**Message From
President Murray
Scharf :**

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I wish all USRA members and their families a very happy and healthy New Year. For all of us on the money-purchase pension, may the stock market recover and, again, may we experience a return on our investments. For those of you on the defined-benefit pension, stop laying claim to the "Crown of Self-Righteousness" – to misquote II Timothy 4:8.

We must thank President MacKinnon for the Christmas Reception for Retirees held on December 15th. In spite of the cold weather, it was well attended and provided an excellent opportunity for members to meet with the President and with each other. For many, the come-and-go nature of the event became a come-and-stay social occasion. The President's Reception was a great success.

On the educational agenda, two sessions have been held. On December 4th, Ron Marken made an excellent presentation on "Pigs in Literature." Although he is of Scandinavian ancestry, Ron did justice to this Irish topic. As a former university administrator, I could personally identify with the poem on the problems and strategies in putting a pig into a half-ton truck; however, the instructions were belated. On January 22nd, Vera Pezer described her first year as Chancellor of the University and her trip to Russia. No, the title was not "The Chancellor was sent to Siberia." It was a reflective statement on dedicating her initial efforts to providing outreach within the Province of Saskatchewan, and to attempting to promote 'Chancellor's Tours' as an alumni activity. Future tours look very attractive. We thank both Ron and Vera for providing us with excellent educational sessions.

As noted in the November Newsletter, actions have been taken by Kurt Tischler and Bob Sanche on the "International Student Initiative" of the USRA. One option the Executive had considered under this initiative was to develop a needy student fund for international students. Kurt has learned, with the international students now being able to access the general university Dyer Fund,

our best approach may be to bolster the funding of the existing International Student Emergency Loan and Bursary Fund for undergraduate and graduate students. Kurt and Robert have been exploring possible venues whereby faculty and retirees could contribute to the fund through the United Way charitable donation system and through the University development funds. The check-off option does not appear to be available to us. It should be noted that the role of the USRA would be to serve as an advocate and not as the funding agency. Through our meetings with Doug Clark and Gail Shivak of the University Advancement Office, progress is being made and the plan should be in place by the end of the 2008-2009 academic year. While the scholarship-bursary fundraising supper and airport reception activities are being explored, there is waning enthusiasm for these initiatives.

Given Christmas holidays and the start of the new term, limited progress has been made on the other initiatives outlined in the November Newsletter.

At the request of David Gibson of the Saskatoon Health Region, Jim Blackburn and I, from the USRA, and Mrs. June Gawdun, from the Saskatoon Council on Aging, met to discuss the possibility of USRA members assisting in joint literature research and

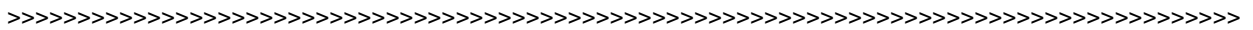
the development of position papers related to issues faced by older adults. In part, the goal would be to promote informed advocacy. Among the immediate issues to be addressed were affordable housing, administration and availability of personal care homes, abuse of seniors, and some health-related issues. Before we become involved in such activities, the Executive must address the policy issue of USRA serving the role of

advocate in the greater community. However, if members of the USRA would like to provide some volunteer services on their own initiative, Dave Gibson would be pleased to hear from you. Being old, I believe the cause is most honourable.

While there is much activity, it is my hope that we can inform the membership of some more results in the next newsletter.

Again, if you have suggestions or comments, please contact us.

Murray Scharf
President



USRA PROGRAMS 2009

(Please mark your calendars for these events)!

Thursday, February 26
Professor Emeritus John Courtney

Lunch – 12:00 noon;
 Presentation – 12:50 PM
 (Mano’s Restaurant 200-1820 8th St. E.)

Topic: Elections and politics in Bolivia - a break with the past

March 16 & 23

1:00 – 4:30 PM both days

The 55 Alive Driver Refresher Course for Seniors

The two day course is designed to help you:

- Gain more confidence behind the wheel

- Improve your awareness of traffic hazards
- Update yourself on traffic laws & new technology
- Anticipate the actions of other drivers
- Identify and correct bad driving habits
- Voice your concerns in a friendly relaxed environment

We require a minimum of 20 registrants for these sessions.

If you wish to attend please contact Jim Blackburn (374-9751 or jblackburn@sasktel.net)

The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers!

Saturday, May 9th
Computer Workshops
AM – Beginners Session
PM – Advanced Session

May 20 Birding Excursion

The excursion will begin early in the morning under the direction of Frank Roy. Details regarding actual time and meeting place will be included in the May Newsletter.

June 8 – USRA Annual Barbecue, Faculty Club

Sept. 21 – AGM and Banquet

Financial Impact of the Economy on the U of S

President Peter MacKinnon recently released a message to the university community regarding the financial impact that the recent economic situation may have on the University of Saskatchewan, and the university's plans to address the impact. As an important part of the university community, U of S alumni are invited to review the President's message, located online at www.usask.ca/president. While minimal impact on the university's financial operation is expected for the short term, further details are available in the [2009-10 Operations Forecast](#) and its covering memo. Comments, suggestions and questions are welcome and can be directed through Ginger Appel in the university's Institutional Planning and Assessment Office (Tel: (306) 966-1825, Email: ginger.appel@usask.ca).

