

# USRA Newsletter

April 2020

No. 109



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## From Our President



On behalf of the USRA Board, we hope you are doing well in this very difficult time in history. This is so hard to believe, isn't it? It is reassuring to see the Prime Minister every morning at 9:15 at his now familiar doorstep. And then the updates from cabinet ministers, dedicated public health spokespersons, and the Premiers and health officers from Saskatchewan and all the provinces. It is heartbreaking to see the toll of the virus in our province, the rest of Canada, our neighbors to the south, and the hard-hit areas in Europe, China and other countries. And the economy – what can we say? Large and small businesses and their employees around the world, not to mention pension investments that we're sure you are worried about. We thank the dedicated health care professionals, grocery and pharmacy employees, cleaners, transportation staffers from bus drivers to pilots, community volunteers, and all the

many others who continue to step forward to help.

At our April 7 Board meeting (held remotely), we talked about ways we could assist our members as we get through this challenging period. The Board considered ideas that we will pursue, of course keeping all of you posted. Our in-person activities through June have been postponed until further notice. We will be in touch with you as soon as it is safe to get together again, but please realize that this may be a while. We have also delayed for now sending current and prospective USRA members surveys seeking your input to ensure a vibrant and responsive retirees' organization into the future.

In helping to prepare for the upcoming survey of USRA members and potential members, I came across interesting information and reassuring parallels within our Association, going back to its inception. We have brief histories of two other retirees' associations at this University, USRFA (1973-76) and USNARA (1996-2017). As USNARA (University of Saskatchewan Non-Academic Retirees Association, founded for retirees who are on the defined benefit Non-Academic Pension Plan) was in the process of joining the academic retirees (USRA), two members of the USNARA Board, Tonya Kaye and Mary Dykes, prepared a history of USNARA for the August 2017 USRA Newsletter: "Introducing the University of Saskatchewan Non-Academic Retirees Association," pp. 5-7.

Perhaps "USRA Past and Present," a brief pictorial history of USRA that I have prepared for this issue of our USRA Newsletter, will give you something interesting to read, and even remember, while you practice the government-mandated social distancing designed to

protect our community and our health system from COVID-19. We hope that you are finding ways to maintain connections with your families, neighbors and friends. If you have suggestions about how the USRA could be of help to you, please be sure to let us know at [ss.usra@usask.ca](mailto:ss.usra@usask.ca) or leave a message at 306-966-6618. Until we meet again, we send our warmest regards to you all. Please take good care of yourselves and your loved ones.

Most sincerely,



Merry Beazely  
USRA President  
[merry.beazely@usask.ca](mailto:merry.beazely@usask.ca)

## From the Education, Social and Recreation Committee

By Brad Steeves, USRA Vice-President

Before the COVID-19 crisis, USRA's winter luncheons had gotten off to a great start with two wonderful presentations at Manos on 8<sup>th</sup> Street: On January 22, "Decluttering and Downsizing for Seniors" by Morag Wharton, and on February 10, Black Fox Farm and Distillery's success story by Barb Stefanyshyn-Coté.

At the end of February, I was hurriedly writing our committee's newsletter article before I left for a southern vacation. Our committee had scheduled a full line-up of speakers and events for the entire 2020 year. However, since that time the world has changed. I have now returned from my vacation several weeks early and am updating this article while in my mandatory 14 days of self-isolation.



*Morag Wharton, January 22, 2020*



*Barb Stefanyshyn-Coté, February 10, 2020*

**Now our customary venues—the University Club, Manos, and Louis’—have been forced to close, and all upcoming USRA educational and social activities through June have been cancelled by the USRA Executive until further notice. It is expected that most of these sessions will be rescheduled for later dates.**

A full line up of speakers and events with scheduled dates was to be included in this newsletter. However, you will find a list of the planned speakers and the titles of their presentations below to inform you of upcoming sessions once we restart our programming. We have left unspecified the

topics and assigned dates for the 2 sessions in the fall at this time but will provide updates later.

At this time the annual BBQ where we welcome new members to the USRA, scheduled for June 8, has been cancelled.

The annual general meeting and awards banquet has been scheduled for September 13 to coincide with the Alumni Weekend. Depending on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic and mandates from various government agencies, we will update its status closer to that date. Currently the University has closed all its buildings and will be holding classes online until the fall. We will continue to monitor the situation at the University and of course around the city and province closely over the next weeks and months.

