazilian classics.



Edgar Avelino, Photo: AM

Ahhh, but the evening didn’t end there. *The Gala Grand Band* and *The Grand Emcee* (in a new suit which defies description, except for its resemblance to a fruit salad) brought the whole shebang to a . . .climax.



Dave Lidstone, Photo: AM

Dave Lidstone sang with his inimitably rich voice an evocative, painful song recorded by Elvis, “She’s Not You.” As the band brought the night to an end, we were all treated to the spectacle of a dancing fruit salad. Dr. Bob was in fine and zany form, and that’s just how we love him.

Lots of people helped to bring this memorable night to fruition (sorry, it’s a fixation), but Dave Lidstone must be singled out as the persistence behind the survival of the Gala. He is, however, ably supported by the production team of Gail Bremer, Patricia Cia, Alan Cooper, Kevin Craib, Carol Chrisjohn, Bruce Kennedy, Robert Leaf, Brian McGibney, and Roy Sinn.



Robert Leaf, Photo: PC

Thanks also go to the Studio 58 students Hernán Alosó, Adrianzén Abanto, Alek Toledo- Cisak, and Emma Tow; and to Studio 58 staff and faculty Halla Bertrand, Ruth Bruhn, Kevin MacDonald, Raes Calvert, and Shizuka Kai. Photos by Fine Arts student Alexina Morisette.

With that, the ink-stained wretch retires his pen and ends this chapter in the magnificent history of Langara Galas and LCAR Grand Galas. May they live on.



Roger Holdstock, Photo: VD

* Editorial comment: The author is being far too self-effacing here. His work last year as emcee was far from “mirthless” and his sartorial choice was stunning. Judge for yourself.

Photos by Alexina Morisette (AM), Patricia Cia (PC), and Valerie Dunsterville (VD).

Editorial choices by Dave Lidstone

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

LCAR Casual Socials and Workshops.

We post event notices to the LCAR forum and website. Summer socials tend to be informal while workshops and events such as the Grand Gala, Mini-Gala, and AGM require registration.

STATUS UPDATE – LCAR BURSARY

Langara retirees are staunch supporters of our students, especially in their time of need. In order to recognize retiree giving and our common goal of helping our students succeed, the Langara College Association Retirees Fund was established and currently has \$11,400 which we are trying to build up to a self-sustaining endowment level (\$25,000). In addition, LCAR is providing a \$800 bursary per year for the next three years to a student in need. **It is never too late to help our students.** Donate at <https://lcar.ca/bursary/>.

IN MEMORIAM

In Memoriam (<https://lcar.ca/in-memoriam/>) commemorates deceased Langara employees. If you know of someone who should be on this list, please consider submitting a testimonial (text in an email is fine). We will gladly add to [existing submissions](#). Send your stories to memorials@lcar.ca. Click on the underlined names below to read more about our former colleagues. Links go to either the LCAR In Memoriam page or to the Vancouver Sun-Province Remembering section <https://vancouver.sunandprovince.remembering.ca/>.

Courtney Dobbie passed away on November 22nd, 2024. She was a graduate of Studio 58, a faculty member, and later, artistic director. A celebration of her life was held on May 18th, 2025 at Performance Works.

Richard Graham Hopkins passed away peacefully on May 12th, 2025. Richard immigrated to Vancouver from the UK. He taught English at VCC/Langara College. In 1998, celebrating its first decade, [a Pacific Rim Magazine article](#) wrote that “Hopkins was the major force behind Langara’s Publishing Program. The idea for the program had developed naturally during the production of the magazine. ‘It gathered momentum and we realized that the technological changes occurring in the publishing industry offered new opportunities for the college and the students,’ Hopkins explains” – Pacific Rim Magazine 1998.

RETIREE TALES

After the formal working life, retirees often explore other passions and have time for reflection. In this issue we are happy to welcome Deborah Blacklock to our newsletter team and are very happy to have her contribute with her Reflections on Retirement.

If you wish to contribute your story or creative endeavors, please contact us at newsletter@lcar.ca.

