



**University
of Victoria**
Retirees
Association

April 2015

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University of Victoria Retirees Association

Grey Matters!



Photo by Mary Sanseverino — *Sun on the Salish Sea* - January 4, 2014

On the southern slopes of Peden Bluffs, on the way down to Maryvine Creek

Bits from the Board

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Some of our most active Board committees these days are working on defining the ways that we retirees continue to be valuable – or aspire to be – to the University. It's not a one-way effort, either – or shouldn't be. The Strategic Plan specifically mentions the University's intent to "*engage the University of Victoria Retirees Association and UVic retirees who are willing and able to make significant contributions in research, teaching and other important aspects of the life of the university and the community*" (<https://www.uvic.ca/strategicplan/> p.21, Objective 9). That has yet to happen in any practical way.

We aim to help fulfil that promise with a variety of initiatives:

- Colin Scarfe and other Board members are fine-tuning a survey that we hope most of you will answer when it comes out this summer. We want to look at how UVic benefits from your continuing involvement in support of the University's activities (teaching, research, committees, mentoring, etc.), or what we retirees do that reflects well on the University's goal of increasing its presence in the community.
- Our colleagues at UBC conducted a similar survey two years ago, with important consequences for their relations with UBC. We hope that your responses are similarly effective.

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Bits from the Board (continued from page 1)

- The introduction of the ONECard has given rise to another small committee that is looking into how the card affects members who are not retirees of UVic. The description of who qualifies for the card and how that is defined is at www.uvic.ca/onecard/. Our committee is looking at how best to clarify the wording on our website. For example, the UVRA use of the word 'affiliate' is not the same as that used for the ONECard.
- Trevor Matthews is leading another group who are looking into improving our access to public transit, starting with the university retirees as a first cohort. Trevor is looking for more members of his committee to share some of the research and evaluation he has planned. Please contact him via us if you are interested in helping with this small-scale, but potentially large-scope project.

Clients of the UVRA-Johnson Extended Health plan may be interested to know that they (www.johnson.ca) are now offering student scholarships for Grade 12 graduands entering a post-secondary institution this September. One important proviso: the (grand)parents must be affiliated to a Johnson client-group such as UVRA. See the UVRA web-site for details.

Also, Johnson is now offering a **pet insurance policy** — see: <https://www1.johnson.ca/pet-insurance>



P.S. The number of UBC health insurance subscribers to the Johnson plan have increased; a month ago, they had about twenty more signed-on than our 120.

As you will see in this issue, our Board is involved in three kinds of events nowadays, with our annual “April is MasterMinds Month” beginning as I am writing. Geri has put together an eclectic program of four excellent presentations in a new, more convenient venue. One of the topics (see April 15th) has become unexpectedly topical, with the recent release of the report on our shrinking glaciers. As usual, Board member Lois Holizki and the Centre on Aging staff have given huge support in the logistical organization of the series.

This issue of *Grey Matters!* also has reports on our latest social events, both of which were a ‘sell-out’ success, thanks to the careful planning of the Events Committee: Jane, Rashna, Linda, and Kathy. Apart from being “Embrace Aging Month”, April is also the month of National Volunteer Recognition Week. The committee has again organized our annual volunteer lunch to thank our stalwart volunteers (aren’t we all?). If you have a couple of hours to spare, please contact us, as we try to staff the new office in the much more convivial surroundings of the Centre on Aging on weekdays from 1.30-3.30. Who knows -- there may be a lunch in it for you next year.

Still on the topic of events, the Elder Academy program is reaching a more steady state now, as David and his Program Committee are looking to schedule at least one series of related presentations during each fall-spring month. But the program is only as good as we all make it -- a UVRA initiative to create a no- or low-cost venue to catch and reflect the interests of our demographic, within our community. You can help: what topics or series would you like to hear or offer yourself? What hobbies, concerns, interests would you like to teach or learn more about?

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Bits from the Board (continued from page 2)

On that same EA front, our partnership with the Island Health Yakimovich Wellness Centre now offers an even wider range of topics, thanks to their indefatigable coordinator Liz McCarter. To see what events she has planned, and how to register (at no cost) see: <http://www.viha.ca/hshc/events.htm>.

