



University of Victoria

Retirees Association

April 2014

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Grey Matters!



Butterfly Propertius Duskywing on Camas, photo by Dave Lynn [Ed.]

<http://web.uvic.ca/retirees>

Bits from the Board

It is that time of the year when those of us who are not Lifetime Members need to renew our membership. The Board recently approved a way to convert your annual membership into a Lifetime Membership, and to receive partial credit for the membership fees you have paid over the years. When the form arrives for renewal of your annual membership, be sure to consider converting to Lifetime membership.

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The Elder Academy proposal has been considered by the UVic Executive Council, who wrote to say *we considered UVic's current financial challenges and priorities and concluded we [sic] cannot proceed with the creation of the Elder Academy as put forward in your [sic] proposal*. Of course, this was a disappointing outcome; given the time and effort many of the Board and others have put forward in drafting the proposal. However, the letter also stated that *we [sic] are looking for ways to meet our shared objectives through the enhancement of existing activities and the desire to work together in ways to incorporate UVRA ideas in future planning*.

Subsequently, three of the Elder Academy Committee members met with the VP External Relations and the Dean of Continuing Studies to discuss the ways in which some of the ideas of the Elder Academy can be fulfilled. At the moment, their plan is work with Continuing Studies, the Centre on Aging, and with Athletics and Recreation, to explore programs and activities that can be offered to target the 55+ demographic. It is not what we had proposed. We hope the needs of the 55+ population can

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Bits from the Board (continued from page 1)

still be addressed within the existing structures. We have been invited to act in an advisory capacity so the ideas in the proposal can be accommodated. Our hope is that if we start small, the UVic Administration will see the value and potential, and will embrace the Elder Academy as put forward in our proposal.

I mentioned in the last “Bits from the Board” that we have a committee exploring ways that the University Pension Office and Human Resources can better serve the needs of UVic retirees and those UVic employees who are approaching retirement. The committee has met several times, and has come up with some excellent ideas that we hope to pursue. One idea is for Human Resources and the UVRA to develop a manual for pre-retirees containing all the information they will need to make some important decisions when the time comes. Apparently, Government employees receive such a manual, which should provide good direction for us. We will keep you posted as ideas evolve, but there is still time for your input, as we are in the early stages of this project.

There is a small committee working on the Memo of Understanding between UVic and the UVRA who are making some progress. The general sense is that at this point that we keep it general rather than specific.

The Membership Committee is also working with University Systems on how the UVRA can fit into the new UVic “ONECard” system that is to be implemented on April 14, 2014. See: <http://www.uvic.ca/photoid/onecard/> for details on the “ONECard”. This is presenting a bit of a conundrum at the moment, given our different categories of members. We are trying to sort out this out with the minimum of inconvenience to our members. This will affect your retiree card – it will have to be reissued, if you wish to access the UVic Library or UVic Recreation facilities.

Thanks to Betty Miller and her committee for organizing a very successful luncheon to celebrate the Chinese New Year. John Price gave a stellar talk that was enjoyed by all. We also hosted the last in this season’s “Talk Series” on March 20 in the Senate and Board Chamber, where Ian McDougall beguiled us with his “Musings on Jazz”.

It is that time of year when our nominating committee gets busy to look for new Board members. We are most fortunate in that many have agreed to carry on serving the UVRA but, as usual, several people will be stepping down. If you are interested in sitting on the UVRA Board, please contact Isobel Dawson <idawson(at)uvic.ca> who is chairing the committee. We really are looking for new people with fresh ideas. So, if you are approached, please give considerable thought to standing. I know we are all busy, but the time commitment for most roles is not that great. Your support is needed and welcome. In particular, we are in need of a Secretary, quarterly-newsletter editor, a chair for the Masterminds Series, and members-at-large.

Remember, volunteers live longer happier and healthier lives!

David Docherty,
President, UVic Retirees Association

Café Scientifique

The UVic Centre on Aging (www.coag.uvic.ca) is proud to present a series of six Café Scientifique sessions from September 2013 to May 2014. These cafés will provide insight into health-related issues of popular interest, with presentations by knowledgeable researchers, and open discussions with audience participants.

Based on the prevalence, cost, and personal impact of chronic pain, there is a need for low-cost accessible and effective interventions. Community self-management programs are accessible and effective approaches that help people manage everyday problems and thus improve their quality of life. Join us for a discussion of what self-management is, and how one can participate in a program.