IN MEMORY

Michael R. Wilson

Deceased – Nov. 22, 2008
Geography Department
1970 – 1999

Peter Knelsen

Deceased – Jan 14, 2009
Biochemistry
1976 - 1993

USRA EXECUTIVE – 2008 - 2009

President: Murray Scharf

Past President: Bob Woods

Vice President: Jim Blackburn

Secretary: Yvonne Cuttle

Treasurer: Ken Smith

Members at Large:

Les Coleman

Eileen Harvey

Faye Kernan

Dale Miquelon

Bob Sanche

Nancy Senior

George Sofko

Duff Spafford

Kurt Tischler

Programs at U of S of Interest to Retirees:

In Performance Convo Series Sunday, March 1, 7:30 pm

Piano solo and chamber music with Zsuzsanna Takacs, Alexandra Diederichsen and Kathleen Solose
Location: Quance Theatre, University of Saskatchewan

March 20-22 Canadian Debate Nationals: Saskatoon 2009

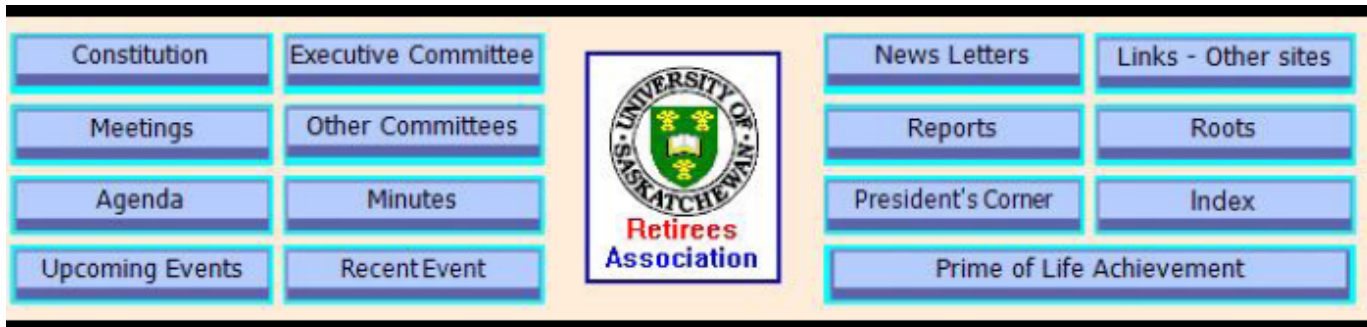
The University of Saskatchewan Debate Society is hosting Canadian Debate Nationals 2009. This event will involve a selection of the brightest and most articulate students from across the nation coming together to exchange ideas, prove their skills, and find this year's Canadian Champions. For more information : Elyn Achtymichuk, Arts and Sciences, (306)292-6098

Saturday, March 21 Greystone Singers 50th Anniversary Quance Theatre

Saturday, March 28 Jazz Band Semester End Final Concert

Tentative Location is the New Saskatoon Jazz Society Club "The Bassment"

USRA WEB SITE: www.usra.usask.ca



USRA Contact Information : Telephone – 306-966-6618 E-mail – ss.usra@usask.ca
Ground Mail – USRA, RJD Williams, 221 Cumberland Ave.
Saskatoon, SK S7N 1M3

E-Mail Addresses Requested – In addition to the distribution of the USRA Newsletter to some members via e-mail, we also distribute reminders just prior to our upcoming USRA Programs to those living in or near Saskatoon. We request that you send us your e-mail address in order to keep up to date with our activities. Please send us an e-mail to – ss.usra@usask.ca requesting to be added to our e-mail distribution list and, if you wish, for the Newsletter. For those who are concerned about keeping their address confidential, we take care to send these emails as “blind carbon copies”.

Non-credit courses for adults aged 55 or more are offered at the University of Saskatchewan by Saskatoon Seniors Continued Learning.

The new courses for Spring 2009 are:

1. How the English Language Conquered the World
2. Passages to China: Chinese Philosophy and Culture
3. Introduction to Sociology: My World, Your World...We're In It Together!
4. Alternative or Complementary Medicine
5. Soviet Politics At Home And Abroad, 1917-1945
6. Out on a Limb? Need to Find Your Roots? (Genealogy)
7. A Terrible Beauty: Irish Literature in the Twentieth Century
8. The Sky, The Stars, and Galaxies: An Introductory Look at Astronomy

Classes meet for two hours once a week, beginning the week of March 16 and ending the week of May 4. Each course costs \$45, plus a \$5 membership fee once a year. Since the class limit is 50, it's best to register as soon as possible.

For more information and registration, see

<http://ccde.usask.ca/ExtensionDivision/noncredit/Adults/>

or contact Bobbi Mumm at the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education, Tel: (306) 966-5642.