We hope to see you at the AGM (Wednesday, June 17th). There are important Board positions needing to be filled, as several of our key people are about to resign. If you can help, David Docherty would like to talk to you. As you have just read, there is much to do on behalf of the University's retirees.

Finally, to revert to my opening thought – moving UVRA closer to the University – thank you to those who helped elect me to Senate. Those who are concerned about my mental health in volunteering for yet more meetings may want to thank those who did not vote for me!

Wishing you a fulfilling and healthy Spring season.

Peter Liddell, President of the UVRA

UVic Speakers Bureau

Dear UVic Retirees:

I am writing to invite you to participate in the **2015-16 UVic Speakers Bureau** program.

The bureau is a free service provided by volunteers from among UVic faculty, staff, graduate students and retirees to the Victoria region. It's the only university-wide bureau of its kind in Canada.

For the past 34 years, the Bureau has made UVic expertise available to community groups, schools, clubs, and other organizations in Greater Victoria and across Southern Vancouver Island.

More than 150 of your colleagues signed up as speakers last year. Won't you consider joining them this year?

Through more than 400 speaking engagements each year, bureau members reach a total audience of 14,000 people in our region, making the Bureau one of the most significant ways in which UVic serves our local community.

The membership form (www.uvic.ca/speakers/join) covers the information we need for the *2015-16 Speakers Bureau Guide to Topics*, which is distributed throughout the community.

Your response by May 4th will allow us to meet our deadlines for printing the new guide.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you!

Mandy Crocker, Co-ordinator, UVic Speakers Bureau Program

250-721-8587 or [speakers\(at\)uvic.ca](mailto:speakers(at)uvic.ca) or <http://www.uvic.ca/speakers>

Event report: Chinese New Year luncheon

The Year of the Wood Sheep/Goat/Ram

This year's lunch was held at [Don Mee Chinese Seafood Restaurant](#) (538 Fisgard Street)



Committee members Jane, Linda, and Rashna were at the door to greet our members as they entered.

Peter and his wife Maureen were among the first of the 36 attendees to arrive.



The food was plentiful and enjoyed by everyone. Some even got to take home a doggie bag.



John Adams was our special guest. He is known as Victoria's Historian, and also happens to be an alumnus of UVic. John told us the amusing story of how the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig became the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac.

He also spoke about the traditions surrounding the New Year celebration - the part lions and dragons played, as well as firecrackers, noisemakers, and the colour red.



Congratulations and Happy Birthday to two of our members attending the lunch who will be celebrating their birthdays in the year of the sheep.

Submitted by Kathy Harris and Linda Metters

In Memoriam

Professor Anthony Birch (Political Science)

Tony died on 13 December 2014 at the age of 90.

A scholar of comparative and British political institutions, he came to UVic in 1977, following a distinguished career in the UK. He was Chair of the Department at UVic 1981-86, before retiring in 1989.

An obituary was published in **The Ring** (www.uvic.ca/ring)

See: <http://ring.uvic.ca/people/anthony-h-birch-scholar-british-and-comparative-politics>

Margot Brand (Accounting)

Margot died on 7 March 2015 at the age of 94.

In supplement to her 26-year career in the Accounting Office, please see her obituary:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/timescolonist/obituary.aspx?&pid=174455791>

University Club Report

The UClub has several special events planned for the coming months - right into the summer season, as well as their regular weekly specials.

If you are not already a member, please consider joining the University Club, so that you may enjoy these and many other fine dining and entertainment experiences in a welcoming atmosphere.

Special Events:

- **Music Bingo, Beer and Beef Pub Night**- Saturday, April 25th 2015, starting at 6 pm.
- **Mother's Day Brunch** – Sunday, May 10, 2015 – seatings at 11 am, 11:30 am and noon. This is an extremely popular event -- reservations are required (\$39.95/\$19.95 child).
- **A Tribute to Mrs. Beeton** – Saturday, May 23, 2015 — a peek into the Victorian culture of food and associated literature.
- **Jazz Fest** – every Saturday Night in June, featuring different musicians each week.
- **British Invasion** – Saturday, July 11, 2015.

