The 38th President’s Reception for Retirees

The next President’s Reception is set for Saturday, October 17, at 2:00 pm in Marshall McLuhan Hall in University Centre on the Fort Garry campus. It will be preceded by the AGM at 12:30 pm.

The featured speaker will be Dr. Tim Papakyriakou, Director of the University’s Centre for Earth Observation Science (CEOS) and Professor in the Department of Environment and Geography. Dr. Papakyriakou conducts research on air-sea gas exchange and associated carbon biogeochemical pathways in marine systems, including the CO2 system dynamics in polar waters.

The title of his talk is: Some thoughts on the Arctic Ocean’s changing role in the fight against greenhouse gas induced climate warming.

Several gases in the atmosphere affect climate; the Earth’s oceans play an important role in global cycles of these gases. For example the “ocean carbon sink,” offsets ~30% of annual anthropogenic CO2 emissions. A consequence of the aggressive uptake of anthropogenic CO2 by oceans is the acidification of surface waters, with potentially negative impacts on marine ecosystems.

Other climate-active gases of interest include dimethylsulfide (DMS), methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O). Production of DMS, a biogenic gas linked to cloud formation in the Arctic, while the release of CH4, an important greenhouse gas, has been observed from sub-sea permafrost along the Siberian Arctic shelf. N2O is a long-lived greenhouse gas that is released from the ocean in high quantities, but observations in the Arctic are limited to the Greenland and Norwegian Seas. The Arctic Ocean is thought to be particularly active in exchanging these gases, but putting precise numbers on this exchange is challenging, due largely to the complicating presence of sea ice.

As an additional complication, sea ice and other factors known to affect gas exchange (e.g., salinity, temperature, ecosystem function, etc.) are changing dramatically in response to climate change, which in turn can modify how these gases are cycled. Here I review what is known on the cycling of major climate-active gases within the Arctic Ocean and speculate on feedbacks and linkages to climate and ecosystem change. Current material will be covered drawing on a decade or so of research attributed to the Canadian-led Network of Centres of Excellence, ArcticNet, and the University of Manitoba’s CEOS/CERC Arctic program.

You are asked to RSVP by Tuesday, October 6, 2015, to Learning and Organizational Development by telephone at 204-474-9124 to confirm your attendance.
From the Editor

Benjamin Disraeli is mostly a forgotten man now, except for we lucky Winnipeggers who can get to and from the Kildonans via the new Disraeli Freeway and Bridge. And very few of us car-jockeys probably know about the man that the roadway honors.

In his day, Disraeli was as popular a novelist as Dickens as well as the two-time prime minister of England (1868, 1874-80) – the first one of Jewish descent. A favorite confidante of Queen Victoria, he is also called “the father of modern Conservatism.” Sic transit gloria mundi.

Although his novels have little currency these days, Disraeli is still eminently quotable. “There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.” That’s Disraeli. So is: “How much easier it is to be critical than to be correct” and, particularly apt these days: “There is no act of treachery or meanness of which a political party is not capable; for in politics there is no honour.”

We’d be wise to post this Disraeli quotation all around campus: “A University should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning.”

If you want to know more about Disraeli, you should have a look at Robert O’Kell’s book Disraeli: The Romance of Politics. Now out in paperback, this study of the conjunction of Disraeli’s political and literary careers has been widely lauded for the “scope, detail, and subtlety” of his interpretation.

“Groundbreaking,” “thorough and valuable,” “a splendid achievement,” “a brilliant, original book.”

Bob O’Kell is the featured retiree of this issue’s Retired, Not Entirely column (page 3). His work on Disraeli is leading to bigger things.

Gene Walz, Professor of Film Studies (retired, obviously but not entirely)

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President’s Message

This past spring I wrote a letter to Gregory Juliano, Associate Vice-President (Human Resources), the official point-of-contact between UMRA and university administration, protesting the way the termination of the no-charge, or “free” gym membership benefit was handled. In addition, I asked that consideration be given to “grandfathering” the approximately 190 existing holders of the free membership. Mr. Juliano replied in June and acknowledged that “our communications with UMRA were insufficient in this regard, and I want to assure you that we will do our very best to improve upon this in the future.”

The request to consider “grandfathering” existing users of this approximately 20-year-old retirement benefit was turned down after review. The rationale is that “current staff, retirees, and other members of the internal and external community should contribute through membership fees to construction, maintenance, and operation of a substantially improved facility.” To the extent that there was a positive note in the letter, it was the statement that “Kinesiology has agreed to offer memberships to retirees at the same rate as paid by active staff.”

The UMRA executive will continue to protect the few post-retirement benefits that are still in place, and also explore what other such benefits the university can reasonably offer to its retired employees.

