

Retirees'

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News

The 40th President's Reception for Retirees

The next President's Reception for members of the University of Manitoba Retirees Association (UMRA) is set for Saturday, October 15, 2016, at 2:00 pm in Marshall McLuhan Hall in University Centre on the Fort Garry campus.

The UMRA Annual General Meeting will be held before the reception in the Graduate Students Lounge, beginning at 12:30 pm. Annual and lifetime members as well as associate members are welcome to attend.

You are asked to RSVP to Lynn Bohonos, Learning and Organizational Development, by Monday, October 3. You may telephone 204 474 9124 or send an email to: lynn.bohonos@umanitoba.ca

Not To Be Abandoned

Gordon Goldsborough, who is regularly interviewed Sunday mornings on CBC radio describing hidden and forgotten locations in

Manitoba, will be the featured speaker. His topic is: Manitoba's Abandoned Past.

The following abstract of his presentation was provided by Dr. Goldsborough: "Places that are abandoned inform us about the changing priorities of society at large. For the past six years, I have been mapping historic sites for the Manitoba Historical Society. They reveal trends in agriculture, energy production, telecommunications, construction techniques, supply chain mechanisms, education, health care, and rural depopulation. I will discuss a few of these places in this presentation."

Dr. Goldsborough is a Past-President of the Manitoba Historical Society as well as the society's Webmaster, and an Editor of the Manitoba History journal.

He is not as well-known as he should be for his work on online, interactive, searchable mapping of Manitoba historic sites. More than 2,000 historic sites have been included. On your Smart Phone go to: (www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites). There you can click on the map's different colored



Gordon Goldsborough

icons and up pop exact latitudinal and longitudinal locations of various historic sites, and a link to a write-up and photo.

An associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, Dr. Goldsborough also served as the Director of the now-closed Delta Marsh Field Station. He is a water quality specialist concerned with the impacts of humans on lakes and wetlands; his research and teaching interests include biodiversity, ecology and environment.

From the Editor

With the addition of more than 100 new university retirees at the end of 2015, the official membership

in the University of Manitoba Retirees Association (UMRA) has grown to almost 1,000 members. To those new members, and as a gentle reminder to past members, I'd like to put out a call for contributions, suggestions, and responses to this and all future newsletters. We need your input.

If you have opinions, advice, news stories, vacation recommendations, book or movie or tv reviews, whatever, do not hesitate to send them to us. We'll find room.

If you or someone you know is working post-retirement – in whatever capacity, not just as a scholar or book writer, but as a greens-keeper or camp counselor or election enumerator or volunteer soup-kitchen server, let us know. We'd like to hear about the ways we are finding meaning after our careers come to a close.

Speaking of volunteers, UMRA is seeking some to serve on the Communications Committee. Specifically, we need an Assistant Webmaster, an Assistant Newsletter Editor, and a trainee for the chairman's job. The work is not onerous. The committee meets twice a year for an hour or two to discuss issues relating to the president's receptions, the newsletter's contents, the UMRA website, and the membership list. No experience necessary.

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



Gene Walz

President's Message

Do you consider yourself a member of the “career alumni?”

This expression was used by one of the delegates attending the 2016 conference of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC).



Ed Unrau, UMRA President

“Career alumni,” for this delegate and others, is preferable to “retiree”. The reasoning? When students graduate, they aren't called “former students,” although the term is accurate; they're called “alumni.” This is a status that never changes and is an indication that interest in their alma mater is a continuing one. Graduation represents a change in the relationship, not an end.

People who retire from the University of Manitoba, or from any other university for that matter, may be leaving their staff appointments behind, but not their interest in the university or its educational endeavours. The use of “retiree” to describe someone who has closed a career is accurate but also incomplete.

The university is an employment environment that expects retired staff members to maintain a continuing connection into retirement. For example, most academic staff become emeritus professors or senior scholars, and all retirees are included in the annual United Way appeal and the university's fundraising programs.

If it is important for retirees and the university to maintain a continuing relationship, I think it would be helpful to see retirees as “career alumni.” It is a shift in terminology that recognizes that retirement represents a change of the relationship, not a termination. I see UMRA as having at least two objectives: one is to continually remind the university that retirees are interested in the university, the other is to find ways for retirees to contribute to the life of the university.