For full details of these and other events, please check the University Club's website: <club.uvic.ca>

Submitted by David Leeming

Physical Activity and Wellness Corner #19

Prolonged sitting is linked to Serious Health Risks

For some time, I have been advocating about the importance of being physically active, and for achieving the recommended levels of at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. However, the conclusion of a recent article (<http://annals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2091327>) in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, based on an analysis of published research, suggests even this amount of physical activity does not completely offset the negative effects of prolonged sitting. The study found that sitting for prolonged periods (more than 30 minutes) increases the risk for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and death, even among people who exercise regularly. However, it should be noted that the health risks were more pronounced in people who never or only occasionally exercise. Other studies have shown that being sedentary is more lethal to your health than obesity, and that lack of physical activity is more dangerous to your health than smoking. So sit less and move more is the obvious take-home message.

Stand up or walk around every 30 minutes

It is not surprising that we spend more than half our lives sitting, such as watching TV, working on the computer, commuting, reading, or doing other sedentary activities. So, for most of us, the findings of this study should be of concern. The recommendation from the study is that we need to get up every 30 minutes and stand or walk around for 3-4 minutes to offset the negative effects of prolonged sitting.

There are a number of physiological changes that happen when we sit for a long time — none of them are good. Conversely, there are number of physiological changes that take place when we stand that are beneficial to our health. Of course, if we increase the amount of physical activity in our daily lives, we will be sitting less. This gives two benefits. Walking rather than driving is one simple way to reduce the time sitting and to increase our physical activity level. Or, simply park further away from your destination, and walk the rest of the way.

It is now not uncommon to see people at work with standing desks. This is considered better for their back, as well as other health benefits. This is something that some of us may wish to consider in retirement, as many of us do seem to spend a lot of time sitting in front of our computers, watching TV, reading, or working at a desk. There is no reason why we cannot stand up to watch TV, or do many of the other things listed!

The lead author of the article, David Alter, recommends that people who do not regularly exercise can be healthier, if all they do is reduce the amount of time they spend sitting. Those who do regularly exercise also need to decrease the amount of time they spend sitting. Of course, this is easier said than done, but we would probably all benefit by reducing the amount of sedentary time, or at least standing up and walking around for a few minutes if we do have to spend a long time sitting.

There is a whole field of research now looking at the impact of sedentary behaviour on health, and ways to combat that impact. It is considered an independent risk-factor in regard to health and wellness, and offsets some of the benefits we get from being physically active.

So don't sit for too long. Get up regularly and walk about, do some stretching or mobilizing exercises, as well as making sure you get your dose of 150 minutes of physical activity each week and feel better for it. It will benefit your overall health, and maybe help you live longer. Sounds reasonable to me! I'm off to the gym.

As always, I am happy to have any feedback or topic requests.

Submitted by David Docherty <angdave(at)telus.net>

UVRA Elder Academy News

In March, the Academy offered another successful series, this time on horticulture, with a focus on Organic Mulching and Composting, held at the [Haliburton Community Organic Farm](#). The series was well attended, with presentations from experts in the area of organic farming.

Stay tuned for further series on gardening topics, one of which will address the growing of Native Plants. We are indebted to the “Farm” for their support of these series, including offering space to meet.

We are not planning on offering courses in **April**, as this is the time for the “Mastermind Series” hosted by the UVRA, the UVic Centre on Aging, and the office of the Vice-President for External Relations. We invite all to attend the lectures, on Wednesday evenings, in a new location. See: <http://www.uvic.ca/masterminds/>

We are planning to host a “Physical Activity Workshop” Series in **May**, which will address both the theory and the practice for effective and safe exercise to enhance health and well-being. The final logistics are currently being finalized — stay tuned for the details. The topics include:

Workshop 1: The use of therabands to increase strength and endurance

Workshop 2: Developing Core/Back Stability

Workshop 3: Weight-training exercises

Workshop 4: Cardiovascular training

On Saturdays in **June (6th and 13th) and July (4th and 11th)** we will be offering a series on “Indigenous Language Revitalization”. Four outstanding leaders and researchers in this area have agreed to share their passion and knowledge: Lorna Williams, Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins, Leslie Saxon, and Peter Jacobs. We are very excited about this series, which will include a guided tour of the First Nations House on Campus.

