

Directors (and Group Leaders) of the Adventures in Mind Educational Travel Association

2025

The Directors of the Association are those who plan, organise, make bookings and lead classes and visits for our various Adventures, at least two of them being assigned to each offering.

Dr. John Black (President) taught in and coordinated the Liberal Studies Abroad credit program at Vancouver Island University from its inception in 1997 until his retirement in 2017. Since then he has been a volunteer organizer and tour leader for Adventures in Mind. From 1997 until now he has led more than twenty study trips to Italy, England and Czechia.

John grew up in England and moved to Canada in 1973. He has Master's degrees from Cambridge and Simon Fraser, and a PhD from UBC, all in Philosophy, with an emphasis on Philosophy of Mind. He has published also on critical thinking, Plato and the 18th-century navigator/philosopher Alexandro Malaspina. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Liberal Studies at VIU, and teaches and volunteers for the Mid-Island and Comox Valley Elder Colleges.

In John's spare time he plays music, bridge, cricket and walking soccer.





Connie Kovalenka (Secretary-Treasurer)

graduated with a BA in Liberal Studies from VIU, having previously gained diplomas in Radio and Television Arts and Sciences (NAIT) and Textile Arts (Capilano University). She has for many years been a tour leader for both VIU's Liberal Studies Abroad program and Adventures in Mind. An artist in her own right, she has a strong interest in all aspects of visual art, modern as well as historical, and is very knowledgeable about the geography of many European cities, their markets, their antiques and vintage shops, and their cats.

Dr. Steve Lane (Vice-President) is a retired English professor and academic administrator whose doctoral work was in the area of the Romantic poets, with a dissertation on William Wordsworth. As a faculty member at Vancouver Island University, Steve taught numerous survey courses (British and American literature) and delivered upper-level courses on Romantic Poetry and Poetics and Gothic literature. He has presented papers on Ernest Hemingway, William Blake, William Wordsworth, and Lord Byron at international conferences, and enjoys hiking in England, France, and Greece.



After retiring from teaching in 2019, Steve became an honorary research associate in the VIU English Department, and keeps busy teaching courses for Mid-Island ElderCollege, and fit with daily walks/ hikes.



Regan McKeever (Member-at-Large) has worked at Vancouver Island University for over 20 years as a Program Manager for life-long learning programs, including Adventures in Mind. She is an avid traveller, having caught the bug while taking her last year of high school in the south of France, then in Singapore during university. She loves travelling with her husband and teenage kids as well as program participants. Hailing from Ontario, she has established her roots on Vancouver Island since attending the University of Victoria in 1996. Her passions include skiing, dancing, gardening and walking on the beach with her two golden-doodles.

Dr. James Anderson (Member-at-Large) received a BA in Classics at the University of Alberta, then an MA and PhD in Roman Archaeology at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. He has been on dozens of digs across the Mediterranean region and in North America. He taught Anthropology at North Island College for 24 years, during part of which time he also taught in VIU's Liberal Studies BA program, before retiring in 2020. He has led thirteen archaeological field schools in Jordan, Greece, England, and Canada. In retirement he continues to be passionate about archaeology, history, literature, art, music, politics, and travel.



Brett Bowen (B.A., B.Ed., M.Sc.) received the Alberta Award for Excellence in teaching and the provincial award for contributions to Gifted and Talented Education as a Calgary Board of Education secondary school teacher.

After retiring, he moved to Vancouver Island where he paints and engages in outdoor pursuits (primarily kayaking and cycling). Brett has taught for what is now Mid Island Elder College for over a dozen years and has spoken to a wide variety of audiences about the impacts of history, including French history, on today's world.

