



Magnolias in bloom, McMaster Health Sciences Library

photo courtesy of McMaster University

McMaster University Retirees Association

Spring 2024

<https://mcmaster-retirees.ca/>

President's Corner



Susan Birnie

This is my last message in *MURAnews* as the President of MURA. My term ends on June 13 with our Annual General Meeting, where a new (and amazing) President will take over. I think of my term as one coming out of COVID and of the impact the pandemic had on our ability to meet in person. We have had a gradual increase in the comfort level of our members to gather again, and with that we had a return to the holiday lunch and to new retiree welcomes. We have had, and continue to offer, opportunities for our members to meet, socialize, and learn. At the same time, we learned that some new methods of meetings work better than traditional ones. Our council meetings are now hybrid, with some members coming onto campus and some joining us from their homes (or vacation spots). We have decided that our AGM should continue to be virtual to allow as many of our members as possible to join us.

We have organized a number of events over the next few months for our members. Our Annual General Meeting will be on June 13 at 1:00 pm and will be a virtual meeting. On June 6 we'll have our second annual "Spring Fling", a barbeque on the superb patio at the Phoenix at McMaster. For those who have not been there before, the patio is an amazing outdoor, shaded spot with comfortable

Notice of Annual General Membership Meeting

Date: Thursday, June 13, 2024

Time: 1:00 - 2:30 PM

Location: Zoom, online or by phone

See [p. 3](#) for details and please plan to attend.

tables and chairs. We will be accommodated indoors in case of rain. On June 18, the McMaster Museum of Art has arranged tours of the art gallery for us. Mary Gauld will continue her curated walks in May and June. More information about each of these events can be found in this newsletter. Information about the September welcome event will be sent to recent retirees as soon as it's available.

Enjoy all that spring brings us, even if it is a bit on again, off again. I am enjoying the spring flowers that are popping up and looking forward to working in my garden and spending some time in the sunshine. Between those tasks I hope to see you at one or more of our events.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your President for the past two years.

Susan Birnie
birnie@mcmaster.ca
905-870-2500

Contacting MURA

Mail Gilmour Hall B108, McMaster University
1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON
L8S 4L8

Phone 905-525-9140, ext. 23171
(voicemail is checked once a week)

Email mura@mcmaster.ca

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

Contacting Human Resources

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L8S 4L8

Phone 905-525-9140, ext. 22247

Email hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca

Website <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/retirees/>

News and Events

Notice of Annual General Membership Meeting

Date: Thursday, June 13, 2024

Time: 1:00 - 2:30 PM

Location: Zoom (virtual)

MURA members may participate either online or by phone.

Please register by 8:00 pm Tuesday, June 11

To participate online:

- Please register at [Eventbrite](#), using your email address and your full first and last name. You will receive an email confirmation from Eventbrite. If you do not receive an immediate response from Eventbrite, be sure to check your Junk or Spam mailbox.
- We will send you a link and password for the Zoom online meeting via email on Wednesday, June 12.

To participate by phone:

- Leave a voice message for MURA at 905-525-9140, ext. 23171.
- We will contact you with a phone number and password for the Zoom meeting by Wednesday, June 12.
- Please note that the closest Zoom phone connection is a 647 (Toronto) area code, so you may incur long distance charges.

Please plan to attend. All participants will be entered into an attendance draw for a \$25 electronic gift certificate to Amazon or Chapters.

Special Presentation to the AGM **GeoTrails**

How can we get people more excited about geosciences? This talk will introduce GeoTrails, a series of virtual educational field trips being developed by students and faculty at McMaster University to share the science and excitement of understanding our natural environment. Several GeoTrails have been made around Hamilton and near McMaster's campus, with many more planned! Learn how to enjoy GeoTrails near you and the work that goes into putting them together.



Dr. Elli Papangelakis is an Assistant Professor and the Fairley Gadsby Research Chair in Fluvial Geomorphology in the School of Earth, Environment and Society at McMaster University. Her research focus is in fluvial geomorphology and, more specifically, in how human activities, such as urbanization, affect river environments. She is interested in developing and testing new science-based river restoration techniques and river management tools.

Business Meeting: The business meeting will include reports of Officers and Council Elections. The report from the Nominating Committee follows.

2024 Nominating Committee Report MURA Council 2024/2025

Honorary President*: *Alvin Lee*

Executive

Past President (ex officio): Susan Birnie

President (Nominated): Jan Nicholson (One-year term, to 2025)

Vice President (Nominated): Diana Parker (One-year term, to 2025)

Treasurer (ex officio)*: TBA

Secretary (ex officio)*: Nora Gaskin

Councillors

Nominated for office, three-year terms until 2027:

Barry Diacon

Henry Jacek

Elaine Riehm

Judith Shedden

Continuing in office until 2025:

Mary Gauld, Jan Nicholson, Richard Stubbs

Continuing in office until 2026:

Virginia Aksan, Jane Mah

*appointed

In accordance with Article 8.01 Section 3 of the MURA Constitution: "Further nominations for the nominated positions will be received by the Secretary of the Association up to seven (7) days prior to the date set the annual general meeting from nominators who are regular members of the Association together with the verbal or written acceptance of the nominee. Nominations will also be received from regular members at the annual general meeting."

Nominating Committee

Henry (Hank) Jacek (Chair)

Virginia Aksan, Cliff Andrews, John Horsman, Betty Ann Levy

MURA Spring Fling 2024



Welcome to the nicer weather!

We had a lovely event last year and have decided to do it once again.

We have booked the **Phoenix Patio** for **Thursday, June 6 from 11:30 to 2:30** and hope that you will join us. We will be outdoors on the best patio in Hamilton (unless the weather turns really bad, in which case we will move inside).

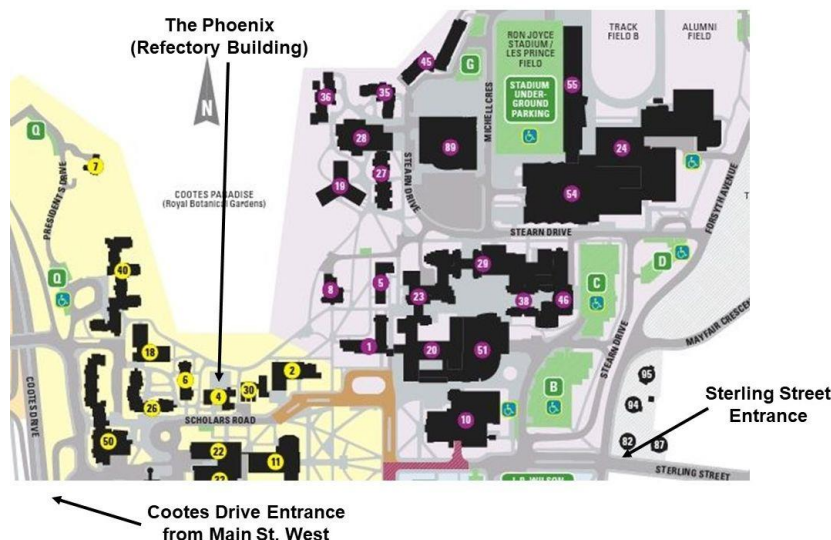
A BBQ will be served from 12:00 to 1:00 (vegetarian or non-vegetarian options), along with salads, potatoes etc., non-alcoholic drinks, and dessert. The cost per person is \$25.00. A cash bar will be available.

