



McMaster University Retirees Association

Summer 2023

<http://mcmaster-retirees.ca>

President's Corner



Thanks to everyone who attended our events in June. First, we had a walk on some of the paths around Hamilton's bayfront, with time to talk and some refreshment afterwards. It was interesting to see the developments planned and under

construction in that area. The walks, in different venues, will continue over the summer and fall as long as there is interest. It is a great way to enjoy fresh air and good company. (Read more about [MURA Walks](#) on page 8.) A BBQ lunch and conversation was on the menu when we gathered at the Phoenix the first week of June. Fortunately the weather held and we could relax on the patio. (If you haven't been there, it is a super patio). It was wonderful to see old friends and colleagues after such a long period of only virtual events.

Our June 14 AGM was held virtually, so that our members who live further away could more easily attend. This might be the model for future annual meetings. Please read more about the [meeting](#) on page 3. Our constitution requires us to hold a general meeting annually, and it is our official method of informing members about where we stand financially and what activities Council has been engaged in. It is also a good chance to connect with some people you know but haven't seen for a while.

As your President, I have been busy representing MURA in a wider context. I wrote an [article](#) for the *University Affairs* publication describing Mac retirees'

contributions to research on aging at McMaster University. From May 31 through June 2, I represented MURA at the CURAC (College and Universities Retiree Associations of Canada) annual conference in Saskatoon. In addition to the conference agenda and business, I found out a couple of interesting facts: First, there is another MURA (the McGill University Retiree Association)! Also, MURA (ours) is much admired for the relationship we have with our university, as well as our robust membership numbers, which are a direct result of our relationship with MUFA, Unifor, SEIU Local 2, and the President's office, who provide our funding so that we do not have to charge a fee to our members.

Lastly, elections for vacant positions were held at the AGM. Many thanks to Betty Ann Levy, Nancy Gray, and John Horsman who completed their terms in June. A warm MURA welcome to new Council members Jane Mah and Virginia Aksan. I also look forward to working with our new Vice-President, Jan Nicholson, and with Diana Parker who was recently appointed as Treasurer by Council. A list of the 2023/2024 [MURA Executive and Council](#) is on page 3. As a council we work together to ensure that the needs of our members are met, and that we represent our members' interests to the university. There are also many people who do not sit on council but who assist us in many ways. MURA could not function without them.

Susan Birnie
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News from MURA

2023 MURA Annual General Meeting

By Nora Gaskin



The 38th MURA annual general meeting on June 14 was the fourth AGM to take place via Zoom. Participants enjoyed 15 minutes of social time before the meeting got underway. Peak attendance at the meeting reached 38.

MURA President, Susan Birnie, began her report by thanking everyone for attending. She said meeting virtually would be a good model for the future since it may allow more people to attend. She reviewed some of MURA Council's work over the past year.

- **Social events and activities:** We enjoyed our first in-person event in fall 2022 with two sold-out McMaster Planetarium shows. Susan thanked Kevin Sulewski for arranging this on our behalf. Our MURA Walks series, arranged by Mary Gauld, began in late May, and will continue throughout the summer. In early June, we celebrated our first "Spring Fling" where we enjoyed lunch and great conversations at the Phoenix, followed by optional campus tours.
- **Constitutional changes:** Over the past year Council took some time to review our constitution. Periodic review is necessary to ensure our constitution recognizes changes in institutional norms, such as virtual meetings, as well as changes to legislation.
- **Human Resources liaison:** Council also spent time working with our Human Resources counterparts on the definition of a retiree, specifically those people who were hired under the Group RRSP plan. We feel it is important to recognize as retirees those who provided service to the university but retired prior to their 65th birthdays. We have been successful in achieving that end. We have also spent time reviewing the "perks" available to retirees and ensuring those perks are documented correctly and consistently on university web pages and in written materials.
- **Research and scholarship:** We have become a pipeline for research on aging. We have links to the [McMaster Age Friendly University Initiative](#) and recently published an [article in University Affairs](#). Our Graduate Scholarship is now fully funded, with thanks to everyone who contributed. There are now [three fully funded MURA scholarships](#).

Susan gave credit to the members of this year's Council, especially outgoing Councillors Betty Ann Levy, John Horsman and Nancy Gray, who each contributed in very meaningful ways over the course of their time on Council. We depend on the skills and talents of our members to have an effective Council.

Treasurer Nancy Gray presented the [Treasurer's and Auditor's Reports](#), MURA constitutional amendments were approved, and Past President Hank Jacek presented the [Nominating Committee Report](#). The following slate of Executive and Councillors was elected, and the [changes to the MURA Constitution outlined in the Spring edition of MURAnews](#) were approved.

Executive	Councillors
Past President: Hank Jacek	Serving until 2024: Cliff Andrews, Barry Diacon, Dina LoPresti, Kathy Overholt
President: Susan Birnie	Serving until 2025: Mary Gauld, Jan Nicholson, Richard Stubbs
Vice President: Jan Nicholson	Serving until 2026: Virginia Aksan, Jane Mah
Treasurer: Diana Parker	
Secretary: Nora Gaskin	

Dr. Diana Sherifali, Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Heather M. Arthur Population Health Research Institute/Hamilton Health Sciences Chair in Inter-Professional Health Research gave a very interesting and useful presentation titled “**Maintaining Good Health in Retirement**”.

In her introduction, she noted that though chronic non-communicable diseases like dementia, stroke, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases are a leading cause of global mortality, 80% of these can be prevented by healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco cessation and limiting harmful use of alcohol. The research she presented focusses on ways of helping people implement healthy changes to their behaviour. She calls her favourite tool for this purpose the “Tiny Habits” approach.



