

# Scans offers courses for south shore seniors

Our Community by **kelly bent**

Henry Ford said, “Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.” At no point during our existence, are we too old to learn, expand our minds or grow in knowledge. The Seniors College Association of Nova Scotia (SCANS) is a registered non-profit organization providing non-credit academic courses to seniors (age 50-plus) in Nova Scotia. Their mission is to keep this demographic engaged in education.

Retired army officer and SCANS student Jim Fox said, “The SCANS program is outstanding. The subjects offered are very wide ranging. Recent subjects covered give you an idea: ethics, leadership, history of the USSR and Japan, great religions, development in Africa, microbiology, charters of human rights, and Shakespeare. All are presented by gifted and enthusiastic professors who seem to enjoy the active participation they get from the students. Class members bring a great breadth of experience and interests to the classes, which really help the classes to be even more enjoyable.”

It’s not what would be typically associated with senior interests. SCANS instructor Daphna Levit came to the South Shore after a well-travelled career as an analyst of international finance as well as a specialist in Japanese Literature. This background gives her an appreciative eye regarding education. The courses offered by SCANS are university level brought to an adult education equivalent. Each course has a two-hour lecture once a week and enrollment continues to grow in each location. “This is our fourth year in Mahone Bay, our second in Liverpool and our first in Chester. The students who attend are eager to absorb what is being taught.”

SCANS is operated through annual membership. “Students register with SCANS at any of our open houses before each seasonal session or they can go to the website at [www.thescans.ca](http://www.thescans.ca) and register on line or by mailing in their registration and payment to the main office. Membership means you can take as many courses as you like in that one year period in any location SCANS instruction is offered. There is no note taking or tests. You just come and absorb what is being said, participate in discussions if you choose and enjoy,” says Levit.

SCANS was founded by the Association of Dalhousie Retirees and Pensioners in 2007. “I became affiliated with the organization about six years ago,” explains Levit. “The program offers eight to ten different courses per session. Each course is taught by retired faculty of Dalhousie and other academic institutions.”

George Anderson, retired adjunct professor of leadership at St. Frances Xavier University, decided in 2011 to take a SCANS course. “It was on metaphysical poetry, something completely out of the ordinary for me, and it was outstanding. The entire SCANS concept, that people who taught at a high level would share their knowledge with people who are interested in the subject, is outstanding,” says Anderson. Anderson taught during the winter session of this year at the Mahone Bay Centre. “I agreed to do a course on ‘Leadership Models in Literature and Legend,’ based on my business course on leadership I teach at the Schulich School of Business at York University, and previously at St. FX. SCANS was a different atmosphere. Usually my audience is 20-year-olds with very little life experience. But to teach in a room filled with people with plenty of life experience, who could respond with positive feedback and applicable examples of what we were discussing, was very gratifying. Some of my SCANS students were leaders in industry, armed forces, military, business and non-profit. All retired for the most part, and just wanting to have a learning experience.” Anderson says he would definitely consider participating in classes and teaching again.

Are you curious and ready to keep flexing that brain muscle to stay vital at any age? For more information regarding SCANS please visit [www.thescans.ca](http://www.thescans.ca).