MURA would like to thank the Office of Alumni Engagement for their oversight of the ticket and registration process. Please buy your tickets online with your credit card at alumni.mcmaster.ca/muraspringfling and **make note of any special dietary needs in the Comments box on the checkout page. Registration closes on June 2.**

If you do not have a credit card or online access, please call Mary Gauld, MURA's event coordinator, at 905-906-5604 **on or before May 30**. Mary will facilitate your registration.

We hope that you can join us.

Complimentary Parking for the Spring Fling *MURA thanks Parking Services for their generous support*



Retirees who do not have a McMaster parking permit and transponder will have access to any parking lot showing “*Visitors – Open*”. The Sterling Street campus entrance leads to Parking Lots B and D and the underground Stadium lot. Lot Q is accessed via the Cootes Drive entrance.

Park in *any of these lots showing “Visitors - Open”*. Take an entry ticket from the machine at the lot entrance and exchange it for a complimentary rebate voucher at the luncheon registration table. Your rebate voucher can be used at the exit gate to “pay” for your parking when you leave your parking lot. If none of these lots show “*Visitors - Open*”, use the Help button at a lot entrance that indicates “*Full to Visitors*” to gain access or be directed to an available lot.

Retirees with valid transponders may park in any lot that shows “*Transponders – Open*”. From May to August, retiree parking permits allow access to Lots B, D, H, I, K, N, P, and the Underground Stadium at all times.

For the mobility impaired: If you have an Ontario Accessible Parking Permit and require reserved accessible parking, or if the walking distance from the parking lots to the Phoenix is problematic for you, please call Mary Gauld, MURA’s event coordinator, at 905-906-5604 **on or before May 23**. Mary will facilitate your parking needs.

An Invitation to a Guided Tour of the McMaster Museum of Art



The McMaster Museum of Art welcomes McMaster University Retirees back to campus! MURA members, family, and friends are welcome to join us for a free guided tour of the museum’s summer exhibitions featuring a retrospective of performing artists *The Clichettes* (Louise Garfield, Janice Hladki, and Johanna Householder) who were among the most important pioneers of feminist video and performance art in Canada in the 1970s and 1980s, and the exhibition *I’m Not Your Kinda Princess* by Cree/Saulteaux/Métis artist Lori Blondeau. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the museum and its programming, experience our current exhibitions with our staff of arts experts, and practice visual literacy skills with works of art.

Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Time: Tours available at 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 pm. **Limited to 20 people per group.**

Location: Lobby of the Museum of Art

To register: Please register on the EventBrite website.

For the 1:00 tour: <https://MURA-MOA-Tour-1pm.eventbrite.com>

For the 2:00 tour: <https://MURA-MOA-Tour-2pm.eventbrite.com>

For the 3:00 tour: <https://MURA-MOA-Tour-3pm.eventbrite.com>

Your spot will be reserved for you when you register. It's not necessary to print and bring your ticket. You will receive an email confirmation from Eventbrite. If you do not receive an immediate response from Eventbrite, be sure to check your Junk or Spam mailbox.

If you do not have online access, please call Susan Birnie at 905-681-6807 as soon as possible. Susan will facilitate your registration if space is available.

The Sterling Street entrance is the closest entrance to the McMaster Museum of Art.

Parking

- **Retirees who do not have a McMaster parking permit and transponder** will have access to any parking lot showing “*Visitors – Open*”. The Sterling Street campus entrance leads to Parking Lots B and D and the underground Stadium lot. Park in *any of these lots showing “Visitors - Open”*. Take an entry ticket from the machine at the lot entrance and exchange it for a complimentary rebate voucher in the Museum of Art lobby when your name is confirmed on our list. Your rebate voucher can be used at the exit gate to “pay” for your parking when you leave your parking lot. If none of these lots show “*Visitors - Open*”, use the Help button at a lot entrance that indicates “*Full to Visitors*” to gain access or be directed to an available lot.
- **Retirees with valid transponders** may park in any lot that shows “*Transponders – Open*”. During May to August, retiree parking permits allow access to Lots B, D, H, I, K, N, P and the Underground Stadium at all times.
- **For the mobility impaired:** If you have an Ontario Accessible Parking Permit and require reserved accessible parking, please call Susan at 905-681-6807 **on or before June 11**. Susan will facilitate your parking needs.

MURA Walks 2024

By Mary Gauld, MURA Special Events Coordinator

We've had some great walks this winter – in January, a dozen of us did the Chedoke rail trail; in February, 25 people took a tour of the outdoor art on campus and had lunch at the Phoenix; in March, a group of 15 met at LaSalle Park and walked along the waterfront trail. In April, 18 walkers met at the Dundas Driving Park and did a tour of the nearby neighbourhood and inspected one of the local gardens.

Upcoming walks:

Wednesday, May 22 at 2:00 pm – [Painted Ladies](#) in Grimsby

- The Painted Ladies are just off of Bartlett Street down by Grimsby Beach. Watch your email for further details. (If you've never seen them, put Painted Ladies Grimsby into Google Maps and have a look – they are amazingly cool!)

Wednesday, June 19 at 10:30 am – Welland Canal

- We'll meet at 10:30 at the Port Robinson parking lot, walk to the dock and take the ferry across the canal, and then walk up the west side of the canal. Finally, we'll make the return trip on the ferry and stop to eat at the Bridge12 Pub and Eatery.

There will be no walk in July.

I'm open to suggestions for future events, so if you have a favourite walk, please let me know! Text me at 905-906-5604, or email me at gauld@mcmaster.ca. It's been nice to gather after walks for coffee or lunch, but that's optional, of course. Thanks for joining me.

Retirees in the News

Why McMaster Retirees Give

Tim Nolan, who retired in 2020 as director of [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#), and his wife Kim (a McMaster alumna), enhance accessibility on campus and advocate for students through [philanthropic giving](#).



