



University
of Victoria

Retirees
Association

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Grey Matters!

SPRING 2025



An afternoon of play in *Parc Citroën*, the one time site of the famed car maker's factory, photographed by Tom Gore.

Update from the Board

Greetings fellow retirees.

Wow that seemed like a lot of rain that we have received this Spring so I am glad that the weather is now beginning to turn on its warmth and the flowers are blooming here in beautiful Victoria. I am still unpacking books from my move but a bit more sunshine would encourage me to venture outside more.

The annual UVRA **Chinese New Year Luncheon** was sold out this year. John Adams provided an extremely informative and interesting series of stories into the history behind the naming of the Chinese zodiac of 12-year animal signs. We appreciate the work of Barry Ming and Sanjit Roy in making this event happen and thank the many members who attended.

One of the highlights each year for UVRA is the **MASTERMINDS** speaker's series, that began in 2006, and continues free to all members and the community. This year

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MARCH 2025

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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it will be an in-person event on consecutive Wednesday evenings in **May**. Support for a hybrid delivery (in person and online) became unavailable this year and UVRA then took the lead and gathered support from UVic External Relations.

Four UVRA members have agreed to deliver timely presentations on topics involving Indigenous language preservation, whether alcohol is safe at any level of consumption, and tips for Grandparents to keep kids safe online. Another UVRA member will discuss how his love of research and drawing produced a graphic history book expanding our understanding of Victoria's Dunsmuir family. Watch for information on the sessions to be available soon. We want to thank Patty Pitts for the incredible work she has been doing to make this year's series a reality.

Volunteers are needed as greeters for this year's Masterminds, so please let us know if you can help...it is a great way to spend an evening.

The **UVRA Annual General Meeting** is fast approaching. It will be held on Wednesday, June 4th and will be followed by a reception that will be open to members and to recent retirees. Nominations are being accepted for a number of board positions including members of the Executive as well as members-at-large. We will be sending out more specifics regarding the meeting closer to the date. We look forward to having you join us.

If you know of someone at the University who is considering retirement, we encourage you to tell them about the association. Beyond the benefits of extended health, dental and travel insurance, members can access other benefits including a lower membership fee at the University Club and reduced rates for home insurance along with access to travel opportunities and discounts based on our association with CURAC and AROHE.

I cannot state it too directly: the activities offered by UVRA are limited by our shortage of volunteers. This impacts us on several fronts including a lack of representation on the United Way Committee this year and the ability for us to move forward in ongoing and new initiatives.

For example, a list of potential members and guests events is available but, without a person to take charge of an activity, these events cannot be undertaken.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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You could make a difference by spearheading a single event or helping us to build a team.



Canada's National Volunteer Week is April 27th to May 3rd. Involvement provides all kinds of intrinsic rewards....make it your year to take the lead. If you are interested or know someone who could assist, then please contact us at uvra@uvic.ca.

We value your input and suggestions and encourage you to share your ideas including submitting articles and/or photos for this newsletter.

Stay safe. Keep well.

Margaret Klatt

March, 2025

EDITOR'S NOTES

Last fall, Tom Gore submitted some photographs to *Grey Matters!* that he had taken on the streets and buildings of Paris. Tom's intent, then, was for me to choose a selection of his photos to publish in the newsletter. After having seen them all, I knew it would be impossible to choose because each photo was a work of art worthy of publication, so we decided to publish them all, but in two parts: the first in the Winter 2025 edition, the second in the present edition. We also decided to get both parts ready back in the fall of 2024, so that Tom could do any changes and re-arrangements between the two parts. (5-14)

Tom passed away this winter. Sadly, we never got to meet in person for coffee, but I got to know him better by reading the remembrance written by Cliff Haman, a long time friend of Tom. (15)

In this edition, Cecilia introduces us to roof rats. I recently read that rats do activities that produce noises thought, by persons studying rats, to be expressing the rat-version of human laughter. That led me to wonder what rats laugh about. (17)

March is Music Therapy Awareness Month in Canada. The March 26, 2025 edition of *McMaster Optimal Aging Portal* highlighted the advantages of music therapy for older adults. They include: Enhancing memory and cognitive function; Reducing anxiety and depression; Supporting physical rehabilitation; and Encouraging social connection.