Changing the subject completely, I attended the annual conference of the College and University Retirees Association of Canada that was held in Kingston at the end of May. Speakers made the usual pleas for a national strategy on aging and for pension plan reform. At the same time, it was also noted that amending existing public policy to reflect the current needs of an older population would in itself be a major improvement. Most importantly, it was emphasized that the best changes and improvements in the way governments respond to the needs of an ageing population would come when retirees take an active role in shaping those policies. In other words, just because you are retired is no reason for retiring your engagement with in public policy as it affects retirees and the elderly. Accordingly, the speakers, most of whom were still some years away from retirement, encouraged conference delegates to get involved.

The most recent edition of the CURAC newsletter, the summer, 2015, edition is available by clicking on the Newsletters tab on the right hand side at website: http://www.curac.ca.

Ed Unrau, UMRA President
As I anticipated my retirement at the end of June 2014, my feelings were very mixed. I feared that I would really miss teaching, but I also knew that a teaching career that had lasted 44 years would be best concluded while I was still energetic and enthusiastic about sharing Victorian literature with undergraduates. In 2013 I had published a book, *Disraeli: The Romance of Politics*, which explored the relationship between Benjamin Disraeli’s political career and his novels. With the increased flexibility of my retirement schedule I wanted to follow up on that research with a study of 19th century political rhetoric. It’s an attempt to compare more broadly, but selectively, the language used in parliamentary debates with the language of political journalism, and both of those with the rhetoric of political novels.

The tentative general argument is that the conventions of parliamentary debates in the Victorian period, despite the differences of political parties, are inherently conservative, while the plurality of voices in the rapidly expanding journalism of the period is inherently radical. Furthermore, it seems to me that the language of political novels, more often than not, tries to ameliorate the tension between the forces of tradition and the forces of democracy.

The most obvious change in the body politic during the 19th century is the increase in the electoral franchise for the House of Commons embodied in the provisions of the three Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884. Prior to 1832 the parliamentary franchise was severely limited by class, education and the possession of real property. In those 52 years the social composition of the Victorian body politic was transformed from a very small, well-educated, upper and middle-class, mostly rural and wealthy group of electors to a very large, mostly urban group, the majority of whom were drawn from the middle, lower-middle, and working classes—people of widely varying degrees of education, experience, and income.

My intention is to show that the most significant changes in the Victorian body politic were not legal but rhetorical. The three Reform Acts were, I argue, belated attempts to codify and stabilize the shifts in power that had already taken place by virtue of a greatly expanded political discourse outside the institution of parliamentary debates. In the twenty or so years following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic War, there was in England a significant loosening of the meaning of the phrases “the people” and “the Commons.” Radicals used the phrase “the people” to refer not just to “freemen” and all those with property considered capable of understanding political issues, but rather to everyone. Similarly, the public meaning of “the Commons” expanded during the years of the Reform movement to mean all adult men, rather than just those few at the time who were eligible to vote in elections of representatives to the House of Commons.

In a recent conference paper, I discussed the mixture of conservative and radical language used by the banker, Thomas Atwood in forming and promoting the Birmingham Political Union between 1830 and 1832. Atwood’s intention was to unite the middle and working classes as supporters of the Reform Bill then before parliament. On the one hand, at large meetings of working men the charismatic Attwood used emotionally charged radical rhetoric to insist that the will of “the people” must prevail. But in the written documents and accounts of the BPU’s actions, he stressed the need for reason and patience. As Lord Grey’s Whig Government tried to forestall an English Revolution with a limited Reform Bill, Attwood’s command of both rhetorics— that of the desire for significant change and that of the need to avoid violence—was a crucial influence in keeping the tens of thousands of Birmingham’s working men peaceful.

The next stage of my research will be to investigate the rhetoric of the Chartist Movement and the campaign of the Anti-Corn-Law League in the 1840s. Beyond that there is the language of the debates, journalism and novels leading toward the second Reform Act of 1867 to explore. And finally there will be the language of democracy to consider as all adult men and women are eventually brought into the political discourse.

Bob O’Kell is Professor Emeritus in the Department of English, Film and Theatre and Dean Emeritus from the Faculty of Arts.
University Awards:  
Dr. Juliette (Archie) Cooper

Dr. Juliette (Archie) Cooper has received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Manitoba for service to the University. Archie Cooper is a member of UMRA and also served as our Membership Chair for a few years.

Contact information for UMRA
The University of Manitoba Retirees Association
Box 5, Administration Building, The University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Phone: (204)474-7175
E-mail: retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca
Website: http://umanitoba.ca/outreach/retirees

Email contact to Retirees
UMRA is using e-mail to send reminders and notices of events of interest to retirees. To receive these, retirees should forward their e-mail address to retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca

Email address changes may be sent to retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca

Travel options for UM retirees to consider

If you are thinking about escorted group travel, two companies are worth considering because they offer a “commission” either to UMRA or to the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) when their retiree members buy their excursion products.