Tiny Habits for Better Health

Recent research has shown that health information and education, and motivation alone do not necessarily lead to behaviour change. How you feel and your emotions are also key factors. Tiny Habits is an emerging, evidence-based approach that helps solve these behaviour problems and increases [self-efficacy](#) in a fun and creative way.

A tiny habit is a small health behaviour that: you design; you want to do; is quick (30 seconds to five minutes); does not require motivation; can be done easily; and can increase, multiply and spread.

For example, if your health goal is to be more active

- ask yourself “what do I enjoy doing?”
- be realistic and honest; don’t try to force yourself to do things you don’t like
- design a tiny habit that will help achieve that goal

The ABC of tiny habits comprises:

- An **Anchor**, or call to action
 - this is your cue to insert your tiny habit
 - find an anchor that works for you
 - e.g., closing the Keurig machine in the morning
- The tiny **Behaviour**
 - this is the small behaviour that supports your aspiration
 - make it easy to do in a short period of time
 - e.g., do 20 wall push-ups while the coffee is brewing
- An instant **Celebration**
 - connects your action to **feeling successful**
 - find your own celebration, something that resonates with you
 - e.g., tell yourself “Good job! You’ve got this!”

Tiny habits work because they are designed for you by you, fit seamlessly into your routine, don’t require motivation, and build confidence and self-efficacy. If your first attempts don’t quite work for you, consider your ABC’s, reflect, redesign, and try again. Technology (e.g., FitBit, phone apps) can help to optimize your environment to prompt a habit.

Two to three tiny habits are usually a good starter combination that can stick and can be stacked and grow. The key is to keep trying and staying positive.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Susan thanked Diana, and presented her with a gift certificate to Indigo. There was a draw for two additional gift certificate door prizes, which were won by Richard Stubbs and Stephen Link.

Brian Beckberger, MURA’s delegate to the Salaried Pension Trust Committee, reviewed the year’s activity in the salaried pension plan, and gave an overview of an asset/liability study that took place over the last year. His [written report](#) is available on the MURA website.

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Welcome New Council Members!



Virginia H. Aksan - I began my journey as a dual citizen – Canadian-American – in 1982, when Oktay Aksan, my black-eyed Turk, carried me off to Toronto. There, he gave me a choice – go back for the PhD or continue to work in libraries. I did both. I enrolled in an MA and then the PhD program in Middle East studies at the University of Toronto, a decade after doing a

library degree at Berkeley (1973) and almost two decades after graduating from Allegheny College with a BA in French (1968). While writing the PhD, I worked at Robarts Library, in charge of cataloguing the Middle Eastern accessions.

I was appointed to the McMaster History Department in the fall of 1991 where I had the great privilege to teach until I retired in 2014, mainly classes in Ottoman, Islamic, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean history. I taught modern Middle East history (more accurately the Arab-Israeli question) a dozen times.

My research focus has been comparative war & society, and imperial Ottoman, Austrian & Russian history 1800-1900. This includes the study of frontiers, the exchange of ideas and technology, and the role of intermediaries, eastern and western, in the discussion and perception of Ottoman governance and reform.

Service to my professional colleagues has been a privilege: MELA (Middle East Librarians Association, President 1980-81); OTSA (Secretary/President of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association, 1992-2001), and MESA (President of the Middle East Studies Association 2009), an organization of some 3000 members, which has kindly given me both a service and mentorship award.

On campus, I served as Chair of History (1999-2006); on McMaster's Senate (1992-94), on the University Planning Committee (1999-2002), the Board of Governors (2005-08), and as President of the McMaster University Faculty Association (2010-11).

Retirement activities include singing and bird watching, both lifelong pleasures, and serving on the Board of the remarkable Hamilton Children's Choir.

Jane Mah -

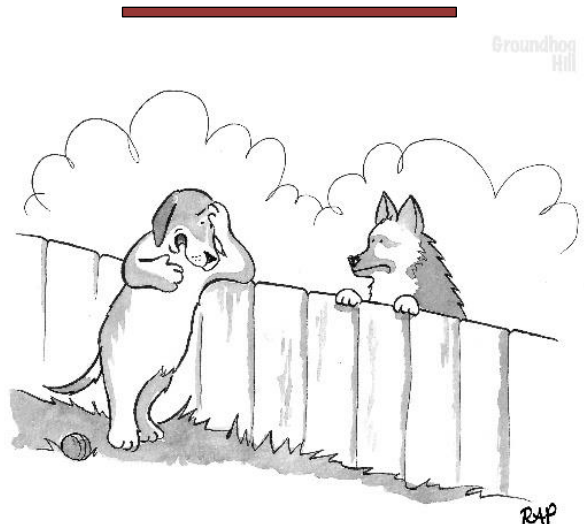
I started at McMaster University in 1983 after 7 years with the Hamilton Spectator. I started in a part-time role in Religious Studies as an Administrative Assistant, knowing that I intended to start my family. My oldest son Tyler currently works for Media Production Services (MPS) at Mac and my youngest Trever, is with the Registrar's Office.



In 1988, I returned to full-time work in the Faculty of Engineering where I had a number of different positions in various departments over 30 years. In 2013 when Mosaic arrived, I was involved in the implementation of the travel and accounts payable finance module.

For more than 20 years, I worked as an Administrator for both Materials Engineering and Biomedical Engineering. I retired in 2021 and stayed on part-time until finally leaving at the end of September 2022.