The entire article can be read by clicking:

<https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/hitting-the-headlines/detail/hitting-the-headlines/2025/03/26/the-healing-power-of-music--how-music-therapy-supports-healthy-aging>

As the president wrote, in her Notes from the Board, UVRA's lack of volunteers severely impedes its ability to undertake various projects including social and educational events for its members and their guests. If you can only commit to a few hours, then organizing an event may be the perfect option for you. Do, please, have a look at the poster on page 16 to get more information.

Lou

MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: Walking across Paris (Part Two)

Page 1 of 11

Since the revolution, and even before, the streets of Paris are often filled with demonstrators arguing for one cause or against another.

Those opposed to an increased retirement age were constrained by a show of force.



The *Marche des Fiertés* LGBTQ, Paris' Pride Parade, was actually led by the gendarmerie and was an exuberant celebration of diversity. The route went from the *Place de la Concorde* along the *rue de Rivoli*, past the Tuileries and the Louvre, ending in the *Place de la République*.

It was estimated that there were around 700,000 spectators and participants!

In order to reduce its carbon footprint, no motorised vehicles were involved, other than those of the police.



MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: Walking across Paris

Page 2 of 11

Shopping is always a great pastime for visitors and locals, especially in the ancient covered passages which are often filled with book, art and stamp dealers.



Other shops seem to mock their clientele or, in the case of this exterminator's window, simply frighten them.



MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: Walking across Paris

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Some of our favourite rambles were on the green way being developed on the abandoned right of way of *La Petite Ceinture*, Paris' little beltway rail line.

Our strolls were often punctuated by opportunities to pause and watch *pétanque* players analysing their next move.

In this case the players are in the old *Arènes de Lutèce*, the best preserved Roman structure in Paris. Built in the 1st century AD, the *Arènes* could seat 15,000 people and was used both for theatre and gruesome gladiatorial combats.



MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: Walking across Paris

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For a quiet moment of reflection after a long walk, the great cemeteries of Paris offer serene respite. They are filled with remembrances of the wealthy and the famous and, in one case, the reluctantly deceased. In the summertime, they are oases of green, filled with trees growing between the tombs.



While many cemeteries were closed and remains removed to the famous Catacombs of the Left Bank, three major ones remain: *Montmartre*, *Montparnasse* and *Père Lachaise*. In each are buried both the famous and the less known folks of Paris.

On our visits we paid our respects to Sartre and de Beauvoir, Oscar Wild, Edith Piaf and many others. Parisians, however, continue to be somewhat chagrined that the most visited grave of all is that of the American Jim Morrison, late of *The Doors*.

In a far corner of *Père Lachaise* there are a series of painfully moving monuments to those murdered in the camps by the Nazis.



MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: Walking across Paris

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On rainy days an escape to a great art museum was always an easy retreat. In the Louvre we've often sat entirely alone in a room filled with Rembrandt's, while a few doors down there was total bedlam surrounding that woman of Dan Brown's *da Vinci Code* and the movie starring Tom Hanks that followed.

The only other paintings that seem to produce equal obsessive audience behaviour are those by van Gogh in the d'Orsay.



On the lower floors one can see ancient sculptures from Egypt, Greece and Rome as well as more recent pieces by Michelangelo and Bernini. There are also complete rooms from the building's past, reminding us that the Louvre used to be a sumptuous royal palace before the revolution.



MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: Walking across Paris

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Just a short stroll across the *Tuileries*, in the *Orangerie*, are Monet's panoramic paintings of his waterlily garden at Giverny.



A few blocks North is the *Centre Pompidou* filled with brilliant works of modern art such as Dix's Portrait of Sylvia von Harden.



MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: Walking across Paris

Page 7 of 11

While we usually walked as much as possible, many trips on the Metro were also necessary, often on horribly crowded trains.



Moments of beauty could be found here and there in stations where buskers sometimes performed quiet classical music.

And, sometimes jazz that reverberated down the passageways.



Sadly we often saw unapproved buskers escorted away by the Metro's police.

MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

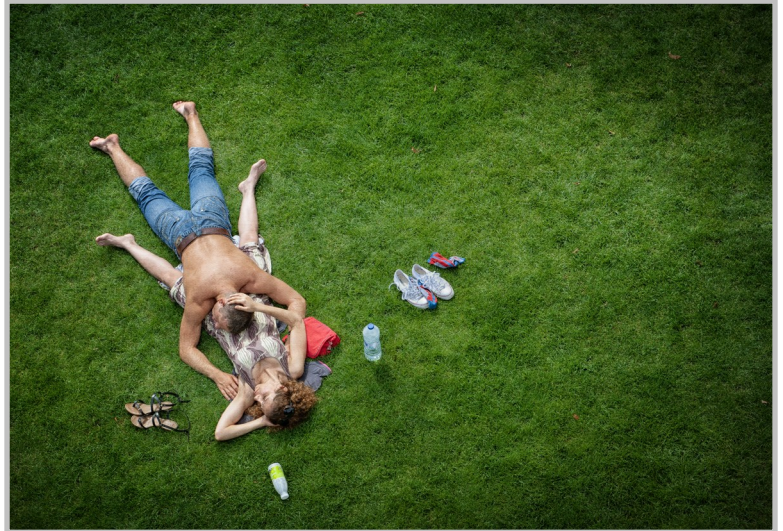
TOM GORE: Walking across Paris

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Leisure activities, especially for the young, were often great fun to watch. Created in the 1980s, the *Promenade Plantée*, a former rail line, was the world's first elevated urban park. It made a wonderful viewing platform for life below.

All over Paris small people play while their parents relax and dogs patiently await their masters.



Meanwhile, a gallery is patiently guarded by its sole occupant.

MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: Walking across Paris

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Street music with Manu Lanvin and the *Devil Blues* from the Summer Solstice party in Montmartre. Manu's father, the famous French actor Gérard Lanvin, is on the right.



Our weekly market under the Metro at *Barbès-Rochecouart*.

MEMBERS' CORNER: FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM GORE: *Walking across Paris*

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Yes, there are many homeless in Paris, often groups of tents are clustered under bridges but they, and their surrounds, are always neat and tidy. Some even had potted plants at their doors.

While *Paris Is Burning* is a film about the New York drag ball scene, a more toxic reality is that Paris combusts all of its garbage in its Ivry facility, burning 100 tonnes of waste per hour.

The beauty of the plant belies its threat but ending that may be harder than tilting at the Eiffel Tower or returning the classic Citroën Traction *Avant* to Paris' streets.



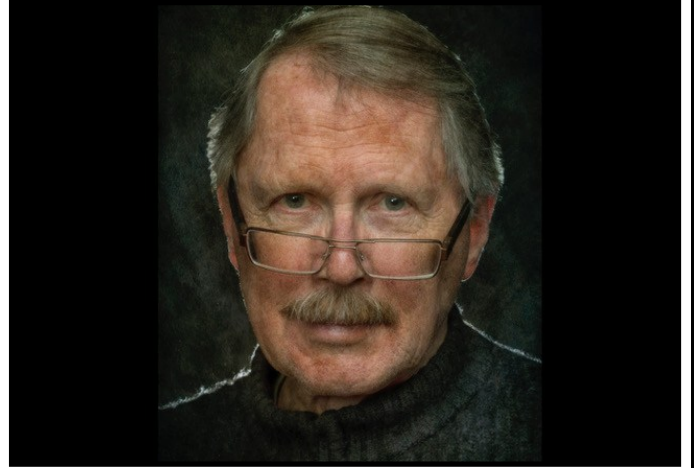
We can't wait to be back to do more research for our forthcoming book about Paris. I can almost hear Joséphine singing already.

Tom Gore

Tom Gore: In Memoriam

It was with tremendous sadness that I received news of the passing of my friend, mentor, and union brother, Tom Gore.

I knew Tom primarily through our connection in the union, where he was a fierce advocate for the rights of the working class. Tom was incredibly generous with both his time and talents, leaving a lasting and positive impact on so many of our members.



A true friend and mentor, he was always eager to engage in thoughtful conversations on a wide range of topics, including civil liberties, the qualities of great leadership, unionism, photography, cuisine, and his ever-persistent quest for the perfect cup of coffee. His warmth, wisdom, and enthusiasm will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

A staunch advocate for civil liberties, Tom was a devoted and long-standing member of our union, the Professional Employees Association. He played an instrumental role in founding the UVic chapter thirty years ago and went on to serve with distinction in numerous leadership roles, including multiple terms as Chair, Vice-Chair, and Director. Additionally, Tom held the positions of Treasurer and Director on several occasions, always bringing his passion, expertise, and dedication to advancing the goals of the union and supporting its members. His legacy of service and advocacy continues to inspire and guide us.

Cliff Haman



HELP NEEDED

The Summer 2024 edition of this newsletter provided detailed information about the numerous positions presently available - but not everyone has the time to commit for long periods of time.

