



USRA EXECUTIVE 2003-2004

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PRESIDENT'S CHATTER BOX

Because of inclement weather conditions, transportation problems, and prior commitments of members, we had to postpone our evening with Dr. David Kaplan and his presentation of "Musical Instruments of the World." In all likelihood, the session will take place in May, when USRA can anticipate an excellent turnout. If you were inconvenienced in any way, I extend to you, on behalf of the USRA Executive, our sincere apologies.

GOOD NEWS!!!

We are continuing to organize our Social and Educational events and have planned just the right evening for your entertainment. Do you ever wonder whether "Laughter" is really the best medicine? Well...come and find out! At our next wine and cheese party we present:

"The LAUGHTER Remedy" with Eleanor Charman and Mickey MacLellan

April 7, 2004, 7:30 p.m.

President's Chatterbox continued on page two

Point of View

Mandatory Retirement

John Owen & Keith Johnstone*

Raising this issue with the Retirees Association seems timely. Whereas in the eighties it was thought inappropriate to retain the services of elderly professors - they would have limited hiring of young faculty and slowed progression through the ranks - the picture has changed. The University of Saskatchewan now faces recruitment problems.

It should be noted that neighbouring Provinces and also Quebec have abolished mandatory retirement with, as documented in the December 2003 issue of University Affairs, little adverse effect on university governance.

Older, experienced faculty can act as a valuable resource by teaching a class or two, mentoring students (and junior faculty), serving on thesis committees and ensuring that departmental policies do not reinvent the wheel! Opting for less than full-time employment would satisfy the needs of both the University and the faculty member. Gradual easing into retirement is good for one's mental health.

Would abolishing mandatory retirement lead to an unacceptable number of elderly professors being retained on the payroll? Unlikely: figures supplied by the Benefits and Pension Office show that since 1995, almost three-quarters of faculty retiring have chosen early retirement. Assuming this trend continues, there should be no cause for concern about maintaining an aging faculty.

The University of Saskatchewan should join many Canadian universities in abolishing the discriminatory practice of mandatory retirement. Paul Martin, it will be recalled, on becoming Prime Minister at the age of 65, declared his support for a longer working career.

It behooves the Retirees Association to initiate discussions with interested parties to bring the University of Saskatchewan's policy on retirement in line with that of other jurisdictions.

* Professors Owen and Johnstone, who were due to retire in 1990, were allowed to work for another year pending a Supreme Court decision that universities could enforce mandatory retirement.

Your response to this "point of view" or a new issue "point of view" is most welcome.

Phone Committee Contacted Members about Wine and Cheese Party

Over 200 members were phoned to advertise the January wine and cheese party. Many members encouraged USRA phone callers to remind them of future activities. So, expect to hear from someone in March and April. Indeed, if you can, volunteer to be a phoner, you are very much needed.

Do you ever forget to pay your dues? An excellent solution is to take out a life membership.

*President's chatterbox continued from
page one*

Faculty Club, U of S
Tickets per person...\$10.00

Now a lecture of sorts, then more about future plans. Because the Faculty Club requires specific numbers in order to make the necessary preparations for the evening, we would deeply appreciate your help in purchasing your tickets on or before Monday, April 5th, 2004 for the evening of "The LAUGHTER Remedy."

You can reserve tickets by phoning the USRA Office at 966-6618. They will be available at the door on April 7th.

If you purchase a ticket but find that you cannot attend the event, please inform the USRA office. It is essential that we know a ticket holder's decision not to attend "The Laughter Remedy" on or before April 5, 2004.

The Faculty Club, like almost all restaurants, prepares for the numbers given them at a specified date. If attendance falls below the number reported, the USRA becomes liable for the ticket price of "no-shows". On the otherhand, it is possible to accommodate several additional guests who, also, might make up for any shortfall.

MORE GOOD NEWS!!

Dr. David Kaplan has agreed to reschedule his feature presentation on "The Musical Instruments of the World" in May. His collection of musical instruments was on display at the Diefenbaker Museum in 2003, but this evening will offer more than just a display. There will be a talk and demonstration when you will hear and watch the instruments being played and there will be time for audience members to play one or more old instruments during the evening and even to learn how to do it from the maestro himself. So, COME! JOIN US! We will provide additional details at a later date.

The following events are also in the planning stages:

Tour of Kinesiology Building: Spring 2004

Tour of Synchrotron: Fall 2004

Spring BBQ: June 2004

Annual Dinner: September 2004

Detailed information will be presented in subsequent issues of the USRA News.