My first granddaughter arrived in 2020, a grandson in 2021, and then I was blessed with twins - a boy and a girl - in 2022. I'm enjoying my time with these kiddos, spending time at the cottage, and I love to quilt in my spare time (which I don't seem to have enough of!).



"I had that nightmare where I'm in class, a final paper is due, and I forgot to eat it."

courtesy of Rose Anne Prevec
Instagram: [@groundhog_hill](https://www.instagram.com/groundhog_hill)

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Diana Parker - Starting in Security and Parking Services, with a stop in Financial Affairs, Diana spent the last 12 years of her McMaster career in the Office of the Vice-President Administration where she worked on a number of process-improvement projects with Finance, Human Resources, Facility Services and University Technology

Services (UTS). She retired in December of 2022 from the Office of the Vice-President Finance and Operations. Along the way, Diana served on the Central Health and Safety committee, was a Treasurer for MUSA, and a student mentor through McMaster Toastmasters.

Diana leveraged her career at McMaster to fulfil her love of learning. During her 35 years working for McMaster, Diana completed her undergraduate degree in History, acquired diplomas in IT, Accounting, Project Management, and Lean Process Improvement, and received her certification as a CPA. Diana was awarded a graduation prize for the highest overall average for one of her diplomas, and was a member of a Security Services Team that received the President's Staff Award. Anecdotally, she's been told by HR she holds the unofficial record for most use of the staff tuition benefit. Consequently, Diana is looking forward to exploring the retiree tuition benefit!

Outside of the office, Diana and her husband are keen scuba divers, enjoying the peace and beauty of underwater landscapes.

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Welcome New Retirees

Compiled by Kathy Overholt

Sue Becker, Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour
 Christina Cooper, University Advancement Services
 David Cowden, Facility Services
 Gary Crooks, Facility Services
 Kenneth Deal, DeGroote School of Business
 Joseph Emberson, Facility Services
 Sheryl Fisker, Obstetrics & Gynaecology
 Lynn Green, Accounts Payable
 Paul Harrison, Chemistry & Chemical Biology
 Roger Jacobs, Biology
 Lynn Jarrett, Health Evidence and Impact
 Anne Lancaster, Surgery
 Diana Maltese, Faculty of Engineering
 Michael Marrin, Pediatrics
 Ray Osborne, Hospitality Services
 Donna Shapiro, Campus Store (Bookstore)
 Cheryl Sinclair, Campus Store (Bookstore)
 Nancy Weller, Faculty of Health Sciences Education
 Jean Wilson, Arts & Science/Linguistics & Languages

A belated welcome to: Milica Zubic, Custodial Services
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Contacting MURA

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Website <http://mcmaster-retirees.ca/>

Retirees in the News

By Marcia MacAulay

Fred Moyes, retiree and former McMaster professor, was recognized with an honorary degree at the McMaster Faculty of Science convocation on June 15. Moyes has had an illustrious career in both the academic and musical worlds, with his passion and enthusiasm for teaching positively impacting thousands of students across the globe. Moyes taught anatomy in the Physical Education and Kinesiology programs at McMaster University, twice earning the McMaster University Teaching Award.

His musical career as a singer/songwriter and composer has seen him perform around the world. He earned the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Scroll of Honour, and served as president of the Robert Burns Society of Hamilton. See the *Daily News* article [Meet McMaster's Spring 2023 honorary degree recipients](#).

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Best Canadian Scientists from McMaster

Several McMaster University retirees have ranked in the top 100 scientists in Canada in their field in the recently released [Research.com](https://research.com) ranking.

Michael Boyle, professor emeritus in the Department of Psychiatry: Boyle's research "mostly deals with Psychiatry, Mental health, Conduct disorder, El Niño and Developmental psychology." <https://research.com/u/michael-h-boyle>

David Feeny, professor emeritus in the Department of Economics: Feeny's "main research concerns Quality of life, Health Utilities Index, Physical therapy, Public health and Gerontology." <https://research.com/u/david-feeny>

Mary Law, professor emerita in the School of Nursing: Law's "primary areas of study are Occupational therapy, Developmental psychology, Activities of daily living, Cerebral palsy and Nursing." <https://research.com/u/mary-law>

Henry Schwarcz, professor emeritus in the School of Earth, Environment & Society: Schwarcz's "primary scientific interests are in Mineralogy, Paleontology, Ecology, Archaeology and Isotopes of carbon." <https://research.com/u/henry-p-schwarcz>

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Order of Canada Appointments

Two McMaster professors emeriti were recognized by the Governor General of Canada in June as new recipients of the Order of Canada. One of our country's highest civilian honours, the Order of Canada recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and contributions to the nation.

Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, professor emerita of Sociology, was appointed a Member of the Order for her extensive scholarly contributions and steadfast commitment to the advancement of international human rights.

Gary R. Purdy, professor emeritus of Materials Science and Engineering, was appointed a Member of the Order for his innovative contributions to the field of materials science and engineering, and for his dedicated support for refugees, peace efforts and social justice.

Learn more about these recipients and other McMaster community members who were appointed to the Order of Canada recently via the [Daily News](#) article [McMaster Chancellor Santee Smith, professors and community members appointed to Order of Canada](#).

