

SASKATCHEWAN RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWS

April 2009 Number 78

www.usra.usask.ca

Message From **President Murray** Scharf:



Activities Update

With the advent of "spring", the educational/recreational social programme of the University of Saskatchewan Retiree's Association shifts from indoor educational activities to workshops, outdoor activities and the annual BBQ. As noted in this newsletter, the computer workshops will be conducted by Drs. Richard Schwier and Jay Wilson in the Education Building on Saturday, May 9th: the Birding Tour by Mr. Frank Roy in Saskatoon and environs on Wednesday, May 20th; and, the annual BBQ at the Faculty Club on Monday, June 8th. If you wish to be involved in these events, please enroll early so we can make appropriate arrangements.

The first element in our preparation for the 2009-2010 operating year is the nomination of members to serve on the new Executive Committee. If you wish to volunteer your services or to

nominate a highly competent and committed fellow retiree, then please contact the chair of the Nominations Committee. Past President Bob Woods, at 374-8867 or rjwoods3@sasktel.net, before Monday, May 11th. For the health of the organization, we need to ensure that we have a renewal of the membership on the Executive. If we don't, nature will take care of our succession planning.

As part of our efforts to promote the purposes of the University of Saskatchewan. at the April 20th meeting of the Executive a motion was passed to endorse the International Student Emergency Loan Fund and to promote contributions to the Fund. Our hope is to provide financial assistance to undergraduate and graduate students finding themselves in dire need of financial support. We have been in discussions with the Derek Tannis (International Student Office) and Frank Kusch (Student Financial Services) to find the appropriate mechanism for our members to contribute to a plan designed for this purpose. Fortunately, the little-known and underfunded International Student Emergency Loan Fund was in place and with a little tweaking of the wording would serve the purposes we desired. The Fund provides for both emergency loans and bursaries. The hope is to "significantly enhance

flexibility in the allocation of emergency funding. ... (and) allow for the granting of more significant loans and for more of them to be converted to bursaries, enabling international students to overcome difficult periods in their lives and continue to excel in their chosen programs." We ask members to give consideration to contributing to this fund.

A Personal Perspective:

Although I recognize the USRA has not adopted an advocacy role addressing the administration and operation of the University and its various agencies, I do wish to take the liberty to express a personal concern arising from the anticipated consequences of the current financial crises, decline in undergraduate enrollments, and extension of distance and outreach academic programmes. My concern arises from the possibility that the primary accommodations will be in the teaching function of the University. My desire is to promote awareness of the consequences of the adoption of some actions to address these changing circumstances.

The question is how will and should the University adjust to these factors? My concerns are related to the following scenarios.

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First, between the two primary functions of research and teaching, research generates the largest income per operating dollar committed to the function. With greater savings to be made in teaching and with the declining enrollments, it would appear the required adjustments could be made in the teaching function. Since the major proportion of operating monies has been dedicated to salaries, the result would be an absolute reduction in the number of employees in the professorial ranks and maintenance or increase in the numbers in the sessional lecture ranks. This initial move would be a reduction in expenditures and not an organizational increase in internal and external efficiency, or in the reduction of leakage and wastage. These latter adjustments require a longer operating cycle.

A second set of concerns arises from the off-campus and other institutional delivery of undergraduate courses. I recognize the public good of increasing access to higher education. However, I believe this access should be

mediated by the need to preserve the critical mass of students required to have the capacity to deliver the desired quality and diversity of programmes and courses. In the University, departments and colleges have been able to offer a broad spectrum of courses and programmes by promoting internal efficiency by offering high-enrollment core undergraduate courses for the sake of offering lowenrollment electives and programmes. However, with the diffusion of the offering of undergraduate courses and enrollments, internal efficiencies would not be available and the number of specialized courses and programmes would be reduced. The external gains would be at the cost of internal course and programme specializations. Given the principle 'the greater the fragmentation of programmes and courses, the lower the ability of the organization to develop an appropriate infrastructure(s)', organizational and unit fragmentation must be reduced in order to retain capacity.

Thus, coupling the debt and reduced enrollments with the external geographic and organizational diffusion of undergraduate programmes. the capacity to achieve excellence and specializations in our undergraduate programmes would be significantly reduced. Further, the external efficiency and revenue gains of other organizations would be at the expense of the University. This shift creates a new interinstitutional allocation of students and resources that may permanently limit the ability of the University to remain a undergraduate and graduate institution.

My call is for solutions that are balanced among the primary functions of the University, and are primarily directed toward reducing leakage and wastage and the promotion of internal efficiency. This may include the reduction in the spectrum of research and instructional programmes.