We have a number of other topics that the Planning Committee are working on. As always, would welcome your suggestions for topics as well as names of possible presenters.

Submitted by: David Docherty, Program Chair, UVRA Elder Academy

Volunteer at the UVic Convocation ceremonies

The UVic Ceremonies & Events office is looking for retirees who would be interested in volunteering during Spring 2015 Convocation, to be held June 8-12. Volunteers play a vital role in the preparations for each Convocation ceremony: they assist students with their regalia and ensure students are in the correct marshaling room. Volunteer roles include Robing Assistants and Greeters.

If you would like to volunteer or if you would like more information please contact Ms Erin Sebastian in the Ceremonies and Events office at erinseb@uvic.ca or 250-721-7634.

Thank you,

UVRA Events Report — Reaching Blue

A big thank you to Andy Robertson and Dr. Richard Dewey for a very informative and interesting presentation on the documentary, *Reaching Blue*.

The film featured Ocean Networks Canada, Dr. Kate Moran, and the role of research and technology in understanding our changing oceans.

From John Steinbeck's old research vessel *The Western Flyer* to residents of coastal communities facing changes head on, *Reaching Blue* demonstrated how each of us are connected to the ocean, and the importance of ocean research as we move forward.

The event was well attended, and a very interesting question-and-answer period followed the presentation.



Submitted by the Events Committee (Linda Metters, Jane Milliken, Kathy Harris, Rashna Charania)

Upcoming UVRA Event — Thursday May 7

The UVRA Events Committee has planned one more event: a tour of Victoria City Hall, with a maximum of 30 people. The tour starts at 10:30 am, inside the building. There is no fee for the tour. Register by phoning the UVRA Office (250-472-4749) or E-mail: uvra@uvic.ca

It will be followed by a buy-your-own-lunch at *The Mint* (one block south) at noon. Please advise if you are going to join us for lunch, as reservations will need to be made. The Mint will open their dining room for us, but will serve their lunch menu (<http://themintvictoria.com/lunch/menu/>). When you register, please advise your lunch preference, so that we can pre-order.



The tour includes information on the building's outside architecture — the entire inside has been modernized. We will visit the third floor clock tower (winding the clock), Council chambers, and Archives.

There will also be stories of past Mayors, who are rather interesting characters.

New UVRA member

Welcome to our new member: Lorna Funk, formerly with Distribution Services.

We also thank our "annual" members, for renewing their membership in the UVRA.

Event Report — tour of Pearson College UWC

Firstly, my thanks to the Pearson College tour guides: Suzanne Dubé and Cheryl Tromp; and the UVRA Events Committee (Kathy Harris, Linda Metters, Rashna Charania, and Jane Milliken) for organizing the event, as well as Elizabeth Coey and Wendy Leyland for helping to hand out the RBCM sea-lion prints to the members.

I really believe that their time at Pearson has to be the most important in the lives of these students. What a marvelous opportunity for them at such a critical time of their lives!

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Pearson College, and learned a great deal about the students, the curriculum, their mandate, the United World College Organization, etc. The Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific (Pearson College UWC) is one of fourteen United World Colleges (UWC) around the world. It is named after the late Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, winner of the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize and early supporter of the College and UWC. The mission of the UWC movement and of the school is to *make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future*. The college follows the International Baccalaureate curriculum, covering the final year of high school and a pre-university year for up to 100 students a year hailing from nearly 90 countries. It has the capacity to house 200 students. Recent graduates have placed in some of the world's top universities, and some alumni are have become notable leaders in human rights, international development, business, law, science and other fields.