On behalf of the USRA Education, Recreation and Social committee, I wish you health and safety.

Brad Steeves

**P.S. UPDATE:** On April 7 the USRA Board agreed to experiment with offering educational talks using the virtual technology Zoom as a replacement for the luncheon events that we have had to postpone in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. See "Monthly Seminars by Zoom?" on p. 20.

## USRA's Scheduled 2020 Activities Postponed

Previously Announced Events to Be Rescheduled at A Later Date

- **Sarah Buhler, "*The Role of Community Legal Clinics in Addressing the Access to Justice Crisis*" (originally March 23)**

Sarah is an Associate Professor in the College of Law. She is the Executive Director and Supervising Lawyer at Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City (CLASSIC).

- **Erika Dyck, Department of History, College of Arts and Science, USASK, "*To Fall in Hell or soar angelic': Psychedelic Trials in Saskatchewan in the 1950s*" (originally April 20)**

Erika is a Professor in the Department of History and is a Canada Research Chair in the History of Medicine.

- **Annual USRA and New Retirees BBQ (originally June 8)**

In addition to seeing old friends, this annual event allows current members to meet and greet new retirees. VP Debra Pozega Osburn and AVP Guy Larocque, University Relations, had planned to be in attendance to welcome new retirees.

## Other Planned USRA Activities Postponed

- **Tour of Merlis Belsher Place, 3:15 PM to 4:30 PM**

This new sports facility is home for the University hockey teams as well as



providing a gymnasium for Huskie basketball practice. In addition, the facility provides dedicated ice time for the City of Saskatoon hockey community. The facility was primarily funded through donors, with the main donor being Merlis Belsher, a University of Saskatchewan alumnus and local business owner who gave \$12.2 M to build the facility. The City of Saskatoon also provided funding to support community hockey, and well-known University patrons Ron and Jane Graham donated generously so that the gymnasium could be constructed as part of the facility.

When events at Merlis Belsher Place resume, please note that parking is located directly in front of the arena and in Lot 15 (the unpaved parking lot along Preston Avenue). Both these lots are reserved for pay parking from 8 AM to 3 PM Monday to Friday. Please note that parking is free after 3 PM.

When USRA finally has an opportunity to reschedule its tour, refreshments will be served on the concourse level at its conclusion.

- **Spring 2020 Convocation Ceremonies**

The University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association is usually invited to send representatives to the platform party at each USASK convocation, and USRA members are often in the audience to see family members graduate. With the opening of Merlis Belsher Place, the University was able to move convocation ceremonies back to campus from TCU Place in 2019. However, the

University has now postponed the spring 2020 ceremonies in line with federal and provincial requirements regarding COVID-19 prevention, and in support of the University's decision to close the campus to public visitors until further notice.

- **USRA Encore Presentation: "Decluttering and Downsizing for Seniors" by Morag Whorton, Trained Professional Organizer, Clearing the Way, Time Management and Organizing Solution**

This session is geared for seniors who are considering transitioning to a smaller home, as well as those who may be in a position of managing the 'stuff' of someone who is downsizing or has passed away.

Please note that there were a number of individuals on the waiting list for the original presentation in January. Those individuals will be given first priority to attend. But there will be lots of room for others who wish to attend this very informative talk.

#### [Future USRA Events Being Planned: Stay Tuned In](#)

- **Collette Travel Presentation:** Collette Travel provides travel services for USRA members at discounted prices.
- **Nancy Turner and Peter Hedley, Office of Vice Provost, Teaching Learning and Student Experience, USASK:**

**Presentation, “Student Mental Health: The Journey towards Change”**

Nancy and Peter recently received much recognition for this TED talk. TED — which stands for **Technology, Entertainment and Design** — features “ideas worth spreading.” TED is a nonpartisan non-profit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks. TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues — in more than 110 languages.

**USRA Events Still Tentatively Scheduled**

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, updates regarding these events will be communicated closer to the scheduled dates. SEE USRA CONTACT INFORMATION AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER TO FOLLOW ANNOUNCEMENTS BY EMAIL (if you provide your address), WEBSITE, OR PHONE MENU.

