

# Retirees'

Volume Twenty-one, Issue Two  
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# News

## The 41<sup>st</sup> President's Reception for Retirees

The next President's Reception for members of the University of Manitoba Retirees Association (UMRA) is set for Saturday, April 8, 2017, at 2:00 pm in Marshall McLuhan Hall in University Centre on the Fort Garry campus.

President David Barnard will be in attendance. He will talk about recent developments and priorities for the university.

### 3MT<sup>®</sup>

The featured speakers at this April's reception will be several Three Minute Thesis graduate students. Retirees who attended the 39th President's Reception will likely remember the four presentations of last April. These talks covered topics such as Oral Biology, Peace and Justice, Human Nutrition, and Biomedical Engineering. They were so enthusiastically welcomed by retirees in attendance that the UMRA executive decided to repeat the program with this year's winning contestants.

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT<sup>®</sup>) is a research communication

competition developed by the University of Queensland in Australia in 2008. The objective of the 3MT<sup>®</sup> is to compress months, even years, of graduate research into an attractive three-minute presentation. The first 3MT<sup>®</sup> competition at the University of Queensland attracted 160 students. Enthusiasm for the 3MT<sup>®</sup> concept first grew in universities in, and near, Australia. By 2011 the first 3MT<sup>®</sup> competitions were held in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom.

The University of Manitoba has been participating since 2014 as part of an overall strategy to promote our graduate students and research at the university, and to connect with the wider community.

The 2017 competition began in early February when 30 graduate students participated in one of three elimination rounds. Twelve graduate students were chosen to advance to the final competition held on March 8, in St. John's College.

3MT<sup>®</sup> competitions challenge students to consolidate their ideas and research discoveries so that they can be presented concisely to a knowledgeable



*President Barnard with Karlee Dyck -- 2016 3MT<sup>®</sup> winner*

but non-specialist audience – which is exactly the kind of audience that attends the President's Reception.

If you are interested in a preview of 3MT<sup>®</sup> presentations from past years, you can go to the Faculty of Graduate Studies website and find the link to the 3MT<sup>®</sup> page, or click on the "Event" button to find a page of YouTube videos.

If you are planning on attending this April's reception, you are asked to RSVP to Lynn Bohonos, Learning and Organizational Development, by Monday, March 27, 2017. You may telephone 204-474-9124 or send her an email at: [lynn.bohonos@umanitoba.ca](mailto:lynn.bohonos@umanitoba.ca).

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## From the Editor

This past October I was sent copies of the Fall Newsletter of the Simon Fraser University Retirees Association and Queens University Retirees Association. What a shock!

SFU's Newsletter is twenty pages long, in full color, with an editor, an associate editor in charge of layout and design, a photography editor, and regular columnists. It had a column called "Memorable Moment" in which a retired professor recounted the time he took the university to court over a tenure decision. Another column criticized university economists for their dismal record analyzing free trade. Two others recommended activities and scenic places worthy of visits by SFU retirees (a hike, operas) undertaken by them.

Perhaps the mere mention of these kinds of columns in other retirees' newsletters will prompt some UMRA members to submit their own opinions, articles and reviews. As usual, any contributions will be welcomed. Anybody read any good books lately?

In the meantime, I've instituted a new column called "Where Have You Been?" in the place of the usual "Retired, Not Entirely." In fact, there are two contributions. They come just in time for retirees beginning to plan a fall holiday.

Bruce Johnston likes the south of Spain in the fall; he's been there more than once. It sounds like a great place. My own contribution about Peru (with more bird tales) might have been included in my book *Happiness Is a Rare Bird: Living the Birding Life* (newly available from Turnstone Press in bookstores and on line) if I'd waited six more months. My search for interesting cultures and rare birds has taken me to some of the usual attractions and some places far off the beaten track.

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



*Gene Walz*

## President's Message

One of the encouraging highlights of 2016 was that the University of Manitoba Retirees Endowment Fund (UMREF) doubled in size.

At present UMREF totals \$12,085, an increase of \$6,440 from a year ago.

One of the donors this past year was UMRA. The executive decided at one of its meetings to transfer \$1,000 from its current account to UMREF.

Still to be added to UMREF are the matching funds from the Manitoba Bursary and Scholarship Initiative.

This fund is now large enough that it can generate enough income to support an annual bursary.