Café Scientifiques are hosted by the UVic Centre on Aging, in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca)

Wednesday, May 7, 2014, 6:30PM, location TBA (Sidney, BC) -- Keeping Secrets: Living with Life-Threatening Illness -- Anne Bruce, RN, PhD

Please register by e-mail: senage@uvic.ca or by calling 250-721-6369.

Employee and Family Wellness

PPC Canada provides employee and family wellness services (EFAP) to members of the UVRA who have retired from the University of Victoria. This service is confidential, and is paid-for entirely by the University. We tend to think about counselling needs during our times of crisis, but an EFAP provider is so much more. PPC Canada assists with any personal issues, including:

- marriage, relationship, parenting, and family concerns
- stress symptoms, and stress-related problems
- alcohol and drug dependencies
- anxiety and depression
- life transitions
- family violence and abuse
- sexuality
- trauma
- grief and bereavement
- eating disorders
- financial and legal problems
- aging parents

If you would like to arrange in-person, telephone, or Internet-based counselling with a PPC Canada professional, please contact 1-800-663-909.

Service is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

Website: <http://www.ca.ppcworldwide.com>

(Information provided by Suzanne Helston, UVic Human Resources)



Masterminds — starting April 9th

The annual **Masterminds** series of lectures by UVic retirees starts very soon, and continues every Wednesday, from April 9 through April 30, at 7 p.m. in room 105 of the Harry Hickman Building.

The series is co-hosted by the University of Victoria Retirees Association and the UVic Centre on Aging, with support from the University. This year's speakers are:

April 9, with Fong Woon -- I Did It My Way: Memoir of A Woman from Hong Kong

Dr. Fong Woon grew up in Hong Kong, and immigrated to Canada in 1968. After obtaining a PhD in sociology, she taught at UVic's Department of Pacific and Asian Studies. She will discuss her experiences, including surviving the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, and its grim post-war conditions, coming to Canada and confronting covert racism, while seeking academic employment, and her ongoing search for identity in both Hong Kong and her adopted country.

April 16, Pauline van den Driessche -- Contributions of Mathematical Modelling to Controlling Infectious Diseases

Ever wonder how public health officials determined their response to infectious diseases? During her career at UVic, Dr. van den Driessche applied new mathematical methods to study the dynamics of epidemics. In her presentation, she will explain how mathematical models are used to predict and monitor the spread of infectious diseases such as influenza, measles and malaria, and to estimate the percentage of the population requiring vaccination.

April 23, Andrew Rippin -- Studying Islam in the Academic Context

Dr. Rippin, UVic Professor Emeritus of Islamic History, has written many books and articles on Islam. In his presentation, he will explore how the study of Islam in the academic context has changed over the past 40 years and how scholars have come under a sometimes-unwelcome spotlight. He will discuss the factors that have made the subject academically controversial as well as a vehicle for cross-cultural understanding.

April 30, Martin Collis -- Healing, Humour and High Level Wellness

Dr. Collis has been at the forefront of fitness and healthy living throughout his academic life. In his presentation he will look at some of the ways that Canadians can live, not only long, but well. He will draw on powerful and persuasive research to demonstrate how to maximize the quantity and quality of our days.

Please register for the free lectures by calling 250-721-6369 or emailing senage@uvic.ca.

Plan to arrive early, as seating is limited. Parking after 6 p.m. is \$2.50 — the Centennial Stadium parking lot is recommended. For more information, see the web-site: www.uvic.ca/masterminds

Musing and Reflections on “the lost martlet”

I thought that calling this piece “musings and reflections” was a good way to start; it is really the academic way of saying “thinking about stuff”. Our UVRA President, David Docherty, when presenting his President’s Report at board meetings, sometimes indicates that he may be wandering in this direction, but I think he is seriously thinking about stuff, that should always be considered a good thing to be doing.

Recently, while on campus, I noticed considerable effort has been put into providing new and improved signage. The technical term for this is “way-finding” -- a very suitable term for providing signage that tells you how, to get to where you want to go, or to inform you where you are. The new signage is colourful, informative, and possibly expensive. It probably will remain in service for many years without having to be replaced, unless hit by a vehicle, then the vehicle’s insurer will have to pay the replacement cost.

Specifically, I admired the new signs into the university at the McGill, Finnerty, and Henderson entrances. This reminded me of “the incident of the lost martlet”.