- **Sunday, Sept. 13, 2020: Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Awards Banquet:** Details to be provided closer to the event.
- **Fall 2020: Luncheon Talks:** Manos Restaurant, 1820 8<sup>th</sup> Street E., Saskatoon
- **October 28, 2020:** Lilian Thorpe MD PhD FRCP, Departments of Psychiatry and Community Health & Epidemiology, College of Medicine, USASK, “*Medical Assistance in Dying: Taking a balanced approach to a challenging addition to end of life care*”

- **November 23, 2020:** Alanna Bailod MD FRCP, Geriatric Psychiatrist, Department of Psychiatry, College of Medicine, USASK, “*Mental wellness issues facing older adults*”
- **December 2020:** USASK President’s Holiday Reception of Retirees: Annual invitation of USRA members to the President’s Residence.

**AGM & Banquet to Coincide with Alumni Weekend**

Although University of Saskatchewan employees and thus retirees come from all parts of the globe, many have attended this University as students or have partners and other family members who are alumni. All USask students who receive University degrees are alumni, but former students who did not obtain a degree or certificate at USask, and also former USask employees, are also eligible to become members of the Alumni Association as Associate Alumni by calling 306-966-5186 or 1-800-699-1907 or emailing alumni.office@usask.ca to join the Alumni roll.

In 2020 the annual USask Reunion Weekend for alumni is planned for Friday, September 11, and Sunday, September 12. USRA has deliberately scheduled its AGM and Annual Awards Banquet on Sunday, September 13, to coincide with this annual alumni reunion. This juxtaposition of a USRA event with alumni events recognizes that current and potential USRA members who may be returning to campus for alumni celebrations, especially those who no longer live in Saskatoon, might also like an opportunity to see former co-workers and colleagues, and those of us who are still Saskatoon residents would enjoy seeing them.

Regarding the AGM, USRA Ordinary Members may vote. Associate Members of USRA, who are usually partners of USRA members, are welcome to attend the AGM but not vote. Please note that while USRA members need not be USask Alumni, Alumni must be USRA members or guests of a USRA member to attend the USRA Awards Banquet. Pre-booking for the Banquet by email, voice message, or telephone is needed for all planning to attend. (See the USRA contact information at the end of this newsletter.)

Please remember that our USRA members, including those who are not USask graduates, are cordially invited to become Associate Alumni Members and attend the Reunion Weekend events, described as “the perfect occasion to reunite, reminisce and relive your experiences with your former classmates from your program on the beautiful USask campus that is buzzing with students and fellow graduates.” (Alumni Relations website)

The University is monitoring all upcoming events planned because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, plans for Reunion Weekend are still going ahead at this point. Special events scheduled for Reunion Weekend include:

- **Educated Tastes with Black Fox Farm & Distillery** event on Friday evening. Educated Tastes offers exclusive access to alumni-owned businesses in Saskatoon who are doing great things in and for our community.
- **An all-reunions Saturday breakfast** with a USask Talk from one of our world-class researchers.
- **Golden Grads ceremony** on Saturday afternoon for those who graduated 50 or more years ago. Many among us will

qualify! Please come walk to the stage again, reminisce and relive your USask experience at Golden Grads.

- **Tours of campus** (including residences, athletic facilities, buildings, and educational organizations on campus)

## USRA Election at 2020 AGM

USRA’s Annual General Meeting is tentatively planned for Sunday, September 13, in the University Club in conjunction with the annual Awards Banquet. In preparation for the election at this AGM, the Nomination Committee here presents to the membership the following slate of Officers and Members-at-Large for the 2020-2021 academic year (one-year terms). The current members of the Nominations Committee are Past Presidents Tom Wilson (Chair), Bryan Harvey, and Judith Henderson.

Election Slate:

- President Brad Steeves
- Vice-President Jim Thornhill
- Secretary Jacqueline Huck
- Treasurer Tom Wilson
- Immediate Past President Merry Beazely
- Members-at-Large: Rick Bunt, Mary Dykes, Bryan Harvey, Judith Henderson, Dean Jones, Ioannis (Yannis) Pahatouoglou, Beryl Radcliffe.