The couple has been committed to supporting students through charitable gifts for nearly a decade. They established a bursary in 2014 for social work students registered with SAS. In 2022, the Nolans added a bursary for graduate students.

Tim and Kim also recently supported the [Physical Activity Centre of Excellence \(PACE\)](#) with a gift to purchase specialized exercise equipment to help break down physical and mental barriers.

They are also leaving [a gift in their will](#) to SAS and PACE.

“We simply hope to be a helping hand to others who live with a disability,” Tim said.

Now enjoying their retirement, Tim and Kim continue to be engaged with McMaster and support a variety of disability-related causes in the community.

See the *Daily News* article [‘If you build it, they CAN come’: A legacy of accessibility advocacy at McMaster.](#)

If you are curious about the impact you could have with a legacy gift, please contact Eli Clarke in the McMaster University Advancement office at clarke27@mcmaster.ca or 905-525-9140 x21533.

Welcome New Retirees

Compiled by Kathy Overholt

James Britten, Chemistry & Chemical Biology
Joy-Anne Coomber, Faculty of Engineering
Shelley Easton, University Advancement
Allan Gillespie, Facility Services
Carol Griffin, Family Medicine
Audrey Kasoian, Athletics & Recreation
Karen McGlynn, Financial Affairs
Sandy Murray, Pediatrics
Koon Teo, Medicine
Robert Twiss, Custodial Services
Wendy Whittaker, Health Sciences Animal Facilities

Plus, a belated welcome to:

Catherine Good, Family Medicine
Joanne Franco, DeGroote School of Business

Recent Passings

Compiled by Kathy Overholt

Ida Beltrano, Hospitality Services, February 8, 2024
Audrie (Dody) Bienenstock*, Psychiatry, January 9, 2024
Alan Bishop, English, March 1, 2024
Pauline DeRosa, Psychiatry (McMaster Oxford Centre), March 25, 2024
Barbara Haley, Medicine, September 25, 2023
Robert Handsebout, Surgery, March 4, 2024
Archie Harms, Engineering Physics, July 28, 2023
Jeanette Hendsbee, Printing Services, April 6, 2024
Mel Hillmer, Divinity College, March 5, 2024
Gyan Johari, Materials Science & Engineering, January 28, 2024
Joe Laposa, Chemistry & Chemical Biology, February 1, 2024
William (Willi) Leigh, Chemistry & Chemical Biology, February 4, 2024
John McCutcheon, Regional Medical Associates, January 29, 2024
Frances (Barney) Morison, Pathology, July 29, 2023
George Obminski, Cardio-Respiratory Lab, January 29, 2024

Yvonne Racine, Psychiatry, January 27, 2024
Michael Ross, English, January 5, 2024
Annie Scott, Building Operations, March 22, 2024
Olga Tynowski, Student Financial Aid & Scholarships, February 4, 2024
Terry Sullivan, Security & Parking, March 17, 2024
Jose Venturelli, Pediatrics, March 31, 2024
Ken Williams, Physical Plant, February 14, 2024

* View the tribute article in the *Hamilton Spectator*: [Dr. Dody Bienenstock helped build the psychiatry department at Hamilton Health Sciences.](#)



News from CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada)

CURAC 2024 National Conference May 22 – 24 hosted by the University of Waterloo Retirees Association

McMaster retirees are welcome to attend the “Thriving in Retirement” conference at the University of Waterloo. The conference offers practical tips, tools, and advice to help you make the best of your retirement years. Themes include Health and Wellness, Housing Options, Services for Seniors, Finance, Recreation and Leisure, and Safety and Security.

From the Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening until lunch on Friday, you’ll enjoy informative presentations, hearty food and refreshments, and ample opportunity to socialize with friends old and new.

Check out the [conference website](#) for details, updates, and registration.

CURAC’s Academic for Life Column in University Affairs Magazine

Representatives of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada ([CURAC](#)) contribute regularly to [CURAC's Academic for Life Column](#) in University Affairs. [University Affairs](#) is the magazine and website of Universities Canada, formerly the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

These are two of the many interesting articles.

[Why Retirees should be the CEO of their own health care](#), by David Zitner, professor emeritus-medicine at Dalhousie University, published on December 14, 2023.

In the introduction, David comments, “Before retiring both as a full professor and as the founding director of the health informatics program at Dalhousie University, I was surprised when my students taught me that anyone who understands the basis of health care thinking can participate in their own care and solve many simple and complex problems.” He writes about several important lessons to keep in mind and emphasizes, “Remember that you have the right to ask questions and can disagree with a diagnosis.”

[*The rewards of being part of your university’s retiree association*](#), by Gladys We, former director of communications and marketing for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Simon Fraser University, published on March 15, 2024.

Article excerpts: “After retirement, it can be difficult to maintain your social connections – joining your institution’s retiree association can be a great solution.” “When I retired in 2022, I didn’t have any solid plans for what I would do next.” “Taking a break was the start of my retirement journey and now I’m glad that I have also found a new community and a new, ever-growing social circle.”

CURAC Later Life Learning (LLL) Events

A variety of opportunities offered by affiliated Retiree Associations are available to MURA members through the Later Life Learning Committee’s [Event Calendar](#). Click on the activity to learn more about the topic and how to register. The Calendar can also be accessed from the [CURAC](#) homepage by scrolling down to the bottom.

Your Money/Your Health

McMaster Optimal Aging Portal Weekly Bulletin and YouTube Channel

By John Horsman

For readers who do not subscribe to the [McMaster Optimal Aging Portal](#) (MOAP) weekly bulletin – you don’t know what you’re missing! Signing up is free and easy. You’ll receive a weekly bulletin, via email, of information on healthy aging. The emails highlight:

- blog posts written by experts using scientific evidence to give you insights on current topics related to seniors’ health and well-being,
- topics on aging in the news, with related research evidence from MOAP,
- MOAP’s bulletins that summarize key messages from high quality published research in lay language.

A way to get additional MOAP information is via YouTube. Clicking on the familiar red

icon at the end of each MOAP email opens [MOAP's YouTube channel](#). You don't need a YouTube account.

From the MOAP YouTube channel's Home page, you can use the navigation buttons – “Videos – Shorts – Playlists – Community” – to view videos on a wide range of topics of particular interest to seniors. “Shorts” is currently featuring 15 second video blurbs on reducing the risk of dementia. For more in-depth discourses go to the “Video” section. Here you will find hour-long health and wellness webinars by invited professors and researchers with expertise in fields such as Insomnia, Depression, Bone Health, Brain Health and so on. There are more than 40 full-length webinars and short information pieces on offer. “Playlists” organize the webinars by topic (e.g. Diabetes).