We are also working on the Prime of Life Achievement Awards and the Pictorial History Display. If you have any nominations and/or photographs which we may use, please contact Peter Cribb, Faye Kernan, or any member of the Executive.

If you take out a life membership, you will never have to send another cheque to the association. Isn't that a good idea?

**WE'RE ONLY HUMAN
CORRECTION / EXPLANATION - USRA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

In January, members were informed that the Association's Constitution states that retirees (1) are considered Ordinary Members and, as such, can attend the AGM, but do not have voting privileges, (2) in the event of the death of the retiree, the surviving spouse/partner becomes an Ordinary Member with all its privileges including the right to vote.

Rather, in the event of the death of a retiree, the surviving spouse/partner does, indeed, continue as an Associate Member "entitled to all the privileges of membership, except the right to vote at general and special meetings and where certain roles and functions are restricted to ordinary members." Article 4.4 of the USRA Constitution clarifies the matter.

ON LAUGHTER

Human beings love to laugh, and the average adult laughs 17 times a day. Humans love to laugh so much that there are actually industries built around laughter. Jokes, sitcoms and the routines of stand-up comedians are all designed to get us laughing, because laughing feels good. For us it seems so natural, but the funny thing is that humans are one of the few species that laughs. Laughter is actually a complex response that involves many of the same skills used in solving problems. Laughter is a great thing -- that's why we've all heard the saying, "Laughter is the best medicine." There is strong evidence that laughter can actually improve health and help fight disease.



from *Time Magazine*

**Suspect 'taint
Aladdin**

The USRA Executive thinks so, and, each year, you will too at the time dues are required. Pay for a life membership with a single cheque to enjoy all honours and privileges appertaining.

Looking for Bargain Travel Accommodations Around the World, Even in Saskatchewan?

Are you travelling folks?

Well, have you heard about Educators B&B with whom you can arrange to stay in New York City, San Francisco and hundreds of others places of interest around the world for only \$34 (US) per night, with breakfasts, for a family of up to four with children (18 and younger) in the same room.

It costs \$36 a year for a family membership and a one-time \$10 non-refundable initiation fee. Membership is open to all current, former and retired educators who are certain to have many common experiences to share.

Educators B&B has over 6000 members and one of them might want to visit Saskatoon, so you could be a host. Thirty-eight members reside in the province and 19 of them live in the Saskatoon 'metropolitan' area. There are, for example, 67 members in England, five in Mexico, five in Honolulu and over 100 in the Toronto area; also one each in Denmark and Costa Rica.

What do four members tell about the organization?

* Well, let's start with ourselves. We stayed in a posh area of Wellesley, MA, before boarding a cruise to Bermuda from Boston to visit a daughter who lives there. Our hosts took us out for dinner twice and told us to turn in our rental car early as they would drop us off at the dock.

After disembarking in Boston, we entrained to New York City where we were hosted in an apartment near the George Washington Bridge for four nights. The most reasonably priced NY hotel we found on the internet was \$99 a day. We still correspond with our NY hosts who have since moved to Oregon.

* A California guidance counsellor related this story:

Doesn't matter when the ferry gets to Nanaimo from Vancouver. Just call us; we'll come get you!"

This phone message was typical of the friendliness and generosity I experienced on a trip to Vancouver Island, British Columbia, through Educators B&B Travel Network. I was able then to spend six nights in Canada for the price of \$186.00, the cost of one night in a good hotel during summer season. I had an in-depth introduction to two areas of Vancouver Island and one of the least expensive, most rewarding trips I've taken. There is nothing like a local's eye view of a place, and nice educators to come home to in the evening."

* Jim and Lois have traveled extensively with EBBN to New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Alaska, London, Frankfurt, Zurich and many of the States. They have booked approximately 70 trips with over 200 hosts and stayed over 600 nights with EBBN!

* "One of the least expensive, most rewarding trips I've taken!"

Interested. Learn more.

Use the internet - educatorstravel.com

Phone - 800-956-4822.

Mail: EBBN, Box 5279, Eugene, OR 97405.

Mark April 7th at 7:30 PM Now on Your Calendar to Remember to Come to an Evening of Fun: Jest for the Health of It

Several decades ago, Norman Cousins, then editor of the prestigious American magazine, *Saturday Review*, learned he had a terminal illness. He was given six months to live with a recovery chance of one in 500. He wondered, "If illness can be caused by negativity, can wellness be created by positivity?" He knew that since ancient Greece, people have proclaimed the value of laughter and decided to make an experiment of himself.