Brad Steeves has served in 2018-19 as Vice-President and has been a model of good sense and efficiency in chairing the Education, Social and Recreation Committee. Customarily, the Vice-President becomes the next President of the Association. Our current President, Merry Beazely, will become in 2020-21, ex officio, the Immediate Past President. Jacqueline

Huck has agreed to stand for re-election as our very capable Secretary, a key role in our Executive meetings and our communications with members. Our current Immediate Past President, Tom Wilson, has agreed to stand for Treasurer, a position to which Registrar Emeritus Ken Smith agreed to return as a temporary replacement when Michael Brockbank resigned recently. We thank Michael for his service as Treasurer and his stalwart and well-informed efforts to reactivate the representation of USask retirees by observers on pension committees after USNARA dissolved and its members joined USRA. The continuation by USRA of the USNARA Pension Committee unfortunately has proved to be impossible in the current University climate. We are most grateful to Ken (who has previously served 12 years as USRA Treasurer) for shouldering that workload yet again when we needed his help after Michael's mid-term resignation.

The nominees for Offices and Members-at-Large have all served on the USRA Board for at least one year. Mary Dykes, a former USNARA Board member and newsletter editor, in 2017 joined the USRA Board as well to help guide the amalgamation of the two Usask Retirees Associations that was officially accomplished in 2018. We are delighted that she has agreed to return to the USRA Board.

For more information about the history of the University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association and its predecessors, including USNARA (University of Saskatchewan Non-academic Retirees Association), see in this newsletter "USRA Past and Present" by President Merry Beazely.

Please note that the election at the AGM will be by acclamation unless further nominations, each signed by three

members of the Association, are received by the USRA Secretary at least 15 days prior to that meeting. See USRA's By-Laws (Section 10) on the USRA website (under About-USRA/Bylaws) for procedures allowing Ordinary Members of the Association to submit nominations of additional candidate(s) to the USRA Secretary. Contact information for the USRA can be found on the back of this newsletter.

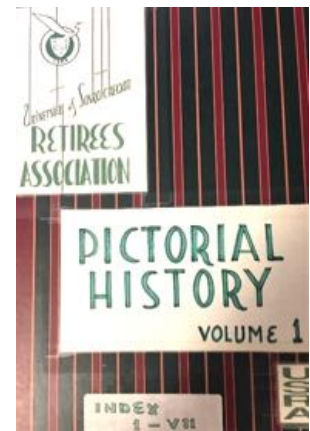
The Nominations Committee hopes to see a good turn-out of USRA Members at the Annual General Meeting on September 13. Details of the AGM and Banquet or, if necessary, alternative arrangements, will be announced closer to the planned meeting date.

## USRA Past and Present

By Merry Beazely

In 1973, a short-lived **University of Saskatchewan Retired Faculty Association (USRFA)**, was established in an effort to up-grade pensions of retired faculty. According to *A Brief History of the USRFA (1973-76)* by Lorne Paul in consultation with

Edith Rowles Simpson, the association was organized for retirees scattered from the Maritimes to British Columbia and the membership fee was \$1. While the history focussed on salaries and pensions, it also spoke about parking on campus! A retirees' organization was revived in 1989 as the USRA to be an organized voice for retired faculty and administrators, including those





from federated and affiliated colleges. **Jack Wigham**, a past USRA President wrote, “The Association began, I’m told, with a realization that both the retirees and the University had much to gain from a continuing relationship of retirees with the University....”



*USRA Founders Art Sumner and Jack Pringle*

Not only from historical documents about the USRA, but also by reading past newsletters on our website (from 2004 on), we can further enjoy news about past members and events, as well as appreciate the consistency in our shared goals and objectives.

USRA and others on campus enjoy using the Retirees’ Lounge in the Peter MacKinnon Building. In her USRA President’s message of November 2004, **Pat Lawson** wrote:

“I would like to introduce two new members of the executive. Firstly, **Duff Spafford**, who will keep us informed about the new Retirees Lounge which is to be included in the refurbished College Building. Our second newcomer is **Ken Smith** (former Registrar, and Professor in the College of Commerce) who answered our plea for a volunteer to look after the treasurer’s duties. I think our money continues to be in good hands. Welcome to these two gentlemen and thanks to the executive members who are returning for another year.”

USRA has been proud to honour Duff with the *Duff Spafford Award for Exceptional Service to the University Community* and to assist in placing *his Duff Spafford Alumni Book Collection* in the Library. And Ken, with a one-year pause, has continued to expertly shepherd the USRA’s finances to this day. Thank-you Ken!

**Pat** went on to congratulate **Lorne Paul**, first President of the USRFA, as mentioned above, on his 100th birthday! She notes:

“The USRA gave some small help to Lorne in 1992 when he published a *Directory of Personal Care Homes in Saskatoon* which he compiled after discovering that there was no place that information could be obtained.”