One of the other observations at the CURAC conference was that university administrations are overlooking the post-retirement energy of retirees. Although this complaint was voiced in other annual conferences, I thought it was much more intensely expressed this year than previously. UMRA and other similar associations will need to work hard to ensure that “career alumni” are not taken for granted.

Retired? Not Entirely

FIRST STAR I SEE TONIGHT: UKRAINIAN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

While working in the UM Libraries (Archives and Special Collections and then Collections Management), Orysia Tracz had another life. Since childhood she has had an interest in Ukrainian traditions and customs, and has always wondered “why do we do what we do”? And the reply was always “because”. That was not enough.

Working as a Library Assistant in the old Special Collections Department in 1968 provided a great opportunity to find out “why” some things happened. The department then consisted of University Archives, Manuscript Collections, Rare Books, and the Icelandic and Slavic Collections. The Slavic Collection holds a wealth of original sources, including those in Ukrainian ethnology, history, and archaeology. These sources answered many of her questions.

As an almost four-year-old refugee, immigrant, and a Displaced Person from Germany, Orysia arrived with her parents in

Jersey City, New Jersey in the fall of 1949. Her Ukrainian parents had been forced labourers in Germany during the war, and could not and would not return to a Soviet Ukraine. In their new American home, the family celebrated all the traditions from Ukraine. Later, as an adult on the Canadian Prairies, Tracz was pleased and comforted that the same “because” traditions were being followed by Ukrainian Canadians after more than a century in a new land.

In researching the traditions, she learned much about the why, but there are always so many more questions behind each answer. Now she knows that Christmas and the Birth of Christ comprise only a tiny percentage of the *koliady* (Ukrainian carols). The rest are much older, pre-Christian in origin, and reflect the earlier beliefs of the ancestors of Ukrainians, long before the acceptance of Christianity. (Christianity came to Ukraine in 988.) The *koliady* show the dualism, the layering of the pre-Christian and Christian. In one example the verses are about family, courting, fertility (among many other themes), while “Christ is born” is added only in the refrain.

And it is not just the *koliady*; almost all the traditions of Ukrainian Christmas are pre-Christian in origin. There is only the veneer of Christianity over those millennia of what was believed before.

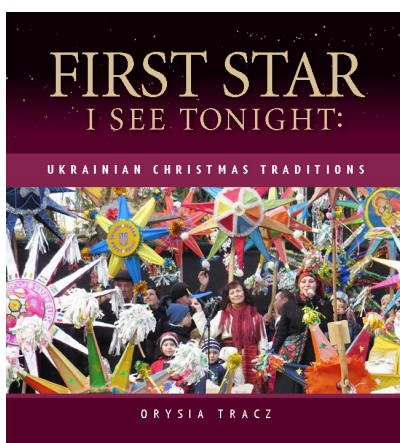
Any Ukrainian child

around the world will know the basic elements of the *Sviata Vecheria* or Holy Supper, the Christmas Eve meal. The youngest kid in the family looks out for the first star – a sign that the meal can begin. The table is set in a special way, with an empty chair as a place setting for the departed and those who cannot be present this evening. The food served is also special, with some dishes served only on this night. They and everything else about this evening are unique and full of prehistoric symbolism in ingredients and numbers.

Twelve dishes are served. They differ from region to region, but some are basic -- the *Kutia* and the *Uzvar*. The foods are mostly the early gathered ones. The meal is non-dairy and meatless, indicating that animals were believed to be part of the extended family and to be respected on this night.

Kutia or *Kutya* is the special ritual food of *Sviat Vechir* (Holy Eve) – whole wheat grains, ground poppy seeds, and honey. They are usually served at the beginning of the meal. The wheat grains are whole rather than ground showing the antiquity of the dish -- before agriculture, before there were enough grains to be ground into flour. Honey is the original instant food, available and edible as is. Poppy seeds symbolize fertility.

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Uzvar is a compote of dried fruits, considered the drink of the old gods.