If you do not already subscribe to the MOAP bulletins, I strongly urge you to consider signing up to receive the once-a-week email. Visit mcmasteroptimalaging.org in your favourite web browser, and then click on the “Subscribe” button on the top right of the MOAP Home screen. (You can also access the MOAP YouTube channel from this screen via the YouTube icon.)

Advance Care Planning

By Dawn Elston

Advance Care Planning Day was April 16. If you've never heard of advance care planning (ACP), you're not alone. Eighty percent of Canadians have never heard of ACP, let alone considered doing it. Which is why, each year in April, hospice palliative care advocates try to raise awareness about the importance of ACP.

Advance Care Planning is a process of reflecting on and clarifying our values, what's important to us, so that if we are ever so ill or injured that we are incapable of making medical treatment decisions for ourselves, others will know what we would want, or not want.

No one likes to imagine a time when they are incapable of making decisions, but it's more common than you might think. Consider that in 2022/23 alone, more than 1.1 million Ontarians were hospitalized and that between 40% and 90% of people who are hospitalized, depending on how seriously ill or injured, will be incapacitated, and will need someone to make medical treatment decisions for them.

Some people think that if they have a living will (sometimes called an advance directive) they've already done ACP. Living wills may be legally valid for documenting your future medical treatment preferences in many parts of Canada, but not in Ontario. In Ontario, a living will can be a helpful way to start a discussion with your substitute decision maker (SDM), but to be legally binding, your wishes must be documented in a Power of Attorney (POA) for Personal Care. In addition, because living wills are created ahead of illness or injury, they have limited usefulness as they may not apply to the specific situation in which they are needed. At the end of the day, it is your SDM who will be asked to make medical treatment decisions for you.

The good news, if you've never heard about or thought about ACP, is that it's never too early or too late to begin. Ideally, people should start before a healthcare crisis, but in reality, ACP often accompanies a hospital admission, a new diagnosis, or the loss of a loved one. ACP is not intended as a 'one and done' process. It's meant to be ongoing because while our values usually remain the same over time, our wishes may change based on any number of reasons, including aging itself. For example, you may value longevity over quality of life, but your preferences for medical treatment e.g. cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) versus do-not-resuscitate (DNR) may be different at 70 years of age than at 60.

Advance care planning begins by considering what's important, or not important, to you in life. Being with family, finding faith, and having good health are examples of our values. Pairing medical treatment decisions with our values is easier said than done without a crystal ball. So instead, consider trade-offs. For example, what changes in abilities would you be willing to live with or live without if you had to? When people are asked 'How important is it that you have more time with family?' and 'How important is it that you be comfortable and not suffer?', most people respond 'Very Important' to *both* questions. Sadly, when you are so seriously ill or injured that you can't make decisions for yourself, it is unlikely that you will have both time *and* comfort. There will be trade-offs. To have more time, you may have to accept more discomfort, for example being on life support machines. Likewise, to experience more comfort, you may have to accept less time, such as palliative care. The point is, as you embark on advance care planning, it's critical to consider what's important to you and what you might be willing to 'trade off' to achieve the right balance of longevity and quality of life.

In 2021, between 40% and 75% of Canadians had *not* discussed their wishes with anyone. Such a discussion is a key step in advance care planning because in Ontario, your substitute decision maker (SDM) will be responsible for making medical treatment decisions for you if you are incapacitated.

It's important to note that, according to the [Ontario Health Care Consent Act \(HCCA\)](#), everyone has an SDM. If you are married, your spouse or common-law partner is your SDM. If you are unmarried, it may be a parent or sibling. If you are satisfied that [the SDM legally defined for you by the HCCA](#) is the right person to make medical treatment decisions for you, then it's time to sit down and have a conversation with them about your advance care plan.

The alternative to accepting the HCCA's SDM is to consider making a Power of Attorney (POA) for Personal Care, a legal document that gives someone you trust the right to make medical treatment decisions for you if you are incapable. In the legal context a POA for Personal Care trumps your legal SDM, according to the HCCA.

There are two types of POA: personal care, and property. A POA for personal care can make decisions about health care, housing, and other personal issues, whereas a POA for property can make decisions about personal finances. The same person can be your POA for both personal care and property, or you can designate different people for each. A POA does not have to be a lawyer, nor do you need to visit a lawyer to

complete a POA. There is a do-it-yourself toolkit available online or by contacting the Ministry of the Attorney General (see below). A POA for Personal Care is not essential, but it is good to have for peace of mind.

I hope this has given you some useful information to consider about advance care planning. Considering your values, wishes, and tradeoffs, and discussing them with your SDM will give you, and your loved ones, peace of mind. If you're still not feeling sure how to get started, consider speaking with your family physician or other health care provider, such as a specialist for chronic disease management. If you are comfortable getting started on your own but would like to learn more about ACP, there are several excellent resources to help you get started listed as follows:

Advance Care Planning in Ontario

🌐 <https://www.advancecareplanningontario.ca/>

✉️ info@advancecareplanningontario.ca

☎️ 1-800-349-3111, ext. 231

Advance Care Planning in Canada

🌐 <https://www.advancecareplanning.ca/>

✉️ info@advancecareplanning.ca

☎️ 1-800-668-2785

Values Clarification Resources

🌐 <https://planwellguide.com/>

✉️ info@planwellguide.com

Power of Attorney Kit Ontario

🌐 <https://www.ontario.ca/page/make-power-attorney>

✉️ webpubont@ontario.ca

☎️ 1-800-668-9938

Reminders for Your End-of-Life Planning

You might be surprised to learn how often Human Resources does not find out about a retiree's death until months, or even years after it occurs.

Make things easier for the executor of your estate and your family by putting a note with your will and other important documents instructing that Human Resources should be informed of your death as soon as possible. Without timely notification, your estate will be required to pay back any pension payments received after death.

Human Resources should also be notified if your spouse dies before you, since there could be impacts to your pension, post-retirements benefits, or life insurance beneficiary.

Human Resources can be reached at 905-525-9140, ext. 22247, or by email at hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca.

A Note about your Power(s) of Attorney

If you have a Power of Attorney (“designated attorney”) which gives someone the ability to manage your affairs before your death, Human Resources must be provided with this information at the time the designated attorney plans to exercise their authority.

If you require a copy of any information that was completed during the retirement process (e.g. benefit booklet, McMaster life insurance policy, pension beneficiary information), or to provide Power of Attorney information, please contact Human Resources at 905-525-9140, ext. 22247, or by email at hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca.

Please note that, if you have McMaster life insurance, you should keep a copy of the insurance policy with your important documents.

