



Collegium News

Volume 9 Issue 3

Newsletter of the Cannon Valley Elder Collegium

June 2006

"A Questing Mind Never Retires"

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Launch Time for New Faculty

by Kathy Mellstrom

Five of the ten Fall Term 2006 courses will be taught by CVEC first-timers. The caliber of our new instructors is impressive, in keeping with other past and present Collegium faculty. Besides extensive teaching careers, this group comes with a wide variety of exciting accomplishments including published books, articles and plays, ongoing research projects, founding or directorship of major college programs, and film and stage credits.

Eric Lund, who can boast (but doesn't) an M.Div. as well as a Ph.D. in History of Christianity from Yale, is currently Director of International and Off-Campus Studies at St. Olaf, where he has also taught in the Religion Department. He is competent in several languages and has led study abroad programs all over the world. Lund co-edited a book and is currently working on another in the area of the history of Lutheranism. The Collegium course he will teach, "Religious Conflict in the Middle East," examines the history of the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, in that part of the world and how it has shaped present attitudes and conflicts within and between these faith groups.



Eric Lund



Joseph Mbele

Another international scholar is Joseph Mbele, a citizen of Tanzania and member of St. Olaf's English Department specializing in folklore. He also conducts ongoing folklore fieldwork. His book, *Matengo Folk Tales*, is a translation of folk tales from his home, with commentary, compiled after extensive on-site research. Mbele's father, a great storyteller, was the inspiration for his studies, and he is particularly interested in "trickster and outlaw" tales, including even Jesse James. His CVEC course, "The African Experience," will use a story - Chinua Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart* - to look at life and values in Africa before the arrival of Europeans and how things changed after that. It will also examine the power of story in African life.

Carleton, on the other side of the river, has also yielded a couple of her own to CVEC. Gary Iseminger taught philosophy there for over forty years before retiring, and has also taught or lectured in various parts of the world. His book, *The Aesthetic Function of Art*, as well as his CVEC course, "Arguing About Art," will give you an idea what his career has been about. Why do we care about art? Does it matter if it is real/authentic or forged/updated? Why should we care about fictional characters? Philosophical discussion and argument are the tools we can use to dig meaning out of this mine of precious ore. May the one with the sharpest tools prosper!



Gary Iseminger

(continued on page 3)

CVEC Classes

Fall 2006

September 18, 2006 - November 10, 2006

<u>Title of Class</u> <u>Time of Class</u>	<u>Professor</u> <u>Location</u>
Three by Beethoven Monday 9:30am-11:30am	Ron Ronning, Bill Child NCRC Room 106
Religious Conflict in Middle East Monday 6:30pm-8:30pm	Eric Lund Village on the Cannon
Theatre in Revolt Tuesday 9:30am-11:30am	Philip Spensley NCRC Room 106
Tragedy & Utopia: Two Responses to Suffering and Evil Tuesday 1:30pm-3:30pm	Walt Stromseth NRC Parkview West
Globalization & Why the World Hates Us 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
Stories of Survival Thursday 9:30am-11:30am	Jane McDonnell Millstream Commons
The African Experience Thursday 1:30pm-3:30pm	Joseph Mbele Three Links Conference Room
Great Decisions Thursday 6:30pm-8:30pm	Robert Flaten Village on the Cannon
The Gothic Cathedral: Urban Jewel Friday 9:30am-11:30am	Jon Rondesvedt NRC Parkview West

NCRC Northfield Community Resource Center
NRC Northfield Retirement Community

Start of Registration
 August 10, 2006

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



Spring (Meeting) Fever

by Kathy Mellstrom

The atmosphere inside the chapel of the Northfield Retirement Center was nearly as bright and cheerful as outdoors on the beautiful spring afternoon, May 16th, that CVEC members gathered for the Annual Meeting. Exultant (not quite gloating) was the mood as director Bill Carlson summarized the continued growth and vitality of our organization. Having nothing to agonize over, members were encouraged instead to celebrate our richest resource: faculty, especially those who have been with us since the early years of CVEC and continue to teach. All who had taught five or more courses were presented with a copy of the art book, *Ralph Rapson; Sketches and Drawings from Around the World*. Honored were Marion Hvistendahl, George Soule, Reidar Dittman, Ron Ronning, Dick Cantwell, Constance Sansome, Stan Frear, Eleanor Z Elliot, and Bill Child. Jim Reilley was previously recognized at last fall's meeting, when he announced his retirement from CVEC, and Bill Woerhlin, who has taught seven courses, was additionally honored with the opportunity to make a speech.