The twelve dishes symbolize the lunar cycle of twelve months. The moon and stars were vital to the hunter/gatherers in their travels, more important than the sun which was vital to later agriculturalists.

It is truly fascinating that in the early 21st century, Ukrainian Christmas throughout the world is still celebrated in that special way that not only echoes but retains those prehistoric elements. If you happen to be in a Ukrainian home in Dauphin, Manitoba, or Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, or Prutendopolis, Brazil, or Perth, Australia, or in the "Green Triangle" near Vladivostok, Russia, or in Kyiv, or the Carpathian Mountains, you'll be sitting down to that special and reverent Sviata Vecheria in basically the same way as all Ukrainians everywhere. And that power of family, heritage, millennia of tradition, and the ancestors is with us in the same way.

First Star I See Tonight is the first English language book that comprehensively describes and explains Ukrainian Christmas rituals and customs. It is not an academic treatise, but is based on the author's decades-long research on this fascinating subject, and the articles written on this topic. And it is not comprehensive; there are many more stories to tell.

First Star I See Tonight (Winnipeg: Mazepa, 2015) was on the McNally Robinson Bestseller List from the first week of December 2015 into March 2016. The book was recognized by the Whistler Independent Book Awards 2017 with an Honourable Mention. In Winnipeg it is available at McNally's, Oseredok, and Kalyna.

Orysia Tracz has been published in The Winnipeg Free Press, The Ukrainian Weekly (an international English-language newspaper in New Jersey), the Globe and Mail, and elsewhere (even the Azerbaijan International journal). She has translated ten books from Ukrainian into English, and has lectured across North America, Australia, and Ukraine. This past July she led a culture and folk art tour to Ukraine, and presented a lecture at the Ivan Honchar Museum (National Center of Folk Culture) in Kyiv.

Earle Ferguson Elected Board Representative

Greg Flemming, Executive Director of UMFA, has announced that Earle Ferguson has been elected by acclamation as Board Representative for the Constituency of Retired Members. Ferguson will serve a three-year term (ending May 2019).

The Board is the governing body of the Association in the interim between meetings of the general membership. Amongst 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.

Flemming has requested that UMFA members keep their Board Representative informed of their opinions and comments. It is only through a strong Board that the membership of the Association can best be served.

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 messages 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

Update: University of Manitoba Retirees Endowment Fund (UMREF)

In 2014 the Endowment Fund Committee received Senate approval of the University of Manitoba Retirees Association Bursary designed to support students in their pursuit of an undergraduate degree. The terms of reference for this bursary are posted on the UMREF website.

Although a number of UMRA members contributed to this fund, the total contributions are not as yet sufficient to award a student with our bursary. We encourage you therefore to consider making a donation to this UMRA Bursary Fund. When we have sufficient funds in this bursary to award it we will post it on our website. However, because it is a bursary we will not be able to disclose the name or identity the recipient.

Our next goal is to establish an UMRA-sponsored graduate student scholarship. The terms of reference for an UMREF graduate student scholarship have been submitted to Senate for approval; once approved, they will be posted on the UMREF website.

The four graduate students who each treated us to a three-minute thesis (3MT) presentation of their major research findings at last April's President's Reception certainly demonstrated qualifications worthy of a graduate student scholarship. To meet these students on the web and enjoy their presentations, go to the UMREF website at:

http://umanitoba.ca/outreach/retirees/umref_about.html

There you will also find information about various kinds of awards and types of donations that may be made in support of the education of our students.

We may be retired but we still wish to help our students achieve their educational goals.

Website link to a provincial resource

The UMRA website that resides within the university environment is a worthwhile source of information. One of the items of interest is a link to the latest issue of Seniors' Guide, published by the provincial government. You can find the link under the "Publications" tab on the first page of the UMRA website.

Do you have a new email address?

If you are one of the retirees who has registered for the university's ".umr" email address, please send your new email address to: retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca

If you have changed internet providers and/or you prefer to use another email address, this request for an update of your email address applies to you as well. This will ensure that you will continue to get regular retiree updates and other missives, including *Retirees News*, the twice-yearly UMRA newsletter.



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