**Howard Klein**, editor of **USRA News** in 2004, conducted a survey of members, asking them to list three or four ways in which USRA Retirees might be able to contribute to the various activities conducted by the U of S. This continues to be of significance to our members and we have frequently surveyed you, for your opinions and ideas to ensure that the USRA remains strong.

**In 1996**, a group of retirees formed an association for staff, whose pension benefit was paid from the Non-Academic Pension Plan, a defined benefit pension. The members of the **University of Saskatchewan Non-Academic Retirees Association** (USNARA) included employees in CUPE 1975, those who were promoted into ASPA or faculty positions but chose to continue contributing to the Non-Academic Pension Plan, and staff from the affiliated colleges. USNARA’s focus was activities and services for its members. In the early years, many social events were held: monthly coffee breaks; Christmas, Valentine’s Day,

and Easter brunches; summer barbecues; and golf tournaments. The *USNARA newsletter* included regular reports on the status of the pension plan, member news, and University news. Other articles focused on seniors' issues, such as health, finances, travel (elder hostels and snowbird destinations), exercise, nutrition and recipes and seminars for seniors. The Association established a bursary and celebrated the achievements of its members.

**By 2017**, USNARA was beginning the process of closing as a result of declining membership and difficulty filling leadership positions. Concerned at the prospect of former colleagues being without a retirees' association, the USRA leadership at the time, led by President Judith Henderson, contacted USNARA's leadership seeking ways to assist them. Cordial and mutually supportive consultations occurred between the Executives of the two Associations, with the support of University Secretary Beth Bilson and the Vice-President of University Relations Debra Pozega Osburn. As a result, USNARA was dissolved by its membership and the USRA at its AGM voted to welcome all members of USNARA to join. USRA's membership eligibility and its constitution were revised to include ***all those*** who left a position at the University after being employed for ***six or more years*** and are at least ***55 years old***. We also continue to embrace all individuals employed in ***federated and affiliated colleges and those who work on research grants and contracts***.

What stands out in the USRA and USNARA histories and newsletters through the years is the ***consistency in the goals of contributing not only to retirees but to the University, and to ensure the enjoyment of***



*Jack Billinton, Ray Boyle and President George Ivany at the opening of the USRA Office on campus.*



*Annual General Meeting of the USRA*



*Dedicated Board Members*



*Jackie Huck laying USRA wreath at Memorial Gates.*

The President's Holiday Reception is the highlight of the season. Pictured: (left) guests in 2019, (centre) Past USRA President Doris Hasell with President MacKinnon, and (right) the 2019-20 USRA Board with President Stoicheff.



USRA monthly lunches continue to engage members. Pictured above is Bill Waiser.



The Annual USRA June BBQ, past and present, is always fun, and we welcome new USask retirees.



**members in the activities that the USRA continues to support. Please find a snapshot of past and current events that USRA members enjoy.**

#### **Acknowledgements:**

*A Brief History of the University of Saskatchewan Retired Faculty Association (1973-76)* by Lorne Paul in consultation with Edith Rowles Simpson.

*University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association: A brief description of our organization for U of S President Elect Dr. P.*

*MacKinnon, January 1999* by J.M. Wigham, President USRA.

*USRA Newsletters, including 2004 Edition and November 2017 Edition, with Message from President Judith Henderson and Article Introducing the University of Saskatchewan Non-Academic Retirees Association* by Tonya Kaye and Mary Dykes.



## Creating a New USask ID: An Origin Story

Rick Bunt

The Internet first came to be in the late 1960s but its full emergence in popular culture took several more decades. The first workable prototype was a project funded by the US military known as ARPAnet, or the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network. Contrary to what some have said, Al Gore was not the inventor. ARPAnet delivered its first test message on October 29, 1969, the day many credit as the official birth date. As ARPAnet evolved, universities around the world wanted on. Now much bigger than a project of the US military, ARPAnet became known as the Internet.

The University of Saskatchewan was making its preparations to join the Internet by the late 1980s. At the time only two Canadian universities were registered – the University of Saskatchewan was about to become the third. Our technical facilities were in place (in a network closet in Room 64 of the Arts Building) but joining the Internet required filling out an Internet Registration Form. This responsibility fell to USRA member Larry Custead, who was at the time the manager of Systems and Networks in the Department of Computing Services (now Information and Communications Technology). On April 30, 1987, Larry completed what seemed a simple clerical task on behalf of the University and a decision he made has had major consequence.