1) Senior Tours Canada (website: www.seniortours.ca/) is offering a “finders fee” of four per cent to UMRA when its members book a tour with the company. In order for the “finders fee” to find its way into the UMRA bank account you must tell the Senior Tours Canada representative that you are a member of UMRA, which is an organization that qualifies for the fee, and you must also send an email to retirees@cc.umanitoba.ca

2) Collette Travel (website: www.gocollette.com) and CURAC earlier this year signed an agreement whereby Collette remits a commission to CURAC and its member associations. This deal also includes discounts on some of the firm’s offerings. All that is necessary is to indicate that you are a member of a CURAC-affiliated retiree association. While you may buy Collette tours from a travel agent, Collette also has a dedicated 1-800 phone line for information. More detail is available in Bulletin #6 at the CURAC website: http://www.curac.ca/

If you are comparing tour packages, and the only material difference is the “finders fee,” please consider either of the above firms for the obvious reason that this choice generates some revenue for UMRA.

Computer help still available

Retired university staff members who are also members of UMRA are eligible to use the computer support service provided by three graduate students in the department of computer science. The assistance available covers both hardware and software problems.

The computer service is not “instant” in that it may take a day or two or three for your call for help to be fully processed, partly because the graduate students are not able to drop everything and partly because incoming telephone and email message are monitored by UMRA executive from their homes.

Computer support is a “fee-for-service” arrangement and you should discuss this at the outset, either as an estimate of time or as a project cost. The service can be provided in your home where desktop equipment is involved, or in the case of laptops on campus or some other convenient location.

This computer support service is only available to UMRA members with paid memberships; that is, holders of the life membership or those who are paying the annual membership fee.

Call the UMRA telephone number, 204 474 7175, or send an email to retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca
Glenlea in July

Anyone who has worked at the U of M for more than a few years has at least heard about the university research farm at Glenlea, on Highway 75 about eight miles south of the Perimeter, but few have ever visited the site.

That changed this past July when 37 university retirees toured the university’s Glenlea farm. The Glenlea farm is the site of the Bruce D. Campbell Farm and Food Discovery Centre, an educational resource set up to show how we get our food. It has both adult and youth (school group) programming.

The retirees explored the exhibits in the discovery centre, which included a window into the hog barn farrowing area. They also visited the dairy. A major component of the afternoon was a presentation by Dr. Laurie Connor, head of the department of animal science, who described the farm’s research projects, several of which are unique to Canada. The afternoon concluded with refreshments and a tasty ice-cream parfait with Saskatoon berries and oatmeal that was manufactured in the department of food science.

The Glenlea event was the first time that a summer event was planned for UManitoba retirees.
Facing Facebook

Should UMRA have a Facebook presence?

The UMRA executive and the communications committee have been discussing whether we should have a Facebook presence to foster communication with our members. This discussion has not generated an answer. Some observers think that the current combination of twice-yearly editions of Retirees News and email messages to members is enough. Other observers, noting the ubiquity of Facebook as a social network medium, argue that a Facebook presence is vital.

Please send your answer and observations on the question above to: retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca

UMRA Rep Elected to UMFA Board

Pat Nicholls has been elected by acclamation as Board Representative for the Constituency of Retired Members.

The Board is the governing body of the Association in the interim between meetings of the general membership. Among other things, the Board approves the Members of the Executive Council, appointees to Committees, UMFA representatives to other bodies, and motions related to policy and collective bargaining.

Please keep your Board Representative informed of your opinions and comments. It’s only through a strong Board that the membership of the Association can best be served.

UM Pension Plans Have Come a Long Way!

By Bruce Johnston

It may be hard to believe, but sixty-five years ago there was no University of Manitoba Pension Plan; this proved most unsatisfactory. In 1950 a direct contribution pension plan administered by Great West Life was implemented. This plan had a 6% employee yearly contribution; over the working life of an employee, the U of M contributed a matching 6%. On retirement an employee arranged for an annuity from an authorized company.

In 1965 there were many proposals for pension change, eventually leading to The University Pension Plan 1970. Managers were hired to invest the pension funds in various investment classes such as mortgages, bonds and stocks.

The next phase was The University Pension Plan 1993 which included many employee investment options on retirement: leaving funds with the Plan, purchasing an annuity, participating in a SUN Life Group Retirees Investment Plan, a Locked-in Retirement Account, a Prescribed Retirement Income Fund, or an RRSP vehicle, as permitted. One of the major changes over time has been the gradual increase of the employee and employer contribution to its current level of 9% each.

Some of the subsidiary goals of the Plans are the protection of funds from inflation/deflation through diversification into asset classes, conservative investing, and the careful shifting between and within asset classes. Unfortunately, there is no panacea protection strategy.