Importance of Self-Care: Nurturing our Well-Being as We Age

By John Horsman

It would seem that Spring may finally have arrived. As I prepare this article for *MURAnews*, the sun is shining brightly, and the temperature is into double digits with a forecast of more of the same for most of the rest of the week. That in itself is good for our well-being. But what else can and should we be doing to nurture our self-care, our well-being, as we age?

A recent [blog post](#) by the [McMaster Optimal Aging Portal](#) (MOAP) notes that July 24 is “International Self-Care Day”. Of course, I’m willing to wager that every day of the calendar year is designated as “International Such-&Such Day” or “National So-&So Day” or “Local Whatever Day”, so why should we take particular heed of “International Self-Care Day”? [Aside from it being designated Self-Care day, July 24th through the ages saw: Chief Dan George, Canadian author, poet, and actor, born in Vancouver on July 24, 1899; Dr Cicely Saunders, founder of the first modern hospice in London, UK, die in 1967; the first calf born on July 24, 2018 after bison were reintroduced to Banff National Park in Alberta; Richard Doll, English epidemiologist and pioneer in research linking smoking to health problems, die in 2005; and the inventor of the CT Scanner, Robert Ledley, die on July 24, 2012.]

As the MOAP blog notes, the role of self-care in our overall health and well-being becomes increasingly more important as we age. It is vital in promoting and maintaining optimal physical, mental, and emotional health. The blog then goes on to highlight four or five ways to add self-care into our daily lives. These include staying active, eating healthy, keeping our brains active, getting a good night’s sleep, and nurturing interests and activities about which one is passionate.

Nourishing the body is essential as we age. We should engage in physical activities tailored to our abilities, be it walking, swimming, yoga and the like to boost heart health, strengthen muscles and improve flexibility. Adjunct to physical activities is

eating well. A balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein is important as well.

One should keep not only the body active, but also the mind. An active, engaged mind is vital for cognitive health. Reading, puzzle solving, learning new skills, engaging in stimulating conversations (and I'm not referring to talking to oneself) all help keep the little grey cells ticking on. Keeping socially active helps combat feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Getting a good night's sleep is crucial for health and well-being. As we age the amount of sleep, and the quality of our sleep, may decline. Don't underestimate getting adequate sleep, however many hours that is for you, because sleep is vital. Try establishing a calm bedtime routine like turning off the TV or computer an hour or more before bedtime, or try gentle stretching to promote relaxation.

Last but not least, engage in activities that bring you joy, that fulfill your inner child. Rekindle an old hobby or start a new one; listen or dance to your favourite music; go for a walk in the woods; meditate, contemplate your navel, or do whatever you enjoy doing that will add to self-care, and you will be on the road to aging as well as you are able.

At the end of the MOAP blog there are links to more resources on all of the above topics including exercise, brain health, reducing loneliness, and better sleep, and highlighting community public library hubs that respond to the needs of older adults.



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

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**, and at all times on weekends and holidays,
Access to Lots H, K, N, P and Underground Stadium at all times on weekdays, weekends and 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](#).

What's Happening @ Mac

Upcoming Departmental Celebrations

Math & Stats 80th Anniversary
Anthropology 50th Anniversary

Planning is underway for virtual activities and in-person fall celebrations of these milestones. Retired faculty and staff are invited to reach out to Laura Escalante at escalan@mcmaster.ca or 905-525-9140, ext. 21314 in the alumni engagement office to join the list for updates and invitations. Be sure to let Laura know which department(s) you're interested in.

Brighter World

Latest News in Research at McMaster

By Dawnelle Hawes

The [Brighter World](#) website continues to be a rich source of up-to-date research information at McMaster. These three examples illustrate McMaster's wide variety of research.

Health & Medicine: Infectious Disease

[Measles: How it spreads and what you need to know](#)

In 2024, Canada saw an increase in measles activity, with four provinces reporting cases.¹

Pediatric infectious disease expert Jacqueline Wong from the McMaster Department of Pediatrics speaks out about measles, how it spreads and what parents need to know. According to the World Health Organization, there has been a 30-fold increase in measles cases in Europe. This has sparked a travel health notice from the Canadian government because most cases have been traced to travel. Although common

symptoms include fever, cough, conjunctivitis, white spots in the mouth, and a body rash, more serious complications like respiratory failure, encephalitis, and even death, are possible.

It turns out that humans are the only known carriers of the measles virus, which is “one of the most contagious infections.” It is generally an airborne disease that is spread through the droplets from coughs, sneezes, or being within the breath range of someone who is already infected.

Although “widespread vaccinations” helped Canada eradicate measles in 1998, the same is not true for many other parts of the globe. Increased world travel (after COVID 19) and a decrease in vaccinations have allowed outbreaks of the highly contagious disease to occur. “A society requires 95 percent vaccination coverage in order to prevent spread.”

Two doses of a measles vaccine (usually given in early childhood and then before starting school) will create antibodies in 97 percent of individuals. This dosage is generally enough to provide “lifelong immunity” for most individuals.

If children are travelling abroad, they should receive age- and travel-appropriate immunizations (including measles). Such decisions should be made in conjunction with health-care providers and/or pre-travel-clinic consultants.

Science & Technology: Water Research

[Analysis: New electrochemical technology could de-acidify the oceans – and even remove carbon dioxide in the process](#)

While “technologies for reducing our carbon emissions are mature, those for removing carbon from the environment are not”. Solid support from governmental and private sectors are needed to address this challenge.

The ability of nature to rebalance Earth’s systems is being overwhelmed, and as a result the ecosystems are being harmed. Fifty-five percent of world CO₂ emissions end up either in plant matter and soils or in the oceans, where the ensuing chemical changes increase the acid.

McMaster chemical engineer researchers Charles-Francois de Lannoy and Bassel A. Abdelkader, along with Jocelyn Riet of University of Toronto, supported by the Carbon to Sea Initiative, feel it is possible to rebalance the pH levels of the oceans through a process called ocean alkalinity enhancement (OAE). The nonprofit Carbon to Sea Initiative is “the leading initiative to evaluate whether ocean alkalinity enhancement can safely remove and store billions of tons of CO₂”. The electrochemical process requires only seawater, electricity, and specific membranes to allow for “a flexible, scalable and potentially cost-effective method of carbon dioxide removal”. To accomplish this rebalancing, CO₂ would be taken from the atmosphere, thereby addressing both ocean alkalinity and CO₂ levels in the atmosphere at the same time.

This massive enterprise would require a supreme coordination and financial commitment of government, industrial, private, and not-for-profit sectors to implement OAE technologies on a global scale.