As Larry describes it, “The form had 11 sections and the last one I tackled was ‘Network Name.’ The suggested name for a university was ‘u’ followed by the institution. I typed usaskatchewan.ca but

contemplated how many times I would be typing this name in the years ahead. I immediately decided that this name was too long.”

Larry considered other possibilities. The University of British Columbia had registered as [ubc.ca](http://ubc.ca), using its commonly known abbreviation, but although the University was widely known in the province as the U of S Larry deemed that [uofs.ca](http://uofs.ca) would not be suitable as an identity on a world-wide network. After some thought, Larry came up with [usask.ca](http://usask.ca) and submitted the form. The registration was accepted and [usask.ca](http://usask.ca) has been the University’s Internet identity ever since.

Since that fateful day the University’s world-wide web address [www.usask.ca](http://www.usask.ca) has taken on a major role in campus life. More and more the University has become known externally as USask. In recognition of this, USask has now become part of the official brand. We owe this to a Computing Services manager who filled out a registration form 33 years ago.

## What Should We Seasoned Adults Eat? (The Beef with Legumes)

By Tom Wilson

Eating is one of life’s pleasures. My dad used to say: “It’s better than sex, especially if you’re hungry”.

Judging by the empty spaces left in local grocery store shelves in the current COVID-19 crisis, many Saskatoon residents would agree. We don’t want to be without food. But in an interview with journalist Bryn Levy, USask Professor Richard Gray, Agriculture and Resource Economics, reassures us that we need not worry about



local food security. Not only does our supply chain have plenty of food, trucks, and labour, but the supply will increase while demand will slow, and in any case, “Saskatchewan farmers produce enough peas, lentils, and chickpeas to feed everyone in the province indefinitely” (Bryn Levy, “No need to stock up every time you visit the grocery store,” Saskatoon StarPhoenix, April 3, 2020, A5).

Finding advice on what to eat is easy; deciding on the value of such advice is not. Remember our Levels of Evidence: high (supported by one or more good randomized controlled trials (RCTs)); moderate (supported by bad RCTs, or good observational studies); low, or very low (supported by none of the above).

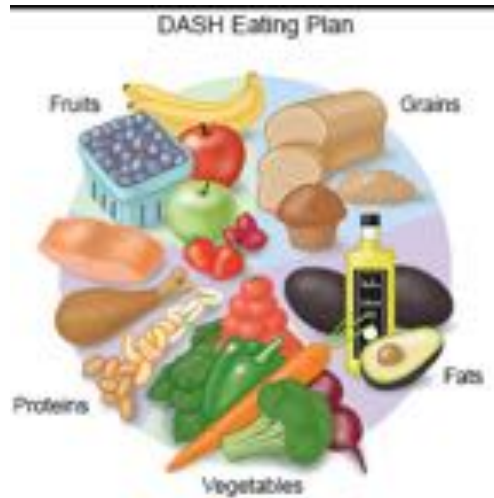
One heavily advertised bit of advice is “eat less meat”. Consider “plant-based meat”: an oxymoron. Is there any evidence that eating burgers made of peas, mung beans, and rice will help us be healthier? Finding dietary advice which has high or moderate supporting levels of evidence is difficult.



First, let’s remember that the beef industry is a major player in Saskatchewan’s economy. In 2019 there were 2,240,000 beef cattle in our province(1) and 1,174,000 people(2). At least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our beef is exported. So, if we all decided on plant-based “meat” our economy would change dramatically. Next, we have the issue of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. While all three GHGs increased from the 1980’s to 2001, the efficiency improved. Thus producing one pound of beef in 2001 produced 40% less GHGs than in 1981(3).

But my aim was to find evidence that eating less meat makes us healthier. As I mentioned elsewhere RCTs comparing diets are difficult to find. Lopez and colleagues found 1673 studies, of which only 11, totaling 983 subjects, were RCTs. Their meta-analysis comparing vegan followers with those following less restrictive diet showed no significant difference in blood pressure in the population as a whole, or in those over age 55(4).

Perhaps the most successful studied diet is the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension or DASH(5).



