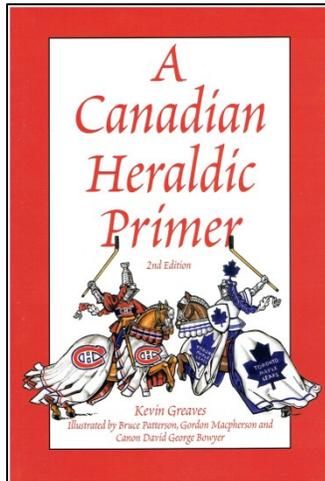


LEARNING HERALDRY IN RETIREMENT

Published in the R.H.S.C. BC/Yukon Branch THE BLAZON Winter 2016

Steve Cowan, Comox BC

Since the mission of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada and its Branches is to promote the Art and Science of heraldry, particularly Canadian heraldry, and to encourage an interest in the subject among Canadians, I had approached the Comox Valley ElderCollege to be a volunteer. ElderCollege is a continuing education program for “students” 55 years of age and older. ElderCollege is designed for students who are looking for a unique community of adult learners. There are no exams, no grades, and no pressure; it's all about learning for fun! And you can have the most fun when you are learning about heraldry, particularly Canadian heraldry.



My approach to offering to teach heraldry was to use our Society's educational program to develop a syllabus. The first course I offered to teach was a 2-session Short Course in February 2016 at the Courtenay BC campus of the North Island College. Since this was the first course in

A PowerPoint presentation was used to conduct the course and the Branch table-top display units and shields came in handy as visual reference. As well each class member paid for a copy of our Society Primer so they could follow along and have for home reference. The fun part was the later portion of the second class where the students were given sheets of blank shields and colour markers to start the design of their own arms. All students were shown our website as well as that for the Canadian Heraldic Authority as they were encouraged to join our Society and to think about a petition for arms.

From the course critique it was evident that a long course was needed due to the scope and range of the material covered.

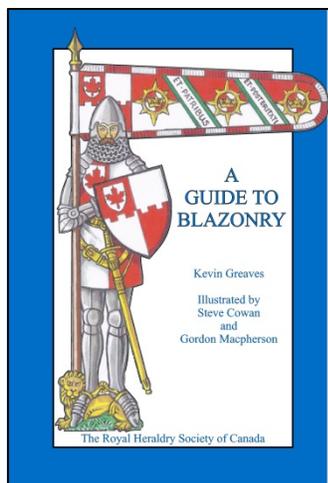
For the autumn of 2016 a four session course was developed and a second campus was added, Campbell River BC as well as Courtenay BC. Over the summer I had time to refresh the subject material and to improve my lesson plans for the classes. And economy of scale applied as I could use the same material in both locations. The courses, run in October and into November, proved very popular. And, similar to the earlier shorter course, the final session had the students designing their arms on sheets of blank shields. They were encouraged to keep working on their



ElderCollege heraldry course at North Island College
Courtenay BC, October 2016.

Photo credit: Don Mayers

designs should they wish to petition for a grant of arms. Besides using Society publications as classroom reference I also took along a selection contemporary heraldry books for use during each session.



While I think that our mission was achieved, a true metric of the teaching success will be students joining our Society or making a petition for arms. My attraction to teaching to learning-in-retirement facilities is that the older students is to promote and explain Canadian heraldry and how arms can be passed to the children, grandchildren and, in some cases, great grandchildren of the “students”.

The one item common in the course critique was could I make the course longer? Six, maybe eight sessions? While I don't have the course booked for either location in the 2017 spring program I am looking at doing these again in the autumn. And I will be keeping it at a four session course.

ElderCollege has many campus locations around Vancouver Island including Courtenay, Campbell River, Alberni, Nanaimo, North Saanich, Duncan, Parksville and Victoria. Other BC locations include Sechelt, Delta, Chilliwack, Smithers, Hazelton, North Vancouver, West Vancouver and Powell River. There are other learning-in-retirement organizations in other communities throughout BC. If you are interested in running a course in your local community I would be happy to pass along my information.

Don't forget that the Society has an education program should you wish to have your heraldic knowledge recognized with certificates for the three levels of proficiency.