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Recent Passings

Compiled by Kathy Overholt

Robert Bell, Facility Services, April 9, 2023
Harold Bridle, Office of the Registrar (Admissions), February 23, 2023
Allan Dingle, Biology, April 18, 2023
Richard Epand, Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, July 12, 2023
Donald Hitch, Surgery, March 27, 2023
Christine Kleinschmidt, Medicine, June 28, 2023
Peter Knight, Surgery, June 8, 2023
Tom Knight, Library, April 26, 2023
Pat O'Day, University Technology Services, May 20, 2023
Sindy Santucci, Hospitality Services, December 9, 2022
Thekla Soar, Regional Medical Associates, May 19, 2023
Karen Szala-Meneok, Research Ethics, July 7, 2023
Asger Thomsen, Hospitality Services, April 25, 2023
Penny Turnbull, Chemistry, April 22, 2023
Maria Voloudakis, Hospitality Services, June 21, 2023

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MURA Events

By Mary Gauld, Special Events Coordinator

SPRING FLING

Once the nice weather arrived, it seemed we all wanted to get going. On Tuesday, June 6, we held the first **MURA Spring Fling** at the Phoenix patio. It was a beautiful day – 40 people came out and visited with old and new friends. Thank you to the President's office for providing a subsidy. Donations for door prizes were provided by the Phoenix (2 - \$25 gift certificates); by Vineland Estates Winery (2 bottles of wine); by Emily Gauld (handmade pottery bowl) and by Rob Stevens (cutting board and wooden spoons). Thank you to these donors. The winners seemed pleased with their gifts.



MURA WALKS

Since walking seems to have become more popular among the retirees, we are now organizing monthly walks at a variety of places. The first was held on Wednesday, May 17 when 12 people gathered at Pier 8 park at Williams Café and went for a walk. Some went around the circuit along the waterfront trail to the Haida and back to Williams. Other more adventurous souls walked over to Bayfront Park and then joined in for a coffee.



The second walk was held on June 16 in Chippawa (Niagara Falls) at Kingsbridge Park. Five adults and a two-year-old walked from the park at the top of the Falls, all the way down to Table Rock House. We walked



at a leisurely pace and it was a beautiful day. Lunch followed at the well-known Betty's restaurant.

Our third walk was scheduled for July 20 for a tour of the McMaster campus, with lunch to follow at the Phoenix for those who were interested.

Future walks currently planned are:

MONDAY AUGUST 14:

Walk along the Welland Canal. Gathering at 10:30 at the Lock 3 Welland Canal Museum and lookout. We can walk in several directions. If you choose to stay for lunch, I will make reservations at George's Greek Village. This is an easy, level, paved walking path and you can walk as far or as little as you please.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 14:

Bruce Trail starting at Chedoke Golf Course (off of Aberdeen Ave.), ending at the on-site Lancaster Eatery. Start time – 10am. This is a more natural path that may not be as well suited for those with walking challenges, but the setting is gorgeous, and it can be a chance to meet up with friends at 11:30 or 12 for lunch.

OCTOBER (TBA): The date has not yet been confirmed for the October walk. I suggest that we gather at Queenston Heights park – the site of Brock’s Monument. I am currently trying to arrange for a Parks employee to give us a little bit of the history of Brock and the War of 1812. Queenston Heights is a beautiful, easy-walking park with several historic markers. It is also the official starting place of the Bruce Trail. We will have a Bruce Trail-trained guide along with us for those that choose this type of walk. October is a beautiful time to walk there.

Watch your emails for information. Or send me a message and I will add you to my personal list of walkers! The more the merrier – spouses and friends are welcome. Hope to have you join us sometime. Walks in November and December will also be planned – suggestions are welcome. Contact me at gauld@mcmaster.ca. (go to [Table of Contents](#))

MURA Holiday Lunch

Mark **Tuesday, December 5, 2023**, on your calendar for MURA’s annual Holiday Lunch. The lunch will be held in the CIBC Banquet Hall on the 3rd floor of the Student Centre on the McMaster campus. Look for more details and a reservation form in the Fall issue of *MURAnews*.



MURA Scholarship Fund
McMaster University Retirees Association



MURA Scholarship News

The McMaster University Retirees Association In-Course Scholarship is given to a full-time student enrolled in Level 2 or above of a program in Aging and Society. **Tegan Wilson** won the MURA In-course Scholarship in Fall 2022, and has asked that we pass along her thanks to members. Her message appears below.

Dear donors of the MURA scholarship,

Thank you for your generosity. I am sincerely honoured to have been selected as a recipient of the MURA scholarship.

Who am I?...

I am a fourth-year undergraduate student working towards an Honours BA in Health and Society with a specialization in Mental Health and Addiction.

My accomplishments...

For over a year, I have had the privilege to work as a research assistant as part of Dr. Daniel Vigo and Dr. Marisa Young’s study "An integrated online approach to mental health and substance use in university

students". I have additionally been granted two undergraduate research grants, which have allowed me to further explore my research interests and concepts raised within my program.

My aspirations...

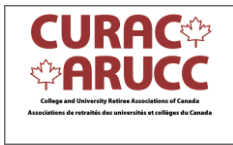
As I finish the final year of my undergraduate degree, I hope to continue my education and aim to enter a JD [Juris Doctor in law] program. Your generosity has helped fund my final year of undergraduate study, and I wish to thank you again for your support.

Kind Regards,
Tegan Wilson

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McMaster University Retirees Continue to Give Back to the University

See the article published by *University Affairs* in their “Academic for Life” section, written by Susan Birnie, president of MURA, and Helen Barton, former president of MURA and acting news editor of *MURAnews*.



Report on College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) Annual Meeting 2023

By Susan Birnie, MURA President

The first in-person conference for CURAC since 2019 was held at the end of May in Saskatoon at the University of Saskatchewan. I attended on behalf of MURA.

The theme of the conference was “The New World”. A series of talks by University of Saskatchewan faculty covered a range of topics.

