UPDATE FROM THE BOARD

Greetings fellow retirees

I do hope that “Spring/Summer” in Victoria has now arrived as it seems to keep changing its mind! It has impacted my bragging rights to family in other parts of Canada!

First, I want to mention that this is my final message in my role as President of UVRA as I am stepping down at this year’s Annual General Meeting. It is amazing how quickly three years has passed and the volume of things that have happened during that period. I stepped into this role as COVID-19 placed its grip on our lives and now, although the depth
of impact has eased, it still exists and will perhaps forever change how we view social interactions particularly those with larger groups.

I will be handing over the baton to Rebecca Warburton, Professor Emerita in the School of Public Administration and UVRA Vice President. I encourage you to give her and UVRA your full and continuous support with your ideas and participation. I will step into the role of Past President and will also continue as the liaison for the CURAC later-life-learning committee.

As one of my last activities as President, I am preparing for the upcoming UVic Retiree Recognition Event. There is always an air of celebration as the about-to-be retirees chat with fellow retirees and almost former colleagues about their time at UVic. I always feel the energy in the room but also some nervous anticipation. I am sure that we all felt it as that time came to clean out the desk and finally shut down the office computer - I recall removing my name from the door...it felt strange to look at the door afterward and I had a sense of wonder at how long I had journeyed through it to my space.

Now let’s turn to the business at hand. It is soon time for the UVRA Annual General Meeting which is being held virtually on June 7th starting at 1:30 pm. More information including the link will be available on the UVRA website. We look forward to you joining us online.

Masterminds completed its 2023 series in April and once again its excellent speakers captured the attendees with their thought-provoking topics. I recommend you check out the Masterminds information on the UVRA website where you will also have access to the Event Recordings of many of the sessions.

Masterminds is a joint UVRA-UVic series which is coordinated by the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health (IALH).
As you know UVRA is a member of two retiree networks: CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) and AROHE (Association of Retiree Organizations in Higher Education). CURAC is holding its annual conference this year in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan from May 31-June 2\textsuperscript{nd}. AROHE has valuable and interesting information on retirement including an excellent newsletter, AROHE Matters which you can access on their website. Our events page lists many selections from both CURAC and AROHE.

**UVRA NEEDS YOU!!**

If you have not volunteered for UVRA in the past, then take the opportunity this year to do so. You can chat with us about what you would like to do and how much time commitment you can provide. It is important that we have a strong and ongoing representation from our membership with your new ideas and energy – fresh ideas and approaches are vital. This is your Association, and it is your contributions that will keep it vibrant and strong.

I could not conclude without recognizing the valuable connection of UVRA to the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health (IALH). They provide us not only with office space but help UVRA in numerous other ways to carry out our activities.

Thank all of you for your continuing support of UVRA.

A reminder that this newsletter welcomes new ideas and submissions of an article or a photo.

All the best…Stay safe… Keep well…

*Margaret Klatt*  
May 2023
EDITOR’S NOTES

URGENTLY NEEDED VOLUNTEERS TO FILL NUMEROUS BOARD POSITIONS
SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS

On June 14th, UVRA is hosting a talk on the discovery of a definitive earthquake precursor. Our presenter is Dr. Chun—an eminently qualified seismologist retired from the University of Toronto. This talk is non-technical and suitable for all audiences, so do consider attending to learn more about his discovery and earthquakes in general (15)

This year, members shared pictures of, and stories about, their beloved pets and/or vintage vehicles. For those of you who had/have a pet and/or a vintage vehicle, and missed the deadline, do please send your articles and photos anytime and they will be published in the next edition.

This edition is inaugurating a new series titled “Unforgettable Memories” (8-9). Peter Liddell, the person who suggested this series and who penned its first article, describes the essays as being “short articles recalling an event, a person you met, or a strange experience that happened to you decades ago”. So, please do share those memories with us by sending me your remembrances at uvra@uvic.ca The deadline for inclusion in the Summer 2023 edition is mid July 2023, but, as written above, if you miss that deadline, send anyway for publication in the next edition. Submissions are accepted with a grateful thank you and you receive (by post) the colour booklet format of the publication into which your tender is included.

David Docherty wrote an informative article about Atrial Fibrillation (10-12)- what it is, and how it is treated. Worth reading, even if you are not afflicted so that you are aware of the symptoms because, as David writes, “[a]pproximately 70% of individuals with AFib are between 65 and 80 years of age”

Would you like some FREE technology-related help? It is available through Cyber Seniors. This is how it works: “Young people are provided with lessons and learning activities to train them to act as digital mentors and senior citizens gain access to effective technology training and intergenerational communities that keep them socially connected and engaged.” Source: https://cyberseniors.org/about/ See page 16 for more information.
Numerous Board positions need to be filled prior to the AGM on June 7, 2023. They are:

- Vice President
- Benefits Chair
- Events Coordinator
- MasterMinds Lead
- UVRA United Way Campaign Chair

Do you see yourself as a candidate?
Do you want more information?