REFLECTIONS ON RETIREMENT

By Deborah Blacklock

I’ve been fully retired for two years now, and it’s not what I expected.

There are definite advantages to being retired: I no longer have to commute, and never again will I have to mark essays (though I cannot escape noticing grammar or spelling errors), or listen to grade-related

pleading. The insomnia that plagued me for the last years of work is gone. (Huzzah!) Reading for fun has been a major activity, and I've read more novels in the last two years than the previous decade.

Also, I have all the time I want to explore new hobbies. Recently, I started lawn bowling, a game so similar to curling that it leads me to suspect that the same people invented both games to keep themselves busy summer and winter.

But all that free time can also lead to days of drifting without purpose or accomplishment, or even leaving the house. I tried volunteering at a couple of places, but for different reasons, they didn't work out.

Everything seems to take more effort than before. I miss the casual social contact, the ability to meet someone for tea or lunch on the spur of the moment, or even to chat between classes. Now, meetings need to be planned, sometimes weeks in advance. Even phone calls occasionally require an appointment, and exercise that isn't scheduled in advance doesn't happen.

I miss lecturing. A few weeks ago, I found myself outlining some of the reasons for the language politics in Quebec to my upstairs neighbour who's from South Africa. He was very polite.

But back to the beginning—retirement is not what I expected. I expected to travel, but the deteriorating health of my cats has forced me to stay home. I lost two last year, and the third has ongoing issues that make him a very high maintenance pet. To keep him company after the first two died, I adopted a kitten, which has created another set of challenges.

I also expected and planned to fulfill a long-held dream of carving out a career as a writer of speculative fiction. I had thought that all I needed was time, which I now have, but the writing is not happening. At least not yet.

So far, retirement is turning out to be similar to my first non-teaching term. I remember vividly that, after years of working as a non-regular faculty member and then a reg-in-temp, I thought I was going to spend my first non-teaching term accomplishing at least a dozen different projects I'd been considering. Instead, I spent a lot of time sleeping and generally recharging my batteries.

Am I glad I retired? Absolutely! I am very grateful to have a pension and the freedom it allows me. It's just taking me a while to create a post-work life for myself.

AND ON 49TH

Langara launched the **first phase of the new website** (<https://langara.ca/>). This first phase, launched May 21st, focuses on migrating critical information for prospective students to support recruitment. Over the summer, the sections on the Library, Health Services, Bookstore, Athletics, Campus and Facilities, and Departments will be updated to optimize content for current students.

Langara introduced a **new logo** on April 3rd at the LangaraFest Open House. This change reflects a recommendation from the Musqueam Advisory Committee that we make a more direct and visible reference to Musqueam land in our branding. The result is a new logo that leads with “Langara” and includes the phrase “at Musqueam” beneath it in both hənq̓əminəm and English.



In 2016, Langara was gifted its Musqueam name: snəwəyəl leləm' – house of teachings. This name is not going away. While it no longer appears directly in the logo, it remains a cherished part of our identity, and its use is incorporated in brand guidelines.

snəwəyəl leləm' LANGARA COLLEGE NEWS & EVENTS

The following news and stories are available in full on the Langara College website. A few of those we thought may interest you include:

- [Strangers on a Train: a decade of building bridges in Vancouver's literary scene](#)
- [From the Vancouver riots to the Olympics: how Langara's Rich Lam captures history through photography](#)
- [Igniting creativity and conversation: Author Jasmine Sealy named 2025 Writer in Residence](#)
- [Play, learn, and grow: the Langara program that's changing childhood education](#)
- [Meet the Langara student leading a thriving Black community on campus](#)
- [How a decades-old tradition with Japan connects Langara students across generations](#)
- [Langara launches Stackable: a bold new brand and strategy for Continuing Studies](#)

These stories and more Langara news and events are available at <https://langara.ca/news-events>.

CAMPUS EMPLOYEE NEWS

With **Dr. Susan Kelsall's** departure on March 1st, **Dr. David Wright**, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts has been appointed Interim Dean, Faculty of Management.