The UMRA endowment fund committee is considering establishing a scholarship fund, likely for graduate students, to complement the bursary. This is a project for the coming year.

In fact, the endowment fund committee is looking for new members to expand its number and to continue developing this aspect of UMRA's program. If you are interested, send me an email (see my email address below).

Finally, I encourage retirees to consider making a financial contribution to UMREF, especially retirees who have no particular affiliation with an academic unit. It is one way for U of M retirees to support university students in a tangible way.

## UMRA is an opportunity...

I would like to close this column with a plea that you consider making room for UMRA in your busy retirement schedules. It is obvious to say that an organization's relevance is directly proportional to the involvement of its members. That's easy to agree with. It's the follow-through that makes the difference. If you are interested in getting involved, we will find a place for you that fits your timetable and interest.

Contact me at: [Edward.Unrau@umr.umanitoba.ca](mailto:Edward.Unrau@umr.umanitoba.ca)

Ed Unrau, UMRA President



*Ed Unrau, UMRA President*

# Where Have You Been?

## Peru by Gene Walz

As a birder, I usually carry a pair of binoculars whenever I go someplace where I might encounter a new or unusual bird. Last fall the binocs dangled around my neck everywhere in Peru, one of the birdiest places in the world. I was able to identify almost 400 different species of birds there. Many of them would have been indistinguishable from one another without the aid of my binocs.

Without a long, exhausting trek, I could not have gotten anywhere near to a sheer cliff where four different kinds of parrots perched to satisfy their weird hunger for clay. Binoculars brought them close. What strange, gorgeous, noisy birds!

In Colca Canyon my binocs made a fly-over by an Andean Condor, one of the most spectacular raptors in the world, seem like I could reach out and touch it.

On the Pacific islands off Paracas I watched bemusedly as Humboldt Penguins tumbled off the rocky shores and cavorted in the sea. People on a boat near me without binoculars could hardly tell that the birds were penguins.

Even on “days off” from birding I was able to find birds – Black Vultures on the spires of cathedrals while doing the simple tourist things in downtown Lima, for instance.

My binocs came in handy elsewhere too. The Catholic churches are so massive and ornate that binoculars are necessary to see the hidden gems far above the altars. In Cusco, for instance, high up on a wall in one of the cathedrals on the main square is a Peruvian rendering of Christ’s last supper. With my binoculars I could see that Judas was a dead-ringer for Pizarro, the murderous conqueror of the Incas. And the pascal lamb was really a guinea pig, one of the delicacies of Peruvian cuisine. (I tried it – not

much meat, a bit greasy, expensive, and not as tasty as I’d hoped.)

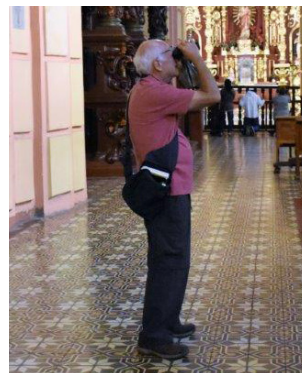
Many of the Inca and pre-Inca ruins in Peru are at the tops of mountains. Binoculars allowed me to see the ones I didn’t dare climb to and to survey the vistas from those I reached -- laboriously. Machu Pichu’s eerie magnificence is best seen with binocs. I avoided the long Inca trail up to a nearby observation point by following the ant-people as they wearily trudged up 400 feet of high-rise Inca stairs. (The Incas were short people, but the risers on their stairs are, oddly, at least two to three times as high as ours. Did they climb by sitting on the next step and then standing? Sitting and standing?) My binocs and my imagination saved me the effort.

Peru’s tourist attractions are even more wondrous than the stunning pictures that fill the guidebooks. Machu Pichu will take your breath away, and there are so many other Inca and pre-Inca ruins scattered about, many unmarked, that you could spend a frenetic year just learning about the culture through its stony remnants.

November is supposed to be the beginning of the rainy season there, but we encountered only one brief afternoon shower in Cusco. What we didn’t realize is that Peru west of the Andes is almost all desert-like. Lima, for instance, gets barely 6.4 mms (0.3 inches) of rain per year.