- **Higher education: The pandemic, digital technology and change** addressed how higher education can be more flexible and inclusive given the changing technologies. Capabilities will be assessed more on the basis of creativity and ingenuity, with an emphasis on deep and complex learning. Of course cyber security was also addressed.
- **Societal changes: Canadian political schisms and shifts, Indigenization and Reconciliation** included a discussion of the divides within Canada, and questioned if we are prepared for the future. Indigenous research is most often fragmented as part of a larger study, and would benefit from bringing a number of indigenous health research networks together.
- **Research and development: Plant proteins, rare earth developments and small modular research** discussed emerging markets in plant-based foods and for 16 of the rare earth elements. Nuclear research, development, and training for use of small nuclear reactors on a small scale was also discussed.
- The **Health services** presentation covered the change in emphasis from disease to health and well-being, as well as trends in technology and access to virtual care in rural and remote communities.

A feature of the conference was a “fireside chat” with The Honourable Roy Romanow (former Premier of Saskatchewan) in conversation with Eric Kline (former Minister of Health for Saskatchewan), who spoke of their recollections of CURAC’s early beginnings twenty years ago.

A portion of the conference was dedicated to a celebration of the twentieth anniversary of CURAC. This included brainstorming by the participants on what CURAC should look like for the next twenty years, and how it can best serve its constituents.

The next CURAC conference will be hosted by the University of Waterloo, May 22-24, 2024.

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What’s Happening @ Mac Order of Canada Appointment

McMaster’s Chancellor, and several other Canadians with strong ties to McMaster were recognized by the Governor General of Canada in June as new recipients of the Order of Canada.

Santee Smith / Tekaronhiákhwa, McMaster’s Chancellor, was appointed a Member of the Order for her contributions as a leading Indigenous artist in performance and dance.

Learn more about these recipients and other McMaster community members who were appointed to the Order of Canada recently via the *Daily News* article [McMaster Chancellor Santee Smith, professors and community members appointed to Order of Canada](#).

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Contacting Human Resources	
Mail	Gilmour Hall 304, McMaster University 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON L8S 4L8
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Website	https://hr.mcmaster.ca/retirees/

McMaster University Campus Architecture and Sculpture Tours

By Sylvia Avery

During my 40 years of working at McMaster, I spent a great deal of time walking around the main campus - picking up parking passes, going to lunch with my colleagues, rushing to the gym for the noon step class, and more! I have admired the campus in the Spring with its flowering trees in many colours of pink. In the winter, following a long stretch of freezing rain, the bare branches of those same trees sparkled like diamonds in the cold morning sun. How fortunate I felt to work among such beautiful surroundings!

The campus has changed so much since I started work in the fall of 1979. I have walked through the vintage corridors of University and Hamilton Hall and witnessed construction of the Student Centre, the David Braley Athletic Centre and the Peter George Centre for Living and Learning. To be truthful, I have never thought much about their history and evolution. If you are like me, here's your chance to find out.

The McMaster Museum of Art has developed a digital tour of the architecture on campus. Hosted on [izi.TRAVEL*](#) (a storytelling platform for museums and cities), the [McMaster Architecture Tour](#) features a map and 11 different stops. You can read or listen to the commentary and there are all kinds of new and old photos to click through. The tour is free and can be easily accessed using your desktop computer or smartphone.

There is also a [McMaster Campus Sculpture Tour](#). The new guide to 26 works of art across campus (and growing) includes images, texts, audio, and maps.

*NOTE: An [izi.TRAVEL](#) account and the app are not required to view the McMaster tours. Just click on the links we've provided here and scroll below the izi.TRAVEL information to access the Mac tours. You may want to check out izi.TRAVEL for other tours. The app is available in the App Store and on Google Play.

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Your Money/Your Health

Retiree Benefits Reminders

Claim Submissions:

The benefit year-end is June 30th. Be sure all benefit claims dated from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 are submitted to Sun Life **no later than September 30, 2023**. Late claim submissions will not be reimbursed.

You are encouraged to review all claim statements you receive from Sun Life and follow up with them at 1-800-361-6212 if you have any questions. If you still have questions regarding your benefits after contacting Sun Life, you can contact the HR Service Centre at 905-525-9140, ext. 22247 for assistance.

To find out more details on your benefits or how to submit claims electronically, visit: [Sun Life Benefit Information For Retirees](#).

Retiree Out of Province/Country Emergency Medical Coverage Update:

Effective July 1, 2023, Sun Life Global Excel Management (GEM) replaced Allianz Global Assistance as the new provider for retiree out of province/country coverage. Other than the change in provider from Allianz to GEM, no other changes have been made. The contact numbers have not changed. To review the McMaster Retiree Out of Province/Country Emergency Medical Coverage Summary and to obtain an updated travel card, visit: [Retiree Out of Country Coverage Summary](#), or contact the HR Service Centre at 905-525-9140, ext. 22247 for assistance.

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Check your Biennial Pension Information Statement

Human Resources mailed pension statements to all former and retired members of the Salaried Original Plan, Salaried Plan 2000, and the Hourly Pension Plan in December 2022. These provincially mandated biennial statements reflect the pension plan status and your individual entitlements as at June 30, 2022.

You are encouraged to carefully review your pension statement for accuracy to avoid problems for you or your spouse. For example, two retirees recently contacted MURA to report that the "Form of Pension" section in their notice indicated no further payments after their death rather than the spousal pension option they had chosen at retirement. HR was contacted, reviewed the retirees' files, and corrected the statements within a few days.

If you have not received a statement, or if you have questions about your statement, please contact the Human Resources Service Centre at 905-525-9140, ext. 22247.