A martlet is not a real bird. It is used as a symbol on heraldic shields. When I first came to UVic, in January 1986, I noticed that the UVic shield looked very similar to the McGill shield that I encountered where I attended and then graduated with a B.Eng. in Mechanical Engineering in 1966.



The UVic shield has three red martlets on the upper portion, and the book of knowledge on the lower portion, whereas the McGill shield has the book above and the martlets below. The martlets are legless and footless, and will ever wander until they have filled the book with all known knowledge.

This brings me to the incident. The original three UVic entry signs were of a simpler construction. They were made of cylindrical concrete vertical supports at each end, mounted with a side-ventilated wooden box between them and had a glass front panel. Inside the box (coffin) was a solid cedar sign carved by an artist, and painted with vivid university colours.

[Photo courtesy of UVic Photographic Services (<http://web.uvic.ca/photos>)]

The features were, of course, the UVic shield and the large UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA letters that were painted with a special reflecting gold paint that was very costly. (I recall that this technique was used in sign advertisements for both Player’s and McDonald’s cigarettes.) The whole assembly had a solid glass front cover to allow the sign and the artwork to be clearly viewed. The real monetary value of this sign was the carver’s artistic creation, and not so much the materials that enclosed the sign.

The acquisition and the installation of these signs were carried out by the Director of Campus Planning, Ian Campbell (who is now wandering with the martlets), and assisted by a few suggestions provided by Trevor Matthews (retired).

The damp weather in Victoria had caused the signs to appear to be weathering and aging.

At the time, my supervisor was the Director of Buildings and Grounds, Jim Helme (he joined UVic before I did, so I had to be called James, but he is wandering with the martlets, so I like to be called James) had

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Musing and Reflections on a “lost martlet” (continued)

suggested that we should look into how these artistic treasures could be rejuvenated.

So, it was decided to disassemble the sign at the McGill entrance, and transport it to the Saunders Building Carpentry Shop, to see what could be done. The disassembly proved a little more complicated than anticipated. The very-heavy glass facing-plate was about one metre high and three metres wide, and was not tightly secured.

After transport, the head of the carpenter shop, Fred Paulson (recently retired) came to advise me that one of the martlets on the shield had gone **MISSING**. Missing, what to do?! This was an artistic creation. It certainly could not be put back with only two martlets, even if they were evenly spaced. Surely, someone would have noticed that there would exist a significant difference from the other two signs.

What to do? A saviour from the Plumbing Shop appeared, and the Head Plumber Ossie Mueller (retired at the greatest retirement party ever, held at the UVic racquet club facility, and organized by me) asked if he might take home one of the two remaining martlets on the sign, as carving was one of his hobbies. In desperation, I agreed.

Well, two days later, while the rest of the sign was being rejuvenated with the very special and expensive gold paint, Ossie returned with TWO newly-carved martlets, the type with flat backs suitable to be placed on the sign and also a martlet, carved in full size and with legs and feet, standing on a wooden base, to be a memento for me to have of the incident.

After suitable repainting in their vivid red colours, the martlets were returned to the sign, and were incorporated into the artistic work. The splendid-looking sign was returned to its original location, and was fitted with a new clear Lexan material, rather than the fragile glass. The exterior cover was newly painted, fitted, and put back into service.

Now there were only two more signs to complete, using more care, and we had a spare martlet on hand to cover any situation.

As can be seen in the photo, I still have my martlet. We both agree that the search for knowledge can at least slow down a little when you retire.



Regrettably, I do not have a photo of the original entry signs, but I do recall seeing many visitors and students, many from abroad, who would gather around, or even on the signs, to take photos as mementos of their time at Uvic. I expect these photographs are also wandering with the martlets.

I still live close to UVic, and regularly manage to stroll (walking slowly) the grounds and enjoy the mélange of the building styles and the wonderful natural landscaping that Tony James, Grounds Manager (retired) worked diligently to preserve and maintain.

I occasionally drop in to say hello to the staff, many whom I hired, and too-few new faces. It is the people that I miss the most, and also the passion and the effort put into the work when a special need or an emergency arose.

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Musing and Reflections on a “lost martlet” (continued)

Remember that a job is usually 90% perspiration & 10% inspiration. There is an old saying *a church is not a building, it is the people in it*; replace *church* with *university*.

HAPPY RETIREMENT!

James Pearce, P.Eng., Manager, Maintenance (retired 2006)

P.S. I wish to acknowledge the help of my spouse Coleen, whose quick fingers typed the story as it was told, in just forty minutes, but it took me ten hours using the hunt-and-peck technique to put a simple tale into print.