The term “rainy season” may scare some sightseers away, but not many. Machu Pichu from May until October is reputed to be aswarm with tourists, too many in fact to make the visit comfortable. In November, the crowds are slightly smaller. We stayed in the nearby village of Urubamba to get acclimated to the high altitude (it’s actually higher than Machu Pichu) and took an early, early train. If I were to

do it again, I’d stay in the town of Agua Caliente at the foot of Machu Pichu and take the pre-dawn bus. Fewer people, and, from what I’m told, spectacular sunrises.



The place to stay in Lima is the upscale southern suburb of Mira Flores, a neighborhood with easy access to the tourist areas of Lima and the bonus of a pre-Inca ruin called Huaca Pucllana. Made entirely of clay bricks, this site would melt into a massive pudding if Lima got any rain at all.

Lima’s main attractions are predominantly architectural. The post-colonial buildings, especially the massive and numerous Catholic churches, can be overwhelming with their gilded altars and European-centred, saintly statuary. I needed binoculars to take in the details of the soaring interiors. Cameras are frowned upon.

Cusco, in the Sacred Valley and the former center of the Incan civilization, is worth a week’s visit, especially if you prefer a relaxing tempo. Colca Canyon, Nazca, Arequipa, and Paracas are certainly worth an overnight stay, but the long bus trips between these places are empty and exhausting.

With the help of websites such as Trip Adviser, you can find very comfortable and not-very-expensive lodges, hotels, and B & Bs almost everywhere. And the food! If you can return within ten pounds of your departing weight, you missed far too much of their unique and fabulous cuisine.

# Where Have You Been?

## Spain – The Mediterranean Coast by Bruce Johnston

Why would a UM retiree go to Spain in the autumn?

We like Manitoba summers, and we like to be here during the Christmas and New Year's seasons. And we are accustomed to and tolerant of Manitoba winters. We even like the winter social life here. So, we now travel in November and March.

What is your reason for travelling?

We go to see how others live, to experience a different ethos than here. We go to see new terrain, culture events, and to live a different rhythm. And, need I mention, we enjoy the wine and dining.

From late October until early December last year, we stayed in Benalmadena, one of the Costa del Sol's prime new holiday locations -- near Malaga, Spain. Every day of the week there is some market to explore, and the harbour shops in Benalmadena are worth a half day's visit. We always made sure we stayed for an excellent repast.

Malaga is the birthplace of Picasso, and there is a museum of art donated by his daughter to the city on the condition that they house it properly. It's well worth a visit. An interesting city is Marbella with its

picturesque harbour and Salvador Dali exhibit.

Friends that stayed with us went on easy one-day side trips to the Alhambra, Gibraltar, Ronda, Seville, and Tangier. We had enjoyed excursions to the former three in the past, and so we only accompanied them to Seville.

The Alhambra is the last major Moorish outpost in Spain; begun in the 14th century, it protected the Muslim settlers of Andalusia from the Catholic Crusaders. It's a beautiful place showing the sophistication of the Muslim culture of the time. Gibraltar was given to the British for aiding in eliminating the French from the Iberian Peninsula. The importance of it during WWII and its role today is clear. On our tour we learned about the contention between Spain and the U.K. on the rock.

Ronda features a medieval bridge that destroyed the builder (an interesting story). The birthplace of modern bullfighting, it has the charm of an old Andalusian village. Seville is a gracious town with a gorgeous Cathedral which depicts Spain's golden age of exploration and exploitation.

Not all of Spain is thriving. One

day this past visit I left the main streets connecting Benalmadena and went up a side street about six blocks. In the 2nd block I stopped to look at a four story apartment or condominium unit, grand but gaudy. There were mattresses tossed out windows and two chaise chairs gracing an unkempt, weedy lawn area. Across the street, up slightly, was a similar apartment in a similar condition. Farther along there was another unit under construction, but abandoned, with three floors of cement pads. The pillars on the 3rd floor had the rusty rebar pointing forlornly toward the skies. A true sign of the times in Spain with 10% unemployment; 50% unemployment for young men. Spain is struggling; tourism is only partially helping it re-gain its feet.

Part of the reason to go to Spain is the climate. It is generally much milder than Manitoba. We have suntanned by the pool on the best of days. The hardy visitors, usually Norwegians, take a dip in the Mediterranean. It is usually pleasant walking-weather with cool nights. Sometimes it has been known to rain. Language is no great problem.

Spain in the fall makes for a great break.