Canada & The World: Health Leadership

Physicians — especially male, married doctors — are working fewer hours

Research by McMaster economics professors Arthur Sweetman and Boris Kralj shows that physicians, particularly male doctors, work fewer hours than they did in the 1990s, with a significant downward trend around 1997. Since 2021, however, physicians still worked about 20 per cent more per week on average than other occupations. The decline didn't seem to be related to any particular professional sector (urban vs. rural, younger vs. older, with or without children younger than five years). Nor did COVID appear to have any lasting impact on this trend.

Burnout does appear to have relevance, including factors such as “emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, detachment from work and reduced personal accomplishment.” Burnout also negatively impacted health, productivity, and work hours, and even led some to leave medical practices.

The repercussion for Canada is that physician numbers and work-life balance will need to be considered in order to address changing national health needs. An increase in the medical workforce (all streams involved in “interdisciplinary care”) seems to be necessary to keep up with population growth and the health needs of an aging population.

References

1. Public Health Agency of Canada. March 27, 2024. [Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada Update on Measles and Risk to Canadians.](#) Ottawa, ON.

Mac in the News

By Marcia MacAuley

AstraZeneca Moves to Acquire McMaster-supported Fusion Pharmaceuticals for \$2.4 billion (US)



A cancer therapy and diagnostics company that grew from a McMaster professor's idea into a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company is being acquired by global pharmaceuticals giant AstraZeneca in a deal valued at as much as \$2.4 billion (US).

Fusion Pharmaceuticals, which develops next-generation radioconjugates* as precision medicine, will become a wholly owned subsidiary of AstraZeneca and will continue its research and manufacturing operations in the U.S. and Canada, including at [a state-of-the-art facility at McMaster Innovation Park](#) on Longwood Road South.

John F. Valliant, who founded Fusion, is a professor of chemistry and chemical biology at McMaster and a McMaster alumnus. Under his leadership, Fusion became [a publicly traded](#) spinout company of the [McMaster-based Centre for Probe Development and Commercialization](#) (CPDC). Valliant said McMaster's support was instrumental in Fusion's success, starting in 2008 when the university enabled the creation of CPDC on campus, a then novel idea for commercialization in the academic landscape.

Fusion also [partners with McMaster to train graduate students](#) in the development, testing, and use of radiopharmaceuticals to identify and treat cancers, creating a unique training experience.

* **What are radioconjugates?**

Radiopharmaceuticals, injected intravenously, take radiation therapy to the next level with a precision medicine approach that delivers “smart bombs” directly to cancer cells. Radioconjugates, or RCs, combine the precise targeting of antibodies or small molecules with potent medical radioisotopes to deliver radiation directly to cancer cells, providing a more exact mechanism for killing cancer cells.

See the Brighter World article [AstraZeneca moves to acquire McMaster-supported Fusion Pharmaceuticals for \\$2.4 billion \(US\)](#) for more information.

Maintaining McMaster's Forest Health with Controlled Burns



[Nature @ McMaster](#) conducted a controlled burn at the McMaster Forest Nature Preserve at 1105 Lower Lions Club Road on April 9 to maintain the health of the forest.

McMaster University purchased this property in two parts in 1964 and 1969, hoping that the area could be developed into a satellite campus. Development was halted due to the difficult building conditions and environmental concerns from the University and governing bodies. In 2015, the McMaster University Senate and Board of Governors officially designated the property as an area of environmentally significant natural land

to be used for ecologically sensitive teaching, research, and recreation purposes, and approved the name “McMaster Forest”.

Controlled burns are a common practice in forest management. They help maintain the health of the forest by removing dead or diseased plant matter, promoting new growth, and reducing the risk of uncontrolled wildfires.

See the *Daily News* article [Maintaining McMaster’s forest health with controlled burns](#) for more information and [McMaster Forest Nature Preserve - Nature @ McMaster](#).

Computer Tips & Tricks

How to Minimize Web Tracking

By the MURAnews team

Do you get annoyed with ads that keep popping up when you do an internet search? If the ads are relevant to your recent internet searches, your activities are likely being tracked by a third party. According to [Wikipedia](#), “[w]eb tracking is the practice by which operators of websites and third parties collect, store and share information about visitors’ activities on the World Wide Web.”

Here are some ways to minimize web tracking.

Private Mode

One way to avoid unwanted ads appearing during internet searches is to use your browser’s private mode. In Safari and Firefox use “New Private Window”, located under “File” or “Menu”. In Chrome, it’s called “Incognito”. Microsoft Edge calls it “InPrivate”.

When you search in private mode your browser no longer stores a record of the websites you visited, [cookies](#), user names, passwords, or information from forms you filled out during that private browsing session. The benefit of using private mode is that next time you search, no ads will appear related to your previous searches.

Private mode is particularly useful if you want to check things on the internet regularly, for example, flight ticket prices. You will always receive the most up-to-date information in private mode, rather than seeing the same price appear in the non-private window. The downside of using private mode is that each time you close a website in your browser, for example your online banking site, you will need to enter all your credentials again, e.g. username and password, plus an additional code if you have enabled [two-factor authentication](#), each time you open it. So private mode may be the best choice for an internet search but maybe not for online banking. For websites you trust, you may want to use a non-private browser window so you have access to the easier logins and improved user experience that first-party cookies can provide.

Block Third-party Cookies

Another way to limit tracking is to allow first-party cookies, but not the more problematic third-party cookies

- **First-party cookies** are created by the website you are visiting to help you navigate, set preferences, and perform functions such as saving items in a shopping cart. They streamline the users' experience on a website. First-party cookies are not controversial and can be seen as an agreement between the user and the site to help things run better.
- **Third-party cookies** are created by domains separate from the primary website you're visiting, and are primarily used for online advertising and tracking.

You can change the settings in most browsers to allow first-party cookies but block third-party ones. Do an internet search for "how to block third-party cookies" and the name of your browser, e.g. Chrome, Safari, Bing, for instructions on how to do this.

Clear Your Browser History

Depending on how you use the internet, it might be good practice for you to [clear your browsing history](#) (which also deletes cookies) when you close your browser. This can be especially important when you use non-private windows or shared computers, or if you are concerned about targeted advertising. However, clearing cookies can also log you out of websites and remove saved preferences, which may be inconvenient. Before deciding, weigh the privacy benefits against the inconvenience of re-entering login information and resetting preferences.

Private Search Engines

Another way of searching anonymously without using private mode is through private search engines such as [Startpage](#) or [DuckDuckGo](#). These search engines allow users to access search results while protecting their privacy by not storing personal information or search data, and removing all trackers. Neither your search history nor any cookies will be stored from your searches.

- You can make Startpage your default search engine for free for both your desktop and mobile devices. Additional information on anonymous searching is available at "[How Does Anonymous View Work?](#)"
- [Downloading](#) and using the DuckDuckGo browser, browser extension or app is also free. You can find more information on anonymous searching using this search engine at "[How Anonymous is DuckDuckGo?](#)".