Welcome to new members

David Rifat	U. of Toronto
David Scott	Mechanical Engineering
Nancy Pike	Social Work
J. Lynne Barrett	Electrical & Computer Engineering
Wendy Darby	Occupational Health & Safety



Photo: Camas (Camassia Leichtlinii) by Dave Lynn

A poem, with an introduction by Michael Best

As we shake off our winter hibernation, and as a chilly spring arrives reluctantly in Victoria, many of us will start to think of this year's garden, the coming season's harvest, and that inevitable battle with weeds. My spring thoughts this year are tinged with some regret, as I remember hacking my first garden out of a scraggly lawn, with the assistance of a student in need of some work. In due course the student, Patrick White, became a good friend and a remarkable poet. Patrick died recently in Perth, Ontario. He leaves behind eight books of poetry.

From the time I met him, Patrick was always striving to make sense and beauty from the world he lived in. He was equally capable of distilling lyrical moments from the people and the natural world around him, and of creating fiery images to illuminate the injustices of the world of politics and the misuse of power. As a poet, Patrick was ambitious, seeking to make poetry important in a world less and less given to meditation and reflection.

One of his early poems celebrates the experience of gardening, and that continuing battle with weeds—in this instance a particularly intransigent one.

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A Poem (continued)

Morning Glory

for Michael Best

And though I work to rid the garden of it,
(Rows of empirical carrots, rational radishes,
Facts like stepping stones throughout the patch)
I've come to respect its strange tenacity,
Its wayward way of sprouting here and there.
Chop as I may at its roots with a spade,
Though I hack like Alexander at his knot,
Yet it will grow again two days from now,
Unfurl its pale green leaf, exact its space
Among the vegetables and cultivated herbs.
It grows in spite of all my labour,
Wound tight about the garden-stakes
I'd meant for beans, constrictive helix
Coiling like a fundamental molecule,
Its chlorophyll ascending stairways to the sun,
It grows to grow, no other purpose set;
Roots deep in radical conspiracies,
Its leaves attempt to climb to power
Upon the backs of lesser, weaker plants
Whose usefulness will always see them spared.
But for that (and only that) I'd let this hardy have its way,
I'd leave the garden to its own affairs
And judge that worthiest which could prevail,
Nature letting nothing stand it did not mean.
I would not stoop, as now, to pull this green enthusiast
From soil enriched by years of care and privilege;
I'd turn my garden back to equal opportunity
And let the fancy lettuce, dill, and beans
Contend without my help against a weed
Whose one offense is overwhelming life.
I'd watch its trumpets raise their senets to the sun,
And like a tired Roman know an empire over-run.

You will find an obituary on Patrick at
<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Patrick+White+passion+poetry+that+never+waned/9570040/story.html>.

More of Patrick's poems: <http://www.poemhunter.com/patrick-white/>

Enjoy nature with the Victoria Natural History Society

UVic Retirees have so many diverse interests. I thought you might like to hear about one of mine. If you like nature and the outdoors and want to get some exercise (David Docherty always is encouraging us to get more), consider joining the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS).

The group enjoys birding, botany and marine activities, but we love to investigate anything related to nature. On an outing with the group, we may stop to check out a mushroom, a butterfly or an interesting rock formation, so it's not often exercise, but it's great to be out, rain or shine. The field trips are rated for difficulty, as we do climb a few mountains but we also find many interesting things to investigate as we meander along on even ground. You can get a sample of what a VNHS field trip is like if you join us on Friday April 25 at the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve. Although this is a UVRA event this time, I have done the same trip for VNHS.

If you simply want to enjoy hearing about the natural world, VNHS also has monthly talks on 4 themes - botany, birds, marine environment and the fourth covers all those other exciting things in the natural world. Talks may be very simple or quite scientific in nature. Most have beautiful images for us to enjoy.

VNHS is a member of BC Nature, which is the naturalist connection for all of BC, and also links to Nature Canada, which considers itself to be the voice for nature in Canada. The three levels are very active in helping to preserve nature and educating people about the value of our natural world.

The members of VNHS come from diverse backgrounds, some professional, but many simply join because of their interest in the natural environment. Local people mix with those from all over the world. There are many opportunities to volunteer, if that interests you. VNHS is a hub that links to many other local environmental organizations, so it is a great place to hear what is going on locally as well as globally. I know of several UVRA members who are already involved with VNHS. Come join us! To find out more about the Victoria Natural History Society, check their website at www.vicnhs.bc.ca or talk to me at one of our UVRA events.