Please contact me.
Peter Liddell
pgl@uvic.ca
Chair, UVRA Nominations Committee
Policy holders in the UVRA-Johnson and RTO/ERO Extended Health plans now have a new benefit, at no extra charge in premiums. It is an online pharmacy option available through Express Scripts Canada. (https://pharmacy.express-scripts.ca/).

It is important to note that this is an additional option, not a replacement for clients’ current arrangements. Clients can use the online service for some (say, recurring) needs and a local pharmacy and their consultation services for others.

The new option has been adopted by similar organizations to UVRA, including UBC Emeritus College and BC Retired Teachers Association, with very positive results.

Prior to the annual renewal of the respective plans, when a specific UVRA or RTO code will be circulated, Express Scripts Canada (ESC) can create a special “VIP code” to make it easier for clients to enroll in the meantime.

Peter Liddell
UVRA Benefits Chair
CHANGES TO UVIC’S CONVOCATION ROLL

UVic’s Convocation Roll is a large group, composed of UVic Alumni, past and present members of Senate and the Board of Governors, most regular and retired faculty members, most non-faculty staff members, and some students of Victoria College before 1963. Its role is to support the work of the University. I am currently on the UVic Senate as a Convocation Senator, elected to serve through June 2024.

When I first ran for Senate as a retiree, in 2020, I learned that some UVic retirees who wanted to vote for me were not eligible, because the UVic Senate (in the 1970s) had adopted rules that removed non-faculty employees from the Convocation Roll when they ceased active UVic employment, unless they requested to remain on the roll within 3 months of retirement.

Once on Senate, I followed up on this issue with the office of the University Secretary, which had been considering the need to review the Convocation membership rules. Unsurprisingly, no progress was made during the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, late in 2022 the University Secretary proposed a review of the rules for Convocation membership within Senate jurisdiction, and in December 2022 Senate approved the striking of an ad hoc committee to conduct the review. A call for members was issued in January 2023, and the committee began meeting in February 2023. In May 2023, the committee reported back to Senate with recommendations.

I am pleased to be able to report that at Senate on May 5, 2023, new rules were approved that give Convocation membership to all retired faculty, and to all non-faculty retirees with one year or more of full-time employment. The Roll will be updated automatically before each Senate election, the next being scheduled for 2024.

Current Convocation membership rules are explained here:

Rebecca Warburton
UVRA Vice President
Sixty years ago, I was preparing to spend my Junior Honours Year in West Germany. Academic requirements from Edinburgh University for the year abroad were that we attended a German university or worked as a teaching assistant. The aim was to improve our spoken German and become immersed in the culture. The year abroad was essentially graded on the major essay we were to write on some salient feature of our experience.

Göttingen University had a solid literary and scientific pedigree. It was the home of several 19th century Romantic poets, and an alarmingly large number of duelling fraternities. Two of the most famous literature professors of the day lectured in converted churches to hundreds of students. I attended their lectures and wrote papers for the seminar classes, but turned down an invitation to watch a duel in favour of a reading by Günter Grass from his latest novel.

About 10 months later, the choice had to be made about the all-important Junior Honours essay for Edinburgh.

Would I write about the New Year’s Eve party in a pub near the Berlin Wall, when a German friend left us about two hours before midnight and came back with his sister, after retrieving her through a tunnel under the newly constructed Wall? Certainly topical, politically and personally dangerous, but scarcely enough for a longer essay. How about my experience between semesters, working in a wallpaper factory in Bad Godesberg, the otherwise sedate, diplomatic suburb of Bonn, he then capital? My foreman was a blond, blue-eyed, bullying racist. In my second week he was gone, despatched by the knife of one of the Turkish ‘guest workers’. Plenty there for an essay: economic miracle, racial tensions with the imported workers needed to sustain it, but…

In the summer of 1964 I went to work as a volunteer in Friedland, a transit camp at the juncture of the former Russian, British and American occupation zones. Its history is a time capsule of the tides of human waves heading to western Germany and beyond. In 1947 the British occupation forces had built the camp to process the masses of German refugees from Eastern Europe. After Adenauer negotiated the release of thousands of German PoWs from Soviet Russian prison camps in 1956-7, the Red Cross set up a family reunification office there.
By 1963, the main arrivals were ethnic German pensioners and physically and mentally 'handicapped' (behindert, in German) people who were deemed of no use to the economies of Poland and East Germany.