Now that I have vented, I take this opportunity to wish everybody a great summer.

Murray Scharf

Amati Fundraiser

The University of Saskatchewan Amati Quartet in Residence will hold a fundraiser for the Saskatoon Cancer Centre May 2 at 7 pm at Third Avenue United Church. Guest artists include Guy Few, Kathleen Lohrenz-Gable, Randi Nelson and Terence Sturge. For tickets, call 270-9385 or visit the Place Riel kiosk.

USRA PROGRAMS 2009

(Please mark your calendars for these events)!

USRA Computer Workshops May 9

There will be two workshops as described below. The registration fee is \$ 10 per workshop. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jim Blackburn (374-9751 - jblackburn@sasktel.net) (limit 25 per workshop)

Morning Workshop Agenda (Difficulty rating: easy)

9:00 AM - 12 Noon

This workshop will focus on a couple of activities to organize our work together. The first activity will be "Starting a Family History." For this activity, you will acquire a free account at Google.ca that will give you access to a host of free software and services you can use to help you get started on the big job of documenting your family history. This workshop will also expose you to some ways to search skillfully using the Google search engine, and to assemble and organize your materials (we call it file management).

Agenda

Introductions
Becoming a Google-head Getting a free Google Account
A quick overview of the suite of
free Google applications
Using Google to explore your
family history

Searching skillfully and finding what you want with Google Using tabs with your Web browser to keep track of several pages at the same time Using Google maps to find locations of interest Finding images with Google Genealogy sites War records Land titles Census data Using Google translate to convert documents you find in other languages Using Google Notebook to store resources you find Using Google docs to write and share a family history

Afternoon Workshop Agenda (Difficulty rating: moderate)

1:30 - 4:30 PM

This workshop will consider a number of useful tools, most of which are available to you with a free Google account. Google provides a suite of free applications that you can use to manage many of the things that you usually have to purchase. One workshop activity will be to subscribe to newspapers, online articles and radio programs and have them delivered automatically and regularly to your own subscription account. Imagine your favourite reading material from a lot of different sources assembled into one place for you, and updated every hour. We call these "newsreaders" or "online aggregators". Don't worry; everything we show you will be

free. We will also introduce you to an inexpensive video camera that will allow you to take videos, edit them, and easily share them.

Agenda

Introductions Becoming a Google-head -Getting a free Google Account A quick overview of the suite of free Google applications Using Google to find resources you want to read Using Picasa to manage your photos and share them Using Google Reader to capture reading material in one place and to organize it Locating and subscribing to music and radio programs (podcasts) Video workshop: shooting, editing and sharing video easily

Wednesday, May 20 Birding Excursion

7:30 AM - 2:00 PM

The excursion will begin at 7:30 AM with everyone meeting in the Parking Lot at the Field House (north east corner). Please pack a lunch. Frank Roy, a nationally recognized birder, will lead the group. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jim Blackburn (374-9751 - jblackburn@sasktel.net)

June 8 – USRA Annual Barbecue, Faculty Club

5:30 PM - Refreshments

6:00 PM - Barbecue

Sept. 21 – AGM and Banquet

IN MEMORY

Roger Carter

Deceased – Feb. 10, 2009 College of Law 1963 – 1989

Norman McDuffie

Deceased – March 22, 2009 Dep't of Physiology College of Medicine 1964 – 1999

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

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.

We take care to keep addresses confidential by sending the emails as "blind copies".

The date on the envelope (ie 2008, 2009) indicates when your membership expires.

Currently the annual membership fee is \$15. If you wish to obtain a life membership, it is dependent on age according to the following schedule:

<60 \$ 180 60 - 64 \$ 160 65 - 69 \$ 140 70 - 74 \$ 110 75 - 79 \$ 80 80 + \$ 50

Payment of fees should be sent to:

Ken Smith, Treasurer, RJD Williams.

Univ. of Sask. Retirees Association

221 Cumberland Ave Saskatoon, SK S7N 1M3 A young couple moves into a new neighbourhood.

The next morning while they are eating breakfast, the young woman sees her neighbour hanging the wash outside."That laundry is not very clean", she said. "She doesn't know how to wash correctly.

Perhaps she needs better laundry soap." Her husband looked on, but remained silent. Every time her neighbour would hang her wash to dry, the young woman would make the same comments.

About one month later, the woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and said to her husband:

"Look, she has learned how to wash correctly.

I wonder who taught her this."
The husband said, "I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows."

And so it is with life. What we see when watching others depends on the purity of the window through which we look. I hope that you have a very great day!