Submitted by Agnes Lynn

Photo: Shooting Star (*Dodecatheion hendersonii*) by Dave Lynn



Cancer Support Network

The **cancer support network** meets in the UVic Human Resources Meeting Room (Sedgewick B142) at noon-time (1 hour) on the first Tuesday of each month.

Please bring your lunch, friends, and any topics you would like to open to the group.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Helston at 250-721-8089 or [shelston\(at\)uvic.ca](mailto:shelston(at)uvic.ca)

Physical Activity and Wellness Corner #15

The benefits of “Nordic-pole” walking

In the last newsletter, I indicated I would share some of the research and findings in regard to Nordic pole walking (<http://www.nordixx.com/your-health-benefits/scientific-studies/>)

I have used Nordic poles for the last 12 years. Once you are able to ignore the obvious comments from passers-by, such as *have you lost your skis?*, you will find that using poles adds benefit to your walking as well as enjoyment.

There is a considerable body of research that has shown you burn +20% more calories using poles than when not using poles, attributable to the upper body involvement, which may also improve strength in the upper body. In addition to burning more calories, the use of poles can assist balance and stability, and relieve some pressure on the lower back, hips and knees, particularly for people with arthritis. The use of poles also helps in maintaining an upright posture, especially in comparison to other walking aids, such as sticks and walkers.

Learning to use the poles

For most of us, there is a learning process in using poles. It takes a little time before you feel comfortable or natural using them. Fortunately, there is no shortage of information on how to use Nordic-poles, with many video-clips showing several different techniques.

I suggest you have a look at www.keenfit.com/videos/videos.asp to see how it is done. You will get some different opinions, but my tips would be:

1. Set the poles at the correct height. The height of the pole should come to just below your elbow, when your elbow is at your side and bent to 90 degrees.
2. Use the straps. Although some poles come with special grips, most come with straps. More expensive poles have “glove” straps, whereas the cheaper ones have “loop” straps similar to ski-poles, and are used in a similar manner.
3. The general approach with the hands is referred to as “grip and go”, which implies the pole is gripped when in front, with pressure also applied downward on the strap, but then the grip is released when pulling the pole from behind to swing forward, mostly using the strap.
4. The wrist should stay fixed in the handshake position, and the forward arm extended to an almost straight or locked position.
5. The big challenge is coordinating the leg and arm action. It should be the same as walking in which the arm and leg work as opposites, i.e. the right arm swings forward with the left leg. The pole should be placed just behind the heel of the opposite foot and feel natural. The easiest way to feel the rhythm is to start walking and let the poles drag along the ground with the natural movement of the arms. As the poles move forward start to apply some pressure or pull. Soon, you will be flying along.

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Physical Activity and Wellness Corner #15

6. As you feel more comfortable, you can think about the arm action as **punch/pull**, where you punch the pole forward, and then pull back when it grips.
7. Most poles come with a variety of rubber tips for use on roads or paved surfaces. Take the rubber tips off when using poles on dirt, chip, and sand trails, unless very muddy.

Try not to think too much about it, because it really is just like walking. It is a bit like marching, in that the more you think about it, the more trouble you have -- you end up having the same arm and leg moving forward and back at the same time!

Choosing the poles

Poles are available from a number of different sources, and at a variety of costs. Capital Iron has a good selection of "loop strap" poles at reasonable prices, and also offer a variety of rubber tips. So you may wish to check them out. Of course, the outdoor equipment stores also have a good selection, and you will get some expert advice on pole selection.



If you need some expert help in learning how to select and use the poles, you should check out Olympian (rowing, Montréal 1976) Linda Schaumleffel's website: www.nordicpolewalkingvictoria.ca -- she is our local guru, and offers a variety of courses in pole walking, as well as "glove" strap poles.

Using Nordic-poles can add to your walking enjoyment, give you some additional health benefits, as well as providing more stability for those who may need it.

Submitted by David Docherty

AGM (Annual General Meeting) and Nominations

The AGM of the UVic Retirees Association will be held on Wednesday, June 18, 2014 in Room D110 of the MacLaurin Building, from 10 AM to noon. Refreshments will be served.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are being accepted for the positions of President, Vice-President and Members-at-Large. Please contact J. Isobel Dawson <isobeldawson@uvic.ca> with your nominations.