If you cannot commit more than a few hours, then do please consider organizing ONE event.

Wondering where to go ?

Ask the UVRA office to email you the List of Possible Event Circa 2025. You will find 16 possible places to go on that list. The first 6 of them are events that sold out quickly and were very popular. They would be well attended were they to be repeated.

Wondering what is expected of you?

Most of the time, it's the following:

- Contact the chosen establishment or department.
- Arrange for a time, date, number of persons accommodated, cost, etc.
- Pass on this information to the UVRA office who will do the following:
 Set up the event with a service; do a poster; send invitations to the membership; send reminders; set up a waitlist when necessary; send attendance list to the organizer, co-organiser(s) and delegates, if any; send registered persons pertinent information and notification of any change if/when necessary.
 If there is a cost, the office, with the help of the service it may be using, will also handle this task.
- On event day, the organizer is responsible to see that she/he or a delegate is at the venue to take attendance.

That's it!

Time required to do the above? Not more than a few hours.

Where can this work be done? At home on line and/or by phone.

Questions? Contact uvra@uvic.ca

MEMBERS' CORNER: CECILIA



Roof Rats

A friend told me they don't have rats in rural Creston.

Well we had rats in Tsawwassen where I lived before I came back to the Island.

Roof rats. I had never heard of roof rats but I bought a house that had roof rats.

(House inspectors don't get a "like".)

It took me over \$1000 for an exterminator to get rid of them. They trapped lots of rats. Then they sent a woman to screen over the slits in the wood soffits and the joins of the roof slopes. She took 2 hours or so. The exterminator tried to charge me over \$700 for the screening. I told him I could hire nuclear scientists to do the screening at that rate. I got a bill for \$500.

Then they used a "bomb" in the attic that annihilates all forms of life and I had to vacate the premises for 4 hours.

But there were still rats under the wood floor in the garden shed. One time I trapped a big one and I put on my gloves, got a black plastic bag and a shovel and shoveled the dead rat into the bag. Once inside the bag, the dead rat started jumping around!!!

So I whacked the bag with the shovel until he quit jumping.

In the old days, the men did the killing jobs. But now we are liberated and it is sexist to say it is a man's job. So I took one for the women.

One of my neighbours, who was trapping a lot of rats, reused his traps.

Don't reuse a rat trap.

Cecilia

TIDBITS OF TRIVIAL LEVITY

(1 of 2)

**The statements provided below may or may not be true.
Trusting their veracity first requires verification.**

The percentage of Africa that is wilderness is 28%; of Canada 35%.

The first novel ever written on a typewriter was *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

The San Francisco Cable cars are the only mobile National Monuments in America.

Each King in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history.
Spades/King David' Hearts/Charlemagne Clubs/Alexander, the Great Diamonds/Julius Caesar

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died because of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes

If you were to spell out numbers, it would take to one thousand to find the letter "A".

Women invented the bulletproof vest, fire escapes, windshield wipers and laser printer.

Honey is the only food that does not spoil.

In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes, the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Hence the phrase . . 'Goodnight , sleep tight'

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It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his new son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.

TIDBITS OF TRIVIAL LEVITY

(2 of 2)

In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts. So in old England , when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them 'Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down' . . . That's where the phrase 'Mind your P's & Q's originated'. Lately, it's often expl

Many years ago in England , pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim, or handle, of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill , they used the whistle to get some service...'Wet your whistle' is the phrase inspired by this practice.

When she was First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt allowed only female journalist to attend her press conferences, thereby ensuring that newspapers would have to hire women.

The human eye can see yellow faster than any other colours.

Humans are not the only entities that laugh. Rats, apes and other animals also engage in what is viewed by scientists as the equivalent of human laughter.

Were the earth to stop rotating, humans would fly eastward at 465 meters/seconds and die instantly.

Gifted persons often have bad handwriting. It's been surmised that this is because their brains works faster than their hands.

Listening to music uses almost all of one's brain. Very few activities use most of the brain's regions.

Editor's Note: No, I didn't spend hours looking up these claims, but the music claim did motivate me to ask my co-pilot—an AI entity that appeared on my laptop when I renewed my Microsoft subscription this year—for more information. It gave me the following: "Yes, listening to music engages a wide network of brain regions, including those involved in auditory processing, emotion, memory, and motor function, suggesting that it activates nearly the entire brain. " It also provided me with detailed information for each brain regions, and numerous sources.