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Changes Coming to OHIP Funding for Visits to Optometrists

By Mary Johnston

You may experience some changes to the frequency of visits to your optometrist after September 1, 2023, when a new agreement between the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Ontario Association of Optometrists (OAO) takes effect. This four-year agreement resulted from negotiations to deal with concerns by optometrists about serious underfunding for optometry services covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

A joint [news release](#) by the Ontario Government and OAO lays out the changes and underlying reasoning. According to the news release “The changes in this agreement are based on the best available clinical evidence and expert opinion for providing people appropriate eye care, as well as the expert advice of the OAO provided over months of bilateral discussions with the Ministry of Health.”

OHIP has in the past, and will continue to, pay for visits to optometrists* for some, but by no means all, residents of Ontario. There are two main criteria that determine OHIP coverage for care by optometrists: age and the presence of certain medical conditions (see the list below for examples). MURA members will generally fall into one of three categories:

1. Those **under 65 years of age without an eligible medical condition** requiring ongoing monitoring are not eligible for OHIP-funded visits to their optometrist. There will be no change to this under the new payment schedule. Some McMaster retirees under age 65 are covered for eye examinations by their post-retirement benefits plan (see the *MURAnews* Fall 2018 article [Eye Examination Funding](#)) and can recoup costs through Sun Life. View your [benefits plan](#) to see what your coverage is.
2. Those **65 years of age or older without an eligible medical condition** requiring ongoing monitoring will be eligible for one OHIP-funded eye exam by their optometrist every 18 months plus two minor follow-up visits, if required, between eye exams. This new schedule is a change from the previous one, which allowed for one eye exam every 12 months plus an unlimited number of follow-up visits.
3. Adults of **any age diagnosed with an eligible medical condition** requiring ongoing monitoring are eligible for one OHIP-funded eye exam by their optometrist every 12 months. There will be no change to this under the new payment schedule. There will, however, be a change to the number of funded minor follow-up visits between eye exams: these will be reduced from an unlimited number to two visits.

Here are some of the **eligible medical conditions** that qualify for OHIP coverage of one optometry visit every 12 months, regardless of age. Changes taking effect on September 1st are underlined.

- diabetes mellitus
- glaucoma
- active retinal disease
- active corneal disease
- active optic pathway disease
- uveitis which is currently inflamed (whether it is reoccurring or not)
- cataract causing clinically significant decreased vision that impacts daily life or is referred for surgery

To summarize, the upcoming changes to OHIP funding may mean that you are eligible for fewer government-funded visits to your optometrist. Talk to your optometrist to find out how these changes may affect you.

*[Optometrists](#) are health care professionals who perform routine eye exams, during which they check vision, prescribe glasses/contact lenses, assess general eye health and screen for eye disease. An optometrist may prescribe certain medications for some eye diseases. The OHIP payments discussed here apply only to visits to an optometrist. They do not apply to care provided by [ophthalmologists](#), MDs who specializes in the medical and surgical treatment of the eye. Visits to ophthalmologists are covered by OHIP.

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Parking on Campus

Permit Expiry Renewal Reminder

Retiree parking permits are issued on a 12-month basis and must be renewed annually. Renew prior to your expiry date by [email](#), [phone](#) or by [postal mail](#). Your transponder number is on the front of your transponder. If you have questions or have not made a note of your expiry date, please contact McMaster Parking Services by email at parking@mcmaster.ca or at 905-525-9140 ext. 24232.

Note that central-campus parking (with a transponder) is available to McMaster retirees as follows:

- May to August each year:
 - Access to lots B, C, D, H, I, K, N, P and Underground Stadium at all times.
- September to April each year:
 - Access to Lots B, C, D and I after 12:30 pm on weekdays.
 - Access to Lots H, K, N, P, and Underground Stadium at all times on weekdays.
 - Access to Lots B, C, D, H, I, K, N, P and Underground Stadium at all times on weekends and statutory holidays.

A note to retirees without parking transponders

Free parking on campus is available to retirees. To take advantage of this perk, and to view retiree parking access, go to the [McMaster Parking Services](#) web page. **The Parking Office is accepting permit applications by email only.** For further information, please contact [Parking Services](#). (go to [Table of Contents](#))

Volunteer Opportunities



Recruiting for a resistance band training research study

A research team working under the supervision of Dr. Stuart Phillips, McMaster professor of Kinesiology, is looking for generally healthy women and men 70 years of age and older to participate in a resistance training program to investigate the impact of resistance band training on older adults' physical function and strength.

The exercise program will occur two times a week for 18 weeks, in three phases:

- Phase 1. In-person (6 weeks)
- Phase 2. In-person and online (6 weeks)
- Phase 3. Online (6 weeks).

The online classes will take place on Zoom, and the in-person classes at the [PACE activity centre](#) at McMaster. Participants must be able to come to the university for the in-person classes and data collection.

For more information, please contact Giulia Coletta at bands.study@gmail.com.

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Recruiting for a light-weight resistance training research study

A research team working under the supervision of Dr. Stuart Phillips, McMaster professor of Kinesiology, is conducting a study to investigate the effects of lifting light weights and consuming protein on body composition and physical function, comparing the effect of whey vs. collagen protein.

The team is looking for healthy men and women between the ages of 60 and 80 with a BMI (body mass index) of 25-40 kg/m² who are non-smokers and in general good health.

The total time commitment would roughly be 66 hours, over 14 weeks (12 visits). You will be trained by one of our group's experienced scientists during the study, and will be provided with a protein supplement for 12 weeks. There will be several measurements taken, including 5 muscle biopsies from the upper leg. Free training and guidance will be provided, as well as an additional \$500 as compensation for your time and participation.