Volunteer Opportunities

Join the SHARE Network



The Gilbrea Centre for Studies in Aging welcomes MURA members and friends to join the SHARE Network.

What is SHARE? The SHARE Group is a volunteer network for adults 55+ developed by the Gilbrea Centre. SHARE provides members the opportunity to meet, connect, socialize, and engage in discussions and workshop initiatives. Members are provided resources and opportunities to participate in research and voluntary opportunities such as awareness raising and public engagement that relate to the aging studies work that we do at the Gilbrea Centre.

- Would you like to meet other older people and work together to help inform the research and education undertaken at McMaster University?
- Would you like to attend workshops and other activities we host at the University and at other community venues?
- Would you like to help address the concerns of older adults by shaping the future direction of research in this area?

For more information, please contact Mason McLeod, SHARE Network Coordinator:

✉ mcleom14@mcmaster.ca

☎ 905-525-9140, ext. 24449

See upcoming opportunities and register to become part of [SHARE](#).



courtesy of Meanwhile in Canada

Me, chillin at the family reunion.



courtesy of Humour is Contagious

McMaster Research Studies Seeking Older Adult Participants

McMaster’s School of Rehabilitation Science Virtual Exercise Trial: Researchers are looking for additional volunteers to participate in a virtual exercise trial for adults over 60 with a current or past diagnosis of cancer.

To be eligible, you must have a previous diagnosis of any type or stage of cancer, be 60+, speak English, currently engage in less than 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week, have access to the internet, and be cleared for exercise. (Please refer to the “[Get Active Questionnaire](#)” for more information and to check if you are clear to exercise.)

You will be matched with a partner to participate in the 10-week virtual exercise study. As part of the study, you will be sent a Fitbit (an activity tracker/physical fitness monitor) to wear on your wrist during waking hours for three separate weeks. You will also be asked to complete assessments virtually at three different times during the 10-week study. The Fitbit will be yours to keep once data collection is completed.

For information, please email Susanne:

✉ partner4exercise@gmail.com

[McMaster Monitoring My Mobility study](#) (MacM3) is interested in tracking the everyday mobility and health trajectories of older Canadians. This study aims to recruit 1,500 adults aged 65+ and monitor their mobility and sedentary behavior for at least 2 years using an activity monitoring device.

For more information:

☎ 905-525-9140, ext. 26894

The **EMBOLDEN** study will evaluate an innovative community-based intervention with the goal to improve physical and community mobility, nutrition, and social participation in adults 55+.

For more information, contact Caroline Moore, Study Coordinator:

✉ camoore@mcmaster.ca

☎ 905-525-9140, ext. 22305

McMaster Institute for Research on Aging Intergenerational Study (MIRA-iGeN) aims to understand how being connected to different generations of one's family (children, parents, or grandparents) impacts health as people age.

For more information, contact Meghan Kenny, Research Coordinator:

✉ mkenny@mcmaster.ca

☎ 289-933-8850

The **Optimal Fitness Study** is looking for adults 65+ who have lost energy/strength (e.g. difficulty climbing stairs or slow walking speed) and want to improve physical function.

For more information, contact GERAS Centre for Research on Aging:

☎ 905-521-2100, ext. 12437

Nature-Based Project for Older Adults Living with Dementia and Their Care Partners. For our study, we are looking for volunteers who are community-dwelling adults (55+) living with dementia and their care partners to participate in a nature-based project.

Participation includes:

- completing a demographic form (5 minutes),
- a 30-minute intake interview,
- monthly 2-hour nature-based activities from April-December 2024* (e.g. walking, nature-based art) in the Hamilton/Burlington area,
- pre/post-session mood questionnaires taking no longer than 5 and 15 minutes, respectively, for each session, and
- a 1-hour follow-up interview.
- **NOTE: The sessions began on Wednesday, April 10.** If you were unable to join the first session, you could join for next month's session and onward.

Potential participants will be asked some screening questions to determine eligibility to participate in this study.

Participation is voluntary, with no consequences for not participating or for withdrawing from the study.

For more information contact: Constance Dupuis, Gilbrea Centre for Studies in Aging:

✉ dupuic1@mcmaster.ca

☎ 905-525-9140, ext. 24449

Research Team: Dr. Anthea Innes (Principal Investigator), Dr. Vanina Dal Bello-Haas (Co-Principal Investigator), Constance Dupuis (Co-Principal Investigator), Mason McLeod (Research Assistant), Equity Burke (Research Coordinator), María Belén Miguel (Research Assistant), Dylan Lu (Research Assistant).

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance by the McMaster Research Ethics Board (#6984).

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.

The After Life: Life Following Retirement

By Mary Hickey, Faculty of Health Sciences

I retired in June 2021. I started working at McMaster in 1974, was fortunate to be able to take a seven-year break when my kids were little, and then was back at it in 1993. People who know me outside of work often commented on how hard it must be for me to sit all day. I did walk every day for ½ hour at lunch time because it is hard to sit for so long, but it has only been since I retired that I realize what everyone was saying to me. Now I can't imagine sitting for so long each day. I regularly clock 80,000-90,000+ steps a week and have very little difficulty getting my 10,000 steps in each day. I start my day with a ½ hour walk, then do some stretching, and weightlifting. Some mornings, I'll do a ½ hour swim. Following this routine, I now really enjoy reading my newspaper and having a cup of coffee at my leisure. I particularly like spring to fall when I can often do this outside. I curl four times a week throughout the fall and winter and play golf in two leagues from May until early September.

In my last few years at Mac, I started to participate in the [TMG Days of Service program](#)*. On one of those days, I volunteered at the [McQueston Urban Farm](#) in the Parkdale Avenue area of Hamilton. I did this in the spring and fall and then made a mental note to inquire about continuing after retirement. This will be my fourth year volunteering with this organization every Tuesday morning. I have always enjoyed gardening, but this isn't your typical garden experience. What I like about it is that I am outside, either tilling the land, or planting or harvesting, depending on the time of year. I feel good that I am giving back to people who are in need of fresh, good quality food at a very low cost to them. It is a win-win in my books!



A couple of years ago I also started volunteering at my curling club, working with Special Olympic** individuals or as we call them “the Hammers”. It is very rewarding to see their progress and to also give their parents time to be by themselves or to do errands.

I have joined the seniors centre near me and started taking a few classes. This coming fall I plan to try the euchre group. I grew up playing cards, especially euchre, so I’m eager to get back to the game. I also plan to try pickleball and perhaps lawn bowling at some point.