My 'job' was mainly maintenance, but included interpreting for visiting anglophone groups. I once helped chaperone a busload of these outcasts from Eastern Europe who were being taken to a fairly secluded village near Osnabrück set up by the Federal Government to teach the basic necessities of life in a capitalist economy (bank accounts, insurance, dealing with the bureaucracy), as opposed to the cradle-to-grave care of a Socialist state. On another occasion, I was invited to sit in as two East German border guards (Vopos) were debriefed after jumping the border. As usual, one was older, one was from an urban background, the other more rural. Each had orders to shoot the other if ran.

So that was my topic: the History of Friedland Transit Camp (Durchgangslager Friedland). I researched in the local newspaper archives in Göttingen, the camp’s own archives, and interviewed long-term staff. The result, as far as Google and I can tell, is the only comprehensive (and certainly the only hand-written) story of the camp’s evolution.

I was told by my tutor in Edinburgh that my mark was the highest ever earned – 73%!

Peter Liddell

Some timeline pictures of arriving immigrants at Friedland Transition Camp.

Source of pictures: https://www.museum-friedland.de/de/museum/timeline/
What is Atrial Fibrillation and what’s all the fuss about? (1of 3)

“The rhythms of the heart”

Normally the heart beats in a very controlled and orderly manner starting with the upper chambers (the atria) contracting and moving blood into the lower chambers (the ventricles) from where it is pumped to the lungs and the rest of the body.

The sequence is usually initiated by a specialized node of tissue in the upper right chamber called the sinoatrial (SA) node or “pace maker”. The SA node sends a single electrical impulse through the specialized cells in the walls of the atria where it is picked up by the atrioventricular node (AV) which passes the impulse down nerve fibres located in the wall between the two lower chambers called the Bundle of His. From here the impulse travels through the ventricles via Purkinje fibres (specialized nerve cells). This causes the ventricles to make a single contraction pushing the blood to the lungs and the rest of the body. The heart normally beats between 60-100 beats per minute during rest.

The SA node is under the influence of other factors and, especially, the autonomic nervous system which may increase the number of beats per minute (the Sympathetic Nervous System) or decrease the number of beats per minute (the Parasympathetic Nervous System) depending on the body’s need for energy.

However, the normal rhythm of the heart can be disrupted in a number of ways, usually referred to as “arrhythmias”.

Atrial fibrillation, or Afib, is the most common arrhythmia (1). It is estimated that 200,000 Canadians experience some form of Afib. Approximately 70% of individuals with AFib are between 65 and 80 years of age. (Canadian Heart and Stroke website listed below, 2).
The precise mechanisms contributing to atrial fibrillation are not completely understood, but it has strong associations with cardiovascular diseases which also increase with age. The atria beat very rapidly and out of synchronization, which results in the quivering, or fibrillation, of the heart walls. This results in the atria not fully emptying, leaving blood behind which may then clot increasing the risk of a stroke or heart attack if the clot breaks free. It will also confuse the AV node and may cause rapid ventricular contractions again leading to the chambers not fully emptying which in turn may result in the body not receiving sufficient oxygenated blood to function properly.

Atrial fibrillation can be categorized as paroxysmal (lasting less than 7-days), persistent (lasting more than 7-days), or permanent (persisting for more than 1-year). The majority of episodes resolve in less than 24-hours. Left untreated AFib increases the risk of stroke or heart attack. The common subjective marker of AFib is a “racing” heart rate or palpitations that can usually be felt. Other symptoms may be shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, or light headedness but many individuals may in fact be symptom-free. If you suspect you may have AFib you should contact your medical advisor as soon as possible. They will usually refer you to a clinic for specific testing such as an electrocardiogram (ECG) or other diagnostic test.

Treatment options are well described in the Mayo Clinic website cited below (3). On initial diagnosis most individuals are put on a blood thinner until a more specific treatment is decided specific to the assessed major cause. If severe palpitations are experienced and require a visit to a medical emergency centre the initial treatment may require some form of cardioversion which involves sending an electrical shock to the heart to try and reset the normal rhythm. Various medications or treatments (including surgery) may be prescribed all in an attempt to:

- Reset the heart rhythm
- Control the heart rate
- Prevent blood clots
What is Atrial Fibrillation and what’s all the fuss about? (3 of 3)

The good news is that although AF is a long-term condition, if managed correctly, you can continue to lead a long and active life. There are a number of steps you can take that will help you manage your condition. These include taking the prescribed medications, having a healthy diet, and of course getting the recommended dose of physical activity. For more advice and suggestions you can check out the New Zealand Heart foundation link below (4).

Disclaimer: I am not a medical doctor but have a lifelong interest in health and wellness and the relationship to physical activity.

David Docherty,
Professor Emeritus, School of Exercise Science,
Physical and Health Education, University of Victoria.