For more information, please email participate@lumed.org or call 289-769-0079 and ask for the Micol [Milk vs. Collagen] study.

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Members' Corner

The views and opinions expressed in Members' Corner are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of MURA Council.

Chimneys: Dundas and Prague

By Elaine McKinnon Riehm, Faculty of Humanities, Eighteenth-Century Studies

Dundas has convenient benches along King Street that allow sitters a view of both the passing scene and the city's nineteenth-century past. Looking up, you will see charming friezes and windows outlined in ornamental brick. If you bend your neck a little and look farther up, you will see chimneys of every sort, four-flued chimneys on store rooftops, indicating four fireplaces below in what formerly were dining or drawing rooms or shops. On one roof top, I found 5 chimneys with a total of 11 flues. But if you sweep your eyes farther up and around, you will discover the serious, tall, industrial chimneys of Dundas.

I suppose that together all these chimneys served to disperse into the atmosphere the noxious air from city factories and workshops on the expectation that prevailing winds would carry airborne particles to outlying areas such as Copetown or Greensville, whose residents and livestock might not object to the soot.

Made of brick from the numerous Dundas brickyards that used pools of local clay for their bricks, chimneys provided employment in the nineteenth century for brick-makers, agile bricklayers, draftsmen, and for horses and drays. Once built, chimneys of every kind required maintenance to avoid catastrophic chimney fires, which were a serious household and town hazard. This was the job of the lowly chimney sweep.

Chimney sweeps, often as young as fourteen, were chosen for their slim girth. They climbed chimneys and descended into them on ropes where they scoured the interior walls with a circular wire brush and scraped off charcoal and carbon debris. It was a dangerous job, often resulting in early death.

In 1775, Percivall Pott, a British surgeon, reported a form of occupational cancer that he had noticed among chimney sweeps. Known as Chimney Sweeps' Carcinoma or soot wart, it is a squamous cell cancer of the skin of the scrotum caused by soot irritation, leading to a cancerous invasion of the abdomen with a high mortality rate. Curiously, there was almost no soot wart in France, where sweeps wore tunics that hung outside their work pants and prevented soot from getting into their underwear. Pott's observations are thought to be the first medical documentation of an occupational disease.

We have no record of soot wart in Dundas, nor do census reports reveal the number of chimney sweeps here. The *City Directory of Hamilton Wentworth* (1865-66), which lists residents by name and occupation, makes no mention of chimney sweeps, suggesting that they were perhaps lumped together with other unskilled labourers.

The large number of surviving chimneys, however, tells us there were many young sweeps in Dundas.

The chimneys I saw recently in Prague are, to mix a metaphor, a different kettle of fish than those in Dundas. Prague chimneys are confections: strips of sweet yeast dough, wrapped around a stick, grilled over charcoal, slipped off the stick, and sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar. They are perhaps the ultimate street food. Eaten in warm tufts pulled from the edges, chimney cakes are fun to share with a friend over coffee. Alternatively, their hollow interior can be filled with scoops of ice cream.

In Prague, these cakes are known as "trdelník." As there are similar cakes eaten on the streets of Vienna and Budapest, there is some controversy about where they originated. If in the Czech Republic, were the inventors Czech, Slovak, or perhaps Moravian? No matter. Surely some time, on some Slavic farm, a farm wife noticed that the coals were still hot and strung a lump of left over, sweet, bread dough onto a stick which she then toasted over the fire.

The tallest chimney cake I saw in Prague was in the hands of a child, who looked about 3. He was balancing an ice-cream-filled chimney while seated jauntily on the shoulders of his lengthy father, whom I estimate at 6 ft. 3 in. From the low bench where I was sitting, I could not determine whether the chocolate ice cream did or did not drip onto his father's head.

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In Praise of Walking

By Ellen Ryan, Psychiatry

When you are walking in the springtime or at dawn, you are watchful, alert, mind stretched towards the rising day, and nothing matters but that slow affirmation.

~ Henry David Thoreau

Walk lightly on the Earth, and the long road turns to joy.

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

To solve a problem, walk around.

~ St. Augustine

Even a twenty-minute walk is long enough to fling open the inner door to insight and inspiration.

~ Julia Cameron

In the course of a walk, we usually find out something about our companion, and this is true even when we travel alone.

~ Thomas A. Clark

Perhaps the truth depends on a walk around the lake.

~ Wallace Stevens

I became a walker thirty years ago. Initially, I walked every day - around the block with a cane to strengthen an injured right ankle. After six weeks, the ankle was healed. I was left with a cherished habit.

I have kept walking since, different reasons prominent at different times. During the pandemic, Patrick and I walked twice a day for outdoor exercise and companionship. Eventually, we mapped out walks to cover most of the Ancaster and Dundas neighbourhoods. The best surprises during these neighbourhood walks occurred when we discovered walkways connecting two cul-de-sacs, allowing us to cover new territory without doubling.

This morning I walked with sun shining over my shoulder, a gentle breeze tickling my cheeks, swaying branch shadows following my own shadow on the rail trail. I could hear the crunch of feet pacing on the gravel, sometimes only mine, sometimes a chorus of feet, sometimes accompanied by the creek babbling.

While walking outdoors, I feel most comfortable in my body, breathing deeply with the rhythm of legs and arms, on my way, with no important destination. I can practice mindfulness, paying attention, often with my camera, to moment by moment all the path. Grateful thoughts flow naturally.

An added blessing of daily walks is the boost to creativity, long recognized by writers and artists.