In addition, as we all know, there are two other pieces of an employee’s pension: the OAS, which has been operating for a long time, and the CPP which was started in 1965-66.

(A more complete description of this history will soon be available on UMRA’s website, http://umanitoba.ca/outreach/retirees, under the title The University Pension Plan: 1900 until 2014.)

Winnipeg United Way Campaign 2015

In 2014 Winnipeg area Retirees of the University of Manitoba once again demonstrated their generous support for agencies of the United Way. 2014 donations totaled almost $187,000 – 30% of the total U of M contributions. This represents a significant increase over the previous year.

As preparations are now underway for the 2015 United Way campaign, we hope that even more of our colleagues, in recognition and appreciation of the wonderful work that the United Way does in our communities, will consider supporting the campaign and make 2015 an even greater success. This support can and will make a difference in the lives of so many in our community.

As in previous years the University will provide the United Way with a mailing list of retirees in the Winnipeg area. Should you wish that your name not be included on the list, please contact Lynn Bohonos at Lynn. Bohonos@umanitoba.ca or at 204-474-9124.
Application for New Membership

[Please Print]

Name:_______________________________________________________________________

(First name or initial)               (Middle name or initial)                  (Last name)

Status:   □ Retiree      □ Spouse/Partner of Retiree

Year Retired from University ___________    Department/Unit __________________________

Street Address:________________________________________________________________

City: ______________________    Province: _________      Postal Code: ________________

Telephone Number: (_____) __________________________

E-mail address*: ___________________________________________________________

*Required if you wish to receive news and notices.

I wish to become a(n)*:

□ Member @ $15 annual fee

□ Member @ $100 lifetime fee

□ Associate Member (no fee)

*Please see the reverse side for information about membership categories.

Members and Associate Members are welcome to serve on our committees. Check the one(s) that you would like to join:

□ Benefits and Pensions    □ Membership    □ Endowment Fund

□ Communications    □ Retiree’s Centre

Signature: ___________________________  Date : _____________________

Please send your completed form with a cheque payable to “UMRA” to: UMRA, Box 5, Administration Building, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2.

Information provided on this form is protected by the UMRA Privacy Policy.

(For Office Use Only)

Date received_______________Cheque # _______  Amount $_______
What is UMRA?
The University of Manitoba Retirees Association (UMRA) evolved from the 1996 University of Manitoba United Way Campaign Committee. Under the leadership of John Mundie, that committee continued on as the Retirees Committee. The Retirees Committee focussed on monitoring retiree benefits and promoting the interests of retirees. In 2003, the University recognized the Retirees Committee as the University of Manitoba Retirees Association, which was authorized to represent all retirees at the University. In October, 2004, UMRA held its first Annual General Meeting, at which time its constitution and privacy policy were ratified.

In 2003, UMRA became a founding member of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC/ARUCC). CURAC is a federation of some 40 retiree associations of colleges and universities across Canada. In 2004, UMRA and the University of Winnipeg Retirement Association co-hosted CURAC’s annual national conference.

Since 1997, the former Retirees Committee and now UMRA has been instrumental in organizing the semi-annual President’s Reception for Retirees. The reception features a guest speaker followed by refreshments and an opportunity for retirees to renew acquaintances. Information about the date and location of the President’s Reception is published in the Retirees’ News which is sent to all retired employees of the University.

For more information about UMRA’s history please visit our website: www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/retirees.

UMRA’s Purposes
- To act as a liaison between retirees and the University.
- To promote and defend the interests of retirees in the pension and benefit plans of the University.
- To provide a means for continuing the associations which members enjoyed as employees.
- To organize and promote recreational, educational, and other events.
- To facilitate interaction with other retiree/seniors organizations.

Membership Q & A
Q. Who can join UMRA?
A. Anyone who has retired from the U of M, or who is the spouse/partner of someone who retired from the U of M, is eligible for membership in UMRA.

Q. What’s the difference between the two membership categories?
A. There are several differences: (1) Members pay a fee which supports the operations of UMRA; Associate Members do not pay a fee. (2) Only Members can participate in the governance of the Association, e.g., voting in elections and serving as voting members of the Executive Committee. (3) Lifetime Members of UMRA who are retirees and who are ineligible for a U of M Retired Staff card may be eligible to be granted Associate Retiree status by the University, and to enjoy benefits such as use of Library services, an email account, and Recreational Services membership at a reduced rate. (4) Members can receive in-home computer support services provided by graduate students in Computer Science. (5) Members can take advantage of other benefits that may become available, such as U of M Bookstore discount coupons.

Q. I’m a Member paying the annual fee. When do I have to renew my membership?
A. For Members paying annually, the membership year runs from October 1st to September 30th. A renewal form will be sent to you in September.

Q. I’m an Associate Member. Do I have to renew my membership each year?
A. No. However, please be sure to notify us if your contact information changes.

Revised: July, 2015