References:
1-https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/atrial_fibrillation.htm#:~:text=When%20a%20person%20has%20AFib,may%20be%20a%20permanent%20condition
4-https://www.heartfoundation.org.nz/your-heart/hearthelp/atrial-fibrillation/managing-your-af

Editor’s note:

The picture of the heart including the names of its parts came from the author.
The ‘wave’ picture of a heart beating “out of synchronization” is from Google.
McMaster Optimal Aging Portal E-Learning Lessons

Stay healthy, active and engaged with the free and interactive lessons from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Topics include:

- Delirium: Is Your Loved One at Risk?
- Anxiety Disorders
- Promoting Brain Health
- Walking Speed - Is it a New Vital Sign?
- Osteoarthritis and Exercise
- Changing Gears: Making a Plan to Retire from Driving
- Social Isolation: Are You at Risk?

For more information, please visit their website.
https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/e-learning/lessons

You can also subscribe to their newsletter
[at the same address, top right hand corner].

Source: In the Loop  Self Management British Columbia
Issue 319—April 5, 2023
It was my great pleasure to serve as Campaign Chair for the UVRA United Way Campaign again this year. I am pleased to report that our Campaign was a very successful one. Over the course of the Campaign, UVIC Retiree donors contributed $56,010 to our community! This is a slightly higher level of contribution over last year and means that over the lifetime of the Retiree’s Campaign, we have contributed more than $525,000 to supporting our neighbours.

The Retiree’s campaign is always significant in securing UVIC’s reputation as a top-tier donor for the United Way of Southern Vancouver Island (UWSVI). Thank you, on behalf of the University, the United Way and all those in our community that your donations support.

The United Way of Southern Vancouver Island is an important social impact organization in our community. If you are interested to know how your donations are helping to support individuals, families and communities in our region, I urge you to explore the community impact directory on the United Way of Southern Vancouver Island’s website: uwsvi.ca/2022-23-community-impact-directory. From this page you can learn about programs offered in your own neighbourhood – or you can use this directory to provide information to friends or family members seeking assistance in our region.

Recently the UWSVI has launched their United for Mental Health Campaign. While the United Way has for many years been seen as a seasonal campaign fund-raiser, it is now a year-round fund-raising organization. We hear stories every day of the challenges faced by youth in our region and the on-going need for mental health services and supports. If you can, please consider supporting the initiatives designed to address the needs of youth in our region with a mid-year donation!

I am still looking for someone to take on the role of Campaign Chair for 2023/24. If you are interested, I would love to show you the ropes! Please be in touch with me at:

emmie@uvic.ca

Mary Ellen Purkis

UVRA – United Way Campaign Chair
In Search of the Holy Grail of Seismology
The discovery of a deterministic earthquake precursor

Presented by Dr. Kin-Yip Chun, Seismologist.
Professor (Emeritus), University of Toronto

In the mid-1980's US launched a national project "Parkfield Earthquake Prediction Experiment (PEPE)" to monitor a 30-km segment of the San Andreas along which a magnitude 6 earthquake was known to occur with an approximate recurrence time of 22 years. The multi-million dollar project used a very dense network of hi-tech geophysical instruments to allow real-time monitoring of anomalous phenomena occurring along the fault. When the anticipated earthquake did occur, in 2004 -- more than 12 years later than was predicted -- it did so with no apparent precursor of any kind. Deploying a new seismic analysis method we had developed, we re-examined the high-quality data left over from the PEPE. Within a year we unearthed a deterministic earthquake precursor that one would have expected to see, knowing what rock-fracture experimentalists had told us at least two decades earlier.

Non-technical talk suitable for all audiences.

WHEN?
DATES: Wednesday, June 14, 2023
TIME: 6:30-7:30 for talk, followed by Q&A

WHERE?
PLACE: Bob Wright Centre (Room A104)

HOW MUCH?
COST: $10.00 = Free for students

REGISTRATION?
https://tinyurl.com/UVRAEarthquake

Need more information? uvra@uvic.ca

NOTE: For Dr. Chun’s CV & publications list, please go to:
https://www.uvic.ca/retirees/assets/docs/poster-for-june-14-cvet-earthquake-precursor-final2.pdf
Do you have technology questions?

We can help!

Cyber-Seniors Technology Mentors are young people who have been trained to teach technology to older adults and are standing by to help with your smart phone, tablet or computer. You can also learn to:

- Set up a video call with friends and family
- Order groceries and medication online
- Watch movies, musicals and news shows
- Schedule appointments with medical professionals over video

Call 1-844-217-3057,
email info@cyberseniors.org or
go to our website at www.cyberseniors.org
to register for FREE webinars or to schedule FREE 1-on-1 tech-help over the phone or via video conference