## Emails to the Editor

What I wanted to mention was my own continued commitment after five years of retirement to the combined "research and service" task I took up in 1992 when I resurrected the journal *Philosophia Mathematica* (on the philosophy of mathematics) as its publisher and editor. I still edit this journal for

Oxford University Press, which took it over after twelve years.

As I am a mathematician and not a philosopher, there has been so much to learn about this job that I am certainly still learning how to do it. That this is a combination of research and service in a scholarly task could obscure the general point I wish to draw to your attention, which is that one's teaching function (which seems to be what they really pay us for) is what one can most

easily give up, but that one's research and service functions can well be continued as long and as much as one wishes and is able.

In my own case, I gave up teaching (and being paid) in order to pursue the other functions and still have a life; it's worked very well. What I know you to be doing is much the same. Thank you; please carry on!

Robert Thomas, Mathematics

## Two New Insurance Products

The College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) has signed affinity agreements that provide retirees who are members of their local university or college retiree organization with access to two insurance products – one for travel and the other for supplementary health and travel. UMRA is a member of CURAC, and so any member of UMRA is eligible to purchase either of the two products.

The first agreement is with Johnson Inc. for MEDOC travel insurance. This insurance product offers coverage for pre-existing medical conditions that are stable 90 days prior to travel. While coverage is available regardless of health status, your premium is related to health status and risk – that is, those with no health issues pay the lowest premium. The basic plan is for an annual unlimited number of trips of up to 17 days; insurance may be topped up for longer trips. Coverage

includes emergency medical, trip cancellation/interruption/delay/baggage loss.

You can read the details of the MEDOC program, and purchase coverage, at their website: [Johnson.ca/medoc](http://Johnson.ca/medoc).

The second affinity agreement CURAC signed allows retirees to subscribe to supplementary health coverage provided by the Retired Teachers of Ontario, an organization which has broadened its reach to include retiree organizations in other provinces. The RTO plan is also administered by Johnson Inc.

The RTO plan combines an array of supplementary health with emergency medical and trip cancellation coverage. Retirees who are members of a retiree association within the CURAC umbrella and who are currently in a group health benefits plan will be accepted as members of the RTO Plan with no medical questionnaire. There is one small

caveat: RTO is permitted to offer its plan only to members of RTO and to enroll in the RTO plan you must become a member at an annual cost of \$56 by applying directly to RTO.

The RTO plan should be of most interest to U of M retirees who retired before 2004 and whose participation in the university supplementary health plan ends at age 75; as well as to surviving spouses whose coverage lapses on the death of their partner. Those interested should, as a first step, review the RTO extended health care plan and rates available at <https://www.rto-ero.org/group-insurance-plans/rtoeros-group-insurance-plans/extended-health-care-plan>.

Although you may read the information on both plans at their respective websites, Johnson Inc. is planning a national roll-out to promote these two products in the coming weeks.

## 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 executives 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](mailto:retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca)

## New Retirement Planning Subcommittee

UMRA's Executive Committee recently created a subcommittee to examine retirement planning services at the U of M and to recommend ways in which those services could be improved. The members of the subcommittee were Janet Sealey and Jay Goldstein. In the Fall of 2016 the subcommittee solicited feedback from retirees and from members of the two largest campus unions (AESES and UMFA) about the retirement planning services provided by the University. In addition, the subcommittee identified planning services not currently available here but which are provided at other western Canadian universities and by employers such as MTS, the City of Winnipeg, and Manitoba Hydro.

The information gathered by the subcommittee led it to make several recommendations for improving retirement planning services at the U of M, including that the University resume offering seminars on retirement-related topics, that a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on retirement be available on the Human Resources web page, and that staff members should be entitled to receive a comprehensive estimate of their post-retirement financial situation (including income from all sources) from the Pension Office.

The subcommittee's report has been transmitted to the University. The Executive Committee will be monitoring the response to the subcommittee's recommendations. If you wish to read the report please go to UMRA's home page ([www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/retirees](http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/retirees)) and click on "Retirement Planning Subcommittee Report" in the box "Reports and Minutes."

## 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.

### In Memoriam

You may not be aware of the In Memoriam section of UMRA's website. It provides information about deceased retirees (including links to obituaries).



#### University of Manitoba - Outreach - Retirees - Corner - In Memoriam

In Memoriam has been created to keep UMRA members and other interested individuals informed of the passing of retired employees of the University of Manitoba.

## 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](mailto: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**