This turned out to be a poignant and pointed story, titled "The Snoopy Gang Got it Right," about a professor who looked forward to retirement as a time to read

everything he had always wanted to read but didn't have the time. Oddly, once he started reading, he missed the classroom scene where he was accustomed to sharing, and discussing and developing the revelations of his reading and thought.

Happening on a Charles Schulz volume of "Peanuts" comic strips called *When You're Over the Hill, You Start to Gather Steam*, B.W. was encouraged by the gentle but on-the-mark humor to appreciate the positive and accept the difficult aspects of the retired and "senior" condition.

Finally, as if on cue, CVEC entered the scene and opened a new vista of study, development, and usefulness for our hero. Here was an ideal situation for one who loves to teach: mature and interested students, a whole year to research and prepare a course, and friends to be made both in classes he taught and those he took.

Bill Woerhlin's inspiring and gratifying (and well-written!) speech is posted on the web site (www.cvec.org) and is well worth reading.

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Launch Time for New Faculty (continued from front page)



Jane
McDonnell

Jane McDonnell has published two books, and she taught at Carleton for thirty-five years, first English and American Literature and then Women's and Gender Studies. Her first book, *News from the Border*, a memoir about her life while raising an autistic son, made a big ripple in the publishing scene and engendered discussions nationwide. Her book *Living to Tell the Tale* and a writing course she developed at Carleton on creating personal narrative describe the process of developing a story from life experience. McDonnell's CVEC course, "Stories of Survival," focuses on crisis memoirs and on writing as a way to re-experience, interpret and make peace with our past lives. The course involves reading of essay-length pieces, discussion and short in-class writing exercises.

Our new theater specialist, Philip Spensley, has been crossing the Canadian border for many years, alternately living in Northfield and teaching at Concordia University in Montreal. He has also acted in dozens of plays, movies, television productions and commercials, and written about theater for a variety of periodicals. Spensley has also done a great deal of directing, including two of the Northfield Arts Guild's "Shakespeare in the Park" productions and its *Blithe Spirit*. In his CVEC course, "Theater in Revolt," Spensley will examine the various societal reactions to the disillusionment after the "War to end all wars," and how they gave rise to movements in theatrical expression that led to today's theater and our ways of understanding it.

More complete information about our new instructors and their courses, and our "tried and true" instructors and theirs, is on the web at www.cvec.org. As our director notes in his message, you will be tempted to enroll!



Philip
Spensley



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**CVEC is a
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From the Director, Bill Carlson

It was exciting to see the large turnout at the Spring Meeting on May 16th, especially in light of competition from the beautiful weather. This is testimony to strong membership support. I know that those who were not present also appreciate the importance of CVEC in our community.

CVEC is growing. During the 2005-2006 academic year we enrolled 513 students, compared to an average of 350 the previous four years. We expanded the number of classes from twenty to twenty-eight, and student interest continues to increase. CVEC is also adding faculty. During calendar year 2006, one third of our classes were or will be taught by new faculty members. Finally, take a look at the exciting course offerings for fall 2006, including two evening classes. You will be strongly tempted to enroll. Course descriptions can be found on the web page, www.cvec.org.

The CVEC board, discussing future plans, feels that we should continue to emphasize our strength: offering three terms of eight-week courses with classes meeting two hours per week. An important fact in our future will be the arrival of the "baby boom" generation. The population of Northfield will have twice as many people in the 55-64 age group - 1043 vs. 560 - in 2010 compared to the year 2000. This growth continues for many years. CVEC will likely expand with the increase in potential students. We will need more teachers, a larger budget, and more volunteer efforts. Fortunately, we are financially strong and have a growing pool of new teachers and a committed membership. We should be able to expand without undue stress.

We need to thank our partners who provide classroom space and support for our classes: Northfield Retirement Community, Northfield Senior Center, Three Links, Village on the Cannon, and now Millstream Commons. We wish you all an enjoyable summer and look forward to seeing you in class next fall. Registration begins August 10, 2006.

Bill