Isn't it wonderful that walking is also good for our health? See the recent blog below from McMaster Optimal Health on the health benefits and follow-up resources.

Resources

Gros, Frederic. (2014). *A Philosophy of Walking*. HarperBooks.

McMaster Optimal Health (2023). [Walking for Good Health](#) (an informative blog).

Nicholson, Geoff. (2009). *The Lost Art of Walking: The History, Science, and Literature of Pedestrianism*. Riverhead Books.

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A Joyful Habit

By Rose Anne Prevec, McMaster Museum of Art

This year, my cartoons resulted in two books, significant sales, an exhibition, and a lot of laughs. Retirement's busier than I expected!

During my career spent promoting the work of weighty, world-class artists at the McMaster Museum of Art, there never seemed like a good time to whip out a stash of my cartoons and say, "Look at these things I made." My doodles were private, shared only on birthday and Christmas cards to close friends and family. That changed in 2020.

I began deliberate, daily cartooning as a personal challenge to find something to smile about after the loss of my father (McMaster Biology Professor, Ludvik Prevec) and the onset of the global pandemic. That exercise became a joyful habit.

For me, gag cartooning is a perfect marriage of skills that I acquired at McMaster. From Art, I learned drawing and composition. From Marketing, I learned to condense big ideas into ten-word captions. From Creative Writing, I developed a love of word play. And let's not forget those Excel Spreadsheet skills that help me keep track of hundreds of cartoons circulating to multiple publications at any one time.

When I am stuck, my favourite brainstorming technique is also something I learned at McMaster in a Marketing Class on Design Thinking. The technique is called "worst possible ideas" and it is a guaranteed way of loosening up and thinking of something unexpected, e.g. What is the worst thing you can do when you're face-to-face with a dragon? Look at your phone. What is the worst thing you could do if you prefer wool to synthetics? Immerse yourself in live sheep. It gives me the freedom to be ridiculous.



"Just when the worries of humanity were about to overwhelm me, I remembered I'm a wild animal!"

The first cartoons I shared online under the name *Groundhog Hill*, were India ink on paper drawings featuring animals that I encountered while hiking the Dundas Valley trails. I'm more than a little obsessed with wildlife, even the ones that raid my green bin, and love learning about their habits and behaviours. In some cases, I use cartoons to share surprising facts, e.g. opossums sleep for 18 hours a day, the [Fibonacci sequence](#) is observed in snail shells, baby groundhogs are sometimes called "chucklings" (how perfect is that for a cartoon?) Generally, however, I try to combine aspects of nature with broader, relatable human concerns like anxiety, business etiquette, and a love of ice cream.

I was delighted by the response I received on Instagram, where I also found a generous, supportive global community of cartoonists. Through them, I was introduced to Amy Kurzweil, a *New Yorker* cartoonist who leads online classes. These have been fun and enormously helpful. I've learned about great gag cartoonists, made connections, and gotten tips about all aspects of cartooning, from generating ideas to finding publishers.

An unexpected benefit was the invitation to be in a book with eleven accomplished cartoonists. We are scattered around the world from California to Singapore, but it has been wonderful to talk, learn, and celebrate successes with others in this strange business, where actual publication is rare and rejection is the norm. The book [Hold That Thought: 12 Cartoonists on Their Worlds of Humor](#), was released in June and there will be a launch in Massachusetts in November. I can't wait to meet all the artists in person.



"I'm going to call them 'slippers.'"

Locally, an exhibition of my original cartoon drawings will be presented at the [Carnegie Gallery](#) in Dundas from September 8 – October 1, 2023. A new book of my cartoons *Chucklings: Cartoons from Groundhog Hill* will be published in late August to complement the show.



Finally, I should add that my cartoon cast has expanded to include more peculiar creatures—humans. These cartoons have sold to a variety of magazines, notably *Airmail*, *Alta Journal*, *Narrative*, *Reader's Digest*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Weekly Humorist*. Some are pending publication. The waiting is excruciating, but exciting too!

I'm grateful to MURA editors for being early adopters and sharing my cartoons in this publication.

Rose Anne Prevec's website is <https://www.groundhoghill.ca> and her cartoons are posted regularly on Instagram [@groundhog_hill](#).

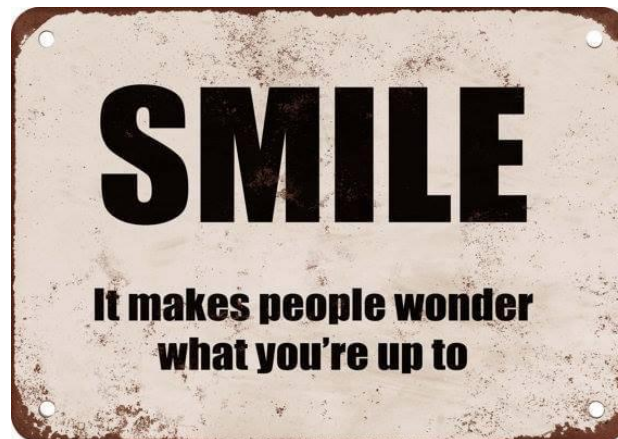
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**If the earth was flat,
cats would have
pushed everything off
of it by now...**

courtesy of Humour is Contagious

*Never
ask a woman who is
eating ice cream
straight from the
carton how she's
doing.*

courtesy of Meanwhile in Canada



courtesy of Humour is Contagious

MURAnews is produced by MURA members Denise Anderson (Production Editor), Sylvia Avery, Helen Barton (News Editor), Nora Gaskin, John Horsman, and Marcia MacAulay. We welcome submissions from MURA members.

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