Here is a summary of servings per day:

	Ctl	F+V	DASH
Fruit and vegetables	3.6	8.5	9.6
Dairy	0.5	0.3	2.7
Nuts, seeds, legumes	0	0.6	0.7
Fats, oils	5.8	5.3	2.5
Snacks	4.1	1.4	0.7
Fish, poultry	1.0	0.7	1.1
Red meat	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>

Appel and colleagues randomized about 150 adults into 3 groups: control (Ctl), the average American diet; (F+V) fruits and vegetables; and DASH (see the illustration above). They were over age 22, men and women equally represented. Meals were prepared and delivered. The main outcome variable was systolic blood pressure (SBP), a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Compared to Ctl, the F+V diet reduced SBP by 2.8 mmHg. But the DASH diet reduced it by 5.8 mmHg. Note that the F+V diet had *more* red meat than the Ctl diet, but still reduced blood pressure. While

blood pressure is a surrogate outcome, I believe this shows that we can eat red meat in moderation and still be healthy. A recent clinical guideline concluded: *“For our review of randomized trials on harms and benefits (12 unique trials enrolling 54 000 participants), we found low- to very low-certainty evidence that diets lower in unprocessed red meat may have little or no effect on the risk for major cardiometabolic outcomes and cancer mortality and incidence”* (6).

Is there any risk in changing from animal-based to plant-based diets? Plants contain less iron and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> than meat. These can be easily supplemented. More problematic, is the “density” of food for protein. A 4-ounce steak contains 33 grams of protein, a cup of cooked lentils, 18 grams and a cup of kale 11 grams. Health Canada recommends a protein intake of 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight. Thus, for my 75 Kg, I’d need to eat a lot of lentils and kale. Furthermore, there is evidence that older adults need even more protein to prevent loss of our muscle mass(7). Finally, plants are deficient in some “essential amino acids” (amino acids necessary for our bodies but which we can’t make ourselves), particularly leucine. Again, this means another supplement.

There is moderate evidence that eating more fruits and vegetables reduces mortality from heart disease and stroke. Wang, et al., published a meta-analysis of 16 cohort studies in 2014. They estimated that increasing fruit and vegetable consumption by 1 serving per day reduces mortality by 5%(8). Furthermore, they found a dose-response curve: the more fruits and vegetables consumed, the greater the reduction in mortality.

I haven't forgotten about another "food group", namely alcohol. But that's a topic for next time.

Further reading

(1) <https://www5.agr.gc.ca/eng/industry-markets-and-trade/canadian-agri-food-sector-intelligence/red-meat-and-livestock/red-meat-and-livestock-market-information/inventories/cattle-inventory-by-farm-type-saskatchewan/?id=1415860000078>. accessed 2020-01-10.

(2) <https://www.google.com/search?q=population+of+saskatchewan&rlz> accessed 2020-01-10.

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## Some FAQs about COVID-19

Tom Wilson

### What is the difference between the novel coronavirus and COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the *disease* caused by the novel coronavirus (scientific name SARS-CoV-2; I'll call it "cov"). COVID-19 has a specific description: fever, cough, bilateral lung infiltrates on chest Xray and isolation of the cov virus from nasal or oral passages. Another intriguing possible symptom is loss of smell; anecdotes attest to this being an early and common symptom.

### How infectious is cov?

One measure is the "reproductive number": the number of people becoming infected after contact with a person shedding the virus. For cov, this appears to be 2.0-2.5, higher than influenza (1.5) but lower than measles (15.0).

### If I have a positive test for cov, do I have COVID-19?

The short answer is "no". The *sensitivity* (the proportion of patients with the disease having a positive test) of isolating cov from patients with COVID-19 is by definition 100%. However the *specificity* (the proportion of persons without the disease who have a negative test) is about 40%. Of

100 persons infected with cov 80 have few or no symptoms, and thus don't qualify as COVID-19. A measure of the utility of having a test for cov in people without symptoms is the "likelihood ratio" (sensitivity/(1-specificity)), which in this case is 100/60 or 1.67. Tests that are useful in making a diagnosis have likelihood ratios of at least 5 and preferably 10.

### **What is the prognosis for COVID-19?**

As stated, most people infected with cov have few or no symptoms (80%). Of those diagnosed with COVID-19, perhaps 15% will require admission to hospital, 5% will require ventilator therapy and 1-3% will die.

### **How does the death rate from cov infection compare with influenza?**

This is uncertain. We know that the mortality rate for seasonal influenza is about 0.1%. For those infected with cov but not meeting criteria for COVID-19, it is likely about the same.