The location of Pearson College is idyllic. It is nestled in the forest on the shores of Pedder Bay. The College provides a suitable location for the study of the environment, due to the surrounding woodlands and the nearby Race Rocks Marine Protected Area, an ecological conservation area maintained by the College. The College's proximity to Pedder Bay allows a broad range of water-front program offerings. A fleet of sailboats, kayaks, canoes, and scuba diving equipment are stored on the docks and in the floating marine biology building.

By bringing students together from such a variety of countries falls under the mandate of the UWC, which is to continue the promotion of peace and understanding in the world. There are 5 residential houses that include all students of the College and some faculty members. All student houses are mixed-gender, with boys on one floor and girls on the other, and students live in shared rooms of 4 to 5 people; a single cafeteria serves meals. The rooms always include one Canadian, with others from different countries, which provide an opportunity for the students to interact with those from different cultures. It also provides an opportunity to live in harmony with other cultures, and to learn their traditions. (As an example, I did hear several years ago from a friend who lived at Pearson College that a student from Israel had shared a room with a student from Palestine; in a very short time they were good friends and shared their feelings openly.).



The students are responsible for recycling, garbage disposal, maintaining cleanliness in their rooms, etc. Because of limited funds as well as the general philosophy of the college, staff is not provided to "wait on" the students. It is up to the students to organize a schedule within their area, and to get along with each other.

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Pearson College does not receive public funding, so relies on financial donations, as well as contributions of “travel miles”. Scholarships and various methods of financial assistance are available to the students, to provide opportunities for admission to those from lower-income families.

I feel the challenges faced by most of the students who are in a new country, who may be struggling with the English language, and who may be learning to live for the first time away from their home, and who must also live harmoniously with their multi-cultural room-mates. These challenges are huge, but are surmountable, and the students will benefit enormously from their experiences in this environment.

What a marvelous experience for them all!

Submitted by Valma Lanceley

Editor's note: if one report about Pearson College is good, then two must be twice as good.

A Trip to Pearson College UWC

“We believe that education is a force to unite people, nations and culture.” — *UWC Pearson College*



Even a damp and drizzly day could not dampen the spirits of the 30 UVRA members who visited the campus of Pearson College. The classrooms and student accommodations seemed to blend in with the woodland setting. For the 160 students, selected from 90 different countries, this is education at its finest.

First of all, you have a diverse group of young people (ages 16-18) who are academically inclined, socially aware, and ready to embrace different cultures. Secondly, there is a magnificent setting, with some classrooms bordering the ocean, and overlooking Race Rocks and Pedder Bay.

The spirit of the students is infectious. They organize their own evening and weekend get-togethers for debates, sharing ideas and cultural differences, music, plays, and other entertainment. During our lunch, one could see the respect these students had for one another. There was plenty of noise and laughter, but when an announcement needed to be made (usually an open invitation to attend an event), students stopped and listened.

We visited the sports area, complete with exercise room, swimming pool and kayak training pool.



Outside this complex is a complete whalebone skeleton, a reminder to respect the ocean.

The marine biology classrooms are situated right on the water's edge, and house various sailing boats, kayaks, and scuba equipment. Pearson College has the stewardship of Race Rocks; they have installed cameras for online viewing of the sea creatures. Students are charged with the care of the lighthouse, and spend some time living on site. Couched in a blanket of arbutus and oak trees, overlooking the water, the Spiritual Centre is a reminder of native heritage.

Should you wish to take in this idyllic spot, there are many walking trails throughout the campus open to the public.

It is well worth the visit; the students I spoke with (from Wales and Prague) were so grateful to be getting the kind of education and exposure to other cultures offered by UWC. It was refreshing to witness their enthusiasm.

Submitted by Elizabeth Coey

Annual General Meeting of the UVic Retirees Association

Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Time: 10 AM

Place: David Strong Building, room: C108

Map: www.uvic.ca/home/about/campus-info/maps/maps/dsb.php

Committee reports will be posted on the UVRA website prior to the meeting.

Refreshments will be served.

**POST THIS NOTICE ON YOUR
REFRIGERATOR AS A REMINDER.**

Attendees will receive a UVRA fridge-magnet.