Dr. Julie Longo, Associate Vice-President, Academic, left Langara at the end of May 2025. Sunita Wiebe, previously serving as director of the Office of Academic Quality Assurance, took on supervisory responsibilities for several areas that had been overseen by Julie.

After 34 years at the College, **Kelly Sveinson** has announced his retirement. He has held several academic leadership positions including coordinator of the environmental studies program, chair of the chemistry department, and division chair of humanities. Kelly co-developed unique experiential educational programs, such as Haida Gwaii studies and Fraser River studies, place-based learning opportunities that paired academic courses with rafting and beach hiking. He retires from the position of director of the Applied Research Centre.

The Professional Photography Department announced their second **Photographer in Residence: Pooya Nabei**. His residency project, "An Old Reverie," explores the myriad struggles that individuals and families face as they write their stories in a foreign land.

The Langara Foundation 2024 Annual Report celebrates the impact the Langara community has made over the year. Read more at <https://students.langara.ca/foundation/about/foundation-report.html>.

The Office of Student Conduct, Accountability and Support (SCAS) supports the students, staff, and faculty of Langara College. Their 2024 report indicates that 1,172+ student connections were made through one-on-one meetings and/or educational engagement opportunities, 1,320 academic and non-academic reports were processed, and 51 educational engagement opportunities were offered to students, staff and faculty. In addition, the report notes a 12% decline in the number of reported academic integrity breaches, but a 7.1% increase in the number of reported incidents of non-academic behaviour.

The **PACWEST Women's Curling Team** has made history by capturing the 2025 CCAA National Curling Championship Gold in Lethbridge, Alberta. Among the championship-winning athletes is a Langara College student, Erin Fitzgibbon, who is enrolled in the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA).

The Facilities Department is undertaking a major renovation project to upgrade the exterior stairways of the A Building. The project is anticipated to end on July 3rd.

LangaraFest 2025 Open House was held on April 3rd. More than 2500 people attended, generating a vibrant energy and atmosphere on campus. Check out highlights of the event on Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18350121856148645/>.

NEWS FROM OUR AFFILIATES

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY RETIREE ASSOCIATIONS OF CANADA/ASSOCIATIONS DE RETRAITÉS DES UNIVERSITÉS ET COLLÈGES DU CANADA (CURAC/ARUCC)

Dave Lidstone, LCAR representative

The CURAC/ARUCC website curac.ca includes considerable information about the organization, its member organizations, and benefits available to members of those retiree associations. LCAR is an affiliate member and so our members receive benefits.

The [May 2025 newsletter](#) includes a selection of articles from other retiree associations and links to this *University Affairs* article: [It is possible to foster new connections and research opportunities after retirement](#).

COUNCIL OF SENIOR CITIZENS' ORGANIZATIONS OF BC (COSCO)

Kevin Craib, LCAR representative

COSCO, in which LCAR holds an affiliate membership, is an umbrella group which coordinates advocacy and information relevant to seniors. Their work concentrates on the four main issues of health, housing, income security, and transportation, but they also advocate for, and work with, seniors from diverse groups who may have special issues.

For more information about the organization, their newsletter, and upcoming events and workshops, visit <https://coscobc.org/> and <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/>.

ASSOCIATION OF BC COLLEGE PENSION PLAN RETIREES (CPPR)

Alan Cooper, LCAR representative

The Association of BC College Pension Plan Retirees (CPPR) represents retired instructors and administrators from BC colleges, universities and educational institutes. The latest issue of Prime Time and other Pension News is on their website cppr.ca

*The Langara College Retirees Association (LCAR) congratulates and welcomes all Langara retirees. We invite you to explore our website to learn more about LCAR, our activities and resources, and register as a member! Please register as an LCAR member (<https://lcar.ca>) to receive Langara retiree benefits, hear of our upcoming events, and receive our newsletter, **And By The Way, Retirees**. The editors encourage all LCAR members to submit suggestions, articles, or announcements for inclusion in future newsletters. We also encourage others to join the editorial team. Contact us at newsletter@lcar.ca.*