Between these activities, a little travelling or cottaging, or seeing friends or family for lunches from time to time it’s a very busy schedule, but I make sure to build in some ‘down’ time every day to read a book that I always have on the go. I really do enjoy that part of my retirement. When I was working in front of a computer all day and then tried to read at night, I immediately fell asleep!

*Renamed to [TMG Ways of Caring](#) program

**Find out how to become a [Special Olympics Coach or Volunteer](#).

Retirement in Niagara-on-the-Lake

By Joe Rose, DeGroot School of Business

After retiring in September 2019, my wife and I considered the idea of relocating to Victoria, British Columbia. Shortly after, we contacted a real estate agent and flew to the west coast. There were many things we liked about Victoria including warmer weather, scenic and walkable neighborhoods, and good restaurants. At the time, there were not many houses on the market in the areas we wished to live and in our price range. (Note: it was not uncommon to pay \$1.5 million for a house that would require some renovations.). Although we left empty handed, we intended to return for a second visit. That did not materialize. Over the next couple of months, we concluded that Victoria was too far from our children in Hamilton and Burlington.

Early in the pandemic (April 2020), my wife and I moved instead from Westdale to Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL). We discovered that many retirees migrating to NOTL from Toronto and surrounding areas had been frequent visitors before retiring there. We, on the other hand, were largely unfamiliar with the town. During our 40 years in Hamilton, we had only visited NOTL three or four times.

Thus, there was much to learn about the town. Initially, we thought it would be ideal to buy a house in the core. This would allow us to walk everywhere, e.g. restaurants, theatre, and the waterfront. We abandoned that idea quickly based on the proliferation of Airbnbs, visitors, and noise levels. We bought a house four blocks from Lake Ontario and a short walk downtown.

NOTL is a tourist town and attracts many retirees. It is known for its natural beauty with historic houses, parks, gardens, and waterfront. It offers many opportunities for walking and bicycling along Lake Ontario, the Niagara Parkway, and other trails. It has an abundance of wineries (some excellent) and four craft breweries (very good). It features a variety of dining options, ranging from wineries (expensive and attracting large numbers of visitors), gourmet restaurants (some expensive, others more moderately priced) and casual options, such as roadhouse/pub/pizza fare (most have wood pizza ovens). In addition, the Culinary School at Niagara College has a restaurant and produces their own wine and beer. St. Catharines and Niagara Falls have a large restaurant scene, many ethnic eateries, and more moderate prices.



One of the major draws for us is the Community Centre. It includes a library, café, and recreational programs and activities, e.g. yoga. The Shaw Festival Theater produces numerous plays between April and October annually. In addition, NOTL has two art galleries and a historical museum. For golfers there is a nine-hole public golf course situated where the Niagara River meets Lake Ontario. The golf course has an indoor restaurant and outdoor dining. The golf course also has the best waterfront view in town. A splendid pastime is to sit in a Muskoka chair overlooking the water and enjoy a glass of wine or a beer.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of NOTL is how easy it is to make new friends. Individually, people are simply friendly and engaging. I suspect this reflects how much people enjoy living here. Some refer to NOTL as a bubble.

Additionally, there are several organizations that facilitate making new friends and social interaction. A prime example is the Social Club (SC). Many, if not most members, are retirees seeking to establish new friends and engage in social events. The SC is mostly composed of couples, and it organizes monthly events, including dinners at restaurants, dine-in dinners, sip-and-savor (BYO drinks and appetizer), coffee at the Community Centre, and tours (Albright Knox Art Museum, for example). An offshoot of the SC is the Newcomers Club (NC), which is a women's group that schedules some events like the SC, (lunches, tours, etc.), but also has established numerous interest groups, e.g. book, hiking, wine tasting, and golf.

NOTL also offers many volunteer opportunities with the Shaw Theater, galleries, museums, community groups, charities and so forth.

By most standards, NOTL is expensive. In 2024, the average house cost \$1 million. Higher prices for many goods and services are also driven by its status as a popular tourist destination. There are at times fault lines between long-term NOTL residents and come-from-aways (e.g. new arrivals from Toronto). Even so, there appears to be a broad consensus about preserving the character and heritage of the town. This is evident in disputes between developers and community groups. Proposals for new hotels and high rises are opposed because they are out of character with the town's official plan. As is the case in many urban areas, attempts to build apartments in areas zoned for single-family homes run counter to the cry "not in my back yard". The battle between change and preserving the past is an ongoing issue.

Are there things I miss about living in Westdale? Of course, but not enough to have any regrets. I do miss having a movie theater I can walk to. The Shaw in NOTL used to show international films in January and February, but that disappeared as it ramped up its theatre schedule post-pandemic. Now we see movies in St. Catharines at the Landmark Theatre and The Film House in the downtown core. I also miss McMaster colleagues and the excitement of university life. Another thing – a small thing – I miss the street vibe in Westdale, the students, cyclists, etc. When I walked my dogs, there was always activity, stimulation, and things to see both morning and night. Now we live on a quiet street, and the dogs and I rarely run into anyone after 9pm. On walks, we can almost hear ourselves breathe. Nevertheless, when it's dark I'm always on the lookout for skunks (NOTL has lots of them) and the occasional coyote. Bottom line: I enjoyed living in Westdale and now I enjoy living in NOTL.

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

Contributing writers: Mary Gauld, Dawnelle Hawes, and Kathy Overholt.

According to the Lore: An Evening of Folktales, Frights and Fantasy Featuring the À La Mode Vocal Ensemble

submitted by Nora Gaskin, McMaster University Library

I joined the [À La Mode choir](#) (ALM) in December 2021 after hearing its first post-pandemic concert, a gospel concert called Raise Me Up. The choir and its talented director, arranger, and founder, Emily Taub (B. Mus. McMaster), filled the church rafters with such a joyous noise that I found it hard to sit still in my seat. Actually, who am I kidding? I didn't even try to sit still in my seat!



ALM is an energetic and eclectic chamber choir with a passion for exploring music of every style and genre. Much of its repertoire is “a cappella”, aka unaccompanied. From pop to rock, classical to folk, gospel to [The Arrogant Worms](#) – no musical style is off limits.

The choir is currently in its 9th season and holds weekly rehearsals in Hamilton. Its choristers are a talented and diverse group, ranging widely in age and experience, but united in their love of choral singing and their flair for the dramatic. Costumes, fog machines, and light shows can, and likely will, happen at an À La Mode concert.

Profits from concerts are donated to local charities and organizations to better the Hamilton community and also to fund the ALM chorister bursary program.



À La Mode Vocal Ensemble Presents

According to the Lore

Saturday June 8, 7:30 pm

[The Music Hall](#)

24 Main St. W. at the corner of MacNab

[Ticket information](#)

This is an accessible venue.