

New ElderCollege opens

Two women praised for getting concept up and running

By Marshall Jones
Echo Staff

When North Island College officially opened its doors to the Comox Valley ElderCollege on Saturday, it welcomed only the sixth organization of its kind in Canada.

Elizabeth Smith and Betty Emery had no idea that even that many existed when they talked nervously with North Island College campus director Jim Hooton more than a year ago about the concept. Hooton knew a little more about it than he let on.

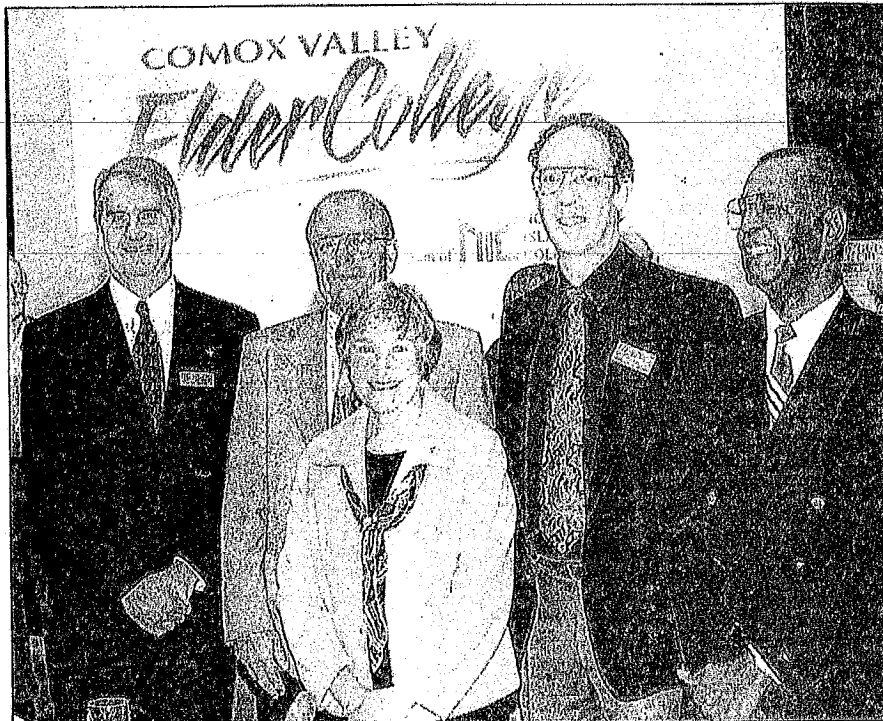
He said at an opening ceremony Saturday he had had enquiries before, but no one wanted to take the idea any further.

"I believe that rather than do things for people, it works better if they make it happen themselves," he said.

Emery and Smith had the energy, drive and determination to see it through, he said. They spread the word and even made a business plan. Dr. Lou Dryden, college president, said he knew when 145 people turned out to the first interest-finding forum last June, it was going to happen.

"I remember the forum," he said. "I know for a fact that it was the first sunny Saturday in about five months. That that many people turned out told me you had a very special group of people."

He said the ElderCollege fits with the principle of lifelong



On hand to officially open the Comox Valley Elder College were Dr. Lou Dryden, NIC president, Clay Rutherford, master of ceremonies, Betty Emery, Elder College chair, Jim Hooton, Comox Valley campus director for NIC and Vivian Wylie, advisory member and chairman of the curriculum committee.

education and its creation is appropriate in the International Year of the Older Person.

Seniors have always had access to NIC academic courses, but many didn't find it fair to apply since waiting lists are so high. The night-time and Saturday classes are unappealing as is the rigorous testing, since most seniors aren't planning on careers and seeking degrees.

Through the ElderCollege, programs can also be tailor-made to the wants and needs of the students. On tap for the first

crop of over 55 students?

Courses include contemporary literature, music appreciation and art appreciation. There are courses on biology and on health and next year, the novels of Jane Austen.

Then, how about Macs for Muddlers, a beginners computer course. There is also another beginning course for PC users, who can then graduate to Computers for Grown-Ups. Wine appreciation promises to be a winner, since it is already booked for next semester as well.