### **How will the COVID-19 pandemic affect overall mortality?**

The crude mortality rate in the US and Canada has been about 70 per 100,000 people per year for many years. The US CDC has estimated 100,000-240,000 deaths due to COVID 19 in the year. So, in the US with its population of 330,000,000 we expect 70 divided by 100,000 multiplied by 330,000,000 or 231,000 deaths in a year. If we **add** 100,000 – 240,000 to this baseline, there is a significant increment in overall death rate.

### **Does "social distancing" have a beneficial effect?**

Likely, yes. South Korea and Singapore mandated social distancing earlier than other countries. Their overall infection rate

and death rate is lower. An interesting natural experiment is being carried out in Scandinavia. Norway instituted social distancing; Sweden did not. To April 6<sup>th</sup>, Norway, population 5.4 million, recorded 74 deaths; Sweden, population 10.4 million, 477. So Sweden's mortality rate due to COVID-19 is about 3.3 times higher than that of Norway.

### **How long will the pandemic last?**

Again, uncertain. The only sure way to interrupt the transmission of the disease is via an effective vaccine and its widespread use. The best estimated for the availability of such a vaccine is early 2021. Add another 6 months for widespread deployment. Of course, never underestimate human ingenuity: it could happen sooner.



## USRA Travellers Flee Pandemic in Europe

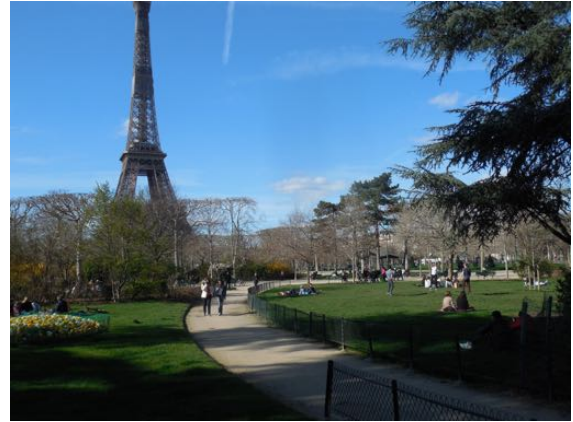
By Judith Henderson

Many Canadians, especially seniors, were travelling abroad in mid-March when the threat of COVID-19 triggered government advisories to return home, flight cancellations, and border closures. Three Life Members of USRA—David Edney and Dan and Lea Pennock—had especially dramatic anecdotes to share, along with photos, of their premature returns to Saskatoon in late March from their usual activities in Europe.

Professor Emeritus David Edney, who spent his career teaching languages, especially French, and translating works by Moliere and later playwrights from French into English, was hoping to stay in Paris to the end of April but reported in a March 16 email to friends, “The situation is grave in France.” Religious services had been cancelled, and everything was closed except government offices and shops for essentials such as food, but public transportation was “still running at about 80% in Paris,” and pedestrians in the Champs de Mars near his apartment were “not practicing social distancing.” The President of France might “impose mandatory confinement at home, except for buying food and walking the dog.”

Later he wrote, “conditions were made stricter. All parks and the banks of the Seine, where people tended to congregate, were closed. And no one could leave the house without an attestation, a signed statement indicating the time of going out and the reason. My statement was examined once by the police. Only essential businesses could remain open: food stores,

pharmacies, banks, newspaper stands, and tobacconists.”



*Parisians on the Champs de Mars defy “distancing.”*

David admits, “I found the confinement a form of retreat” from such obligations as preparing to teach yoga classes and going out to 16 operas, plays, and concerts in March and April, his typically busy schedule. The show tickets were now unusable. He had the same positive reaction to his two-week quarantine after he arrived in Saskatoon on March 25, via Montreal because Air Canada’s Paris/Toronto flights had been cancelled to the end of April.

David reports that when he left Paris on short notice, “Charles de Gaulle airport was empty, with a total of only 11 flights from early morning to late at night. All three of my flights were less than half full. I am happy to be back.” He is now offering free accommodation in his empty Paris apartment “to health care workers who need a place to stay” while working at a nearby hospital.



*Charles de Gaulle airport was empty at 10 a.m.*

Dan Pennock, Professor Emeritus in Soil Science, and his wife Dr. Lea Pennock, former University Secretary, have been hiking the Camino de Santiago frequently since retiring. As we know