Laughter was one of the most positive activities he knew. He rented all the funny movies he could find - Keaton, Chaplin, Fields, the Marx Brothers. (Before VCRs). He read funny stories. He asked his friends to call him whenever they said, heard or did something funny.

So great was his pain that he could not sleep. Laughing for 10 solid minutes relieved the pain for several hours enabling him to sleep. Call it his medical and personal regimen or a miracle, but he fully recovered from his illness and lived another 20 happy, healthy and productive years which allowed him to chronicle his recovery in a best-selling book, *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979).

USRA has presented, over the years, several workshops



focusing on specific illnesses to help members learn about the latest medical answers to them, Did any of the seminars deal with the role laughter may play in continuous health or relief of illness? Are the students in medical schools introduced to

the subject? The internet, however, reveals that there are numerous professional associations holding annual conferences and doing much research in the area,

The USRA is fortunate in identifying two teachers who have been talking about the subject for years in and around Saskatoon. Mickey Maclellan who has presented a sessional topic, "Lighten Up." is a retired teacher. She was recommended to the USRA by a member's wife. Rumour has it, Mickey is eighty-plus years young. She taught in rural Saskatchewan, as well as at City Park

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LAUGHTER

Sir Max Beerbohm wrote, "Strange, when you come to think of it, that of all the countless folk who have lived before our time on this planet not one is known in history or in legend as having died of laughter."

So, laugh away with the following jokes, or send us funnier ones:

A man from Corner Brook, New Foundland driving a Volkswagan Beetle in Toronto, pulls up next to a guy in a Rolls Royce at a stop light. Their windows are wide open and he yells at the guy in the Rolls, "Hey, you got a telephone in that Rolls?"

The guy in the Rolls who leans into the passenger seat says, "Yes, of course I do."

"I got one too... see?" the Newfie says.

"Uh, huh, yes, that's very nice," responds the Rolls owner.

"You got a fax machine?" asks the Newf

"Why, actually, yes, I do." the big car owner answers.

"I do too! See? It's right here!" brags the guy from the Rock.

The light is just about to turn green and the guy in the Volkswagon says, "So, do you have a double bed in back there?"

The guy in the Rolls replies, "NO! Do you?"

"Yep, got my double bed right in back here," the Newf replies.

The traffic begins to move, and the man in the Volkswagon takes off.

Well, the guy in the Rolls is not about to be one-upped, so he immediately goes to a customizing shop and orders them to put a double bed in back of his car. About two weeks later, the job is finally done. He picks up his car and drives all over town looking for the Volkswagon with its Newfoundland/Labrador plates. Finally, he spots it parked alongside the road, so he pulls his Rolls up next to it.

The windows on the Volkswagon are all fogged up and he feels somewhat awkward about it, but he gets out of his newly modified Rolls and taps on the foggy window of the Volkswagen. The man in the Volkswagon finally opens the window a crack and peeks out. The guy with the Rolls says, "Hey, remember me?"

"Yeah, yeah, I remember you," replies the Newfoundlander, "What's up?"

"Check this out...I got a double bed installed in my Rolls."

The Newf exclaims, "B'JEEZ BYE, YOU GOT ME OUT OF THE SHOWER TO TELL ME THAT?!"

Share the Gift of Laughter

Send us a joke or two and, who knows, you may see it in the USRA News. Will everyone think your joke is funny? Would you care? You thought it was funny.

Have you ever considered that joke collecting could be a wonderful entertaining hobby?

Coming in May, so, be ready to mark your calendar for a grand time with maestro David Kaplan



Lute Maker German woodcut, 1598

HE WILL BE BRINGING TO THE FACULTY CLUB SOME OF THE UNIQUE INSTRUMENTS IN HIS COLLECTION TO TALK ABOUT THEM, TO PLAY THEM AND TO LET YOU TRY THEM. WHAT MORE ENTERTAINING WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING AT A USRA WINE AND CHEESE PARTY?

Mark April 7th continued from page three

and Evan Hardy Collegiates in Saskatoon.

Eleanor Charman was recommended to USRA by a U of S Dean. She has worked at Kelsey Institute with Basic Education students for two decades.

Over the years, she enrolled in two humour courses at Saratoga Springs, N Y. She titles one of her workshops, "Jest for the Health of It." The participation workshop demonstrates and discusses how humor decreases stress, anxiety, tension and pain as Cousins thought it would.

She and Mickey Maclellan will have the group share in activities that help us have fun, discover humor wherever we are, make us dare to be playful and be able to laugh at ourselves.

Seems like a tall order, but it should be an evening well spent. So, reserve your ticket early for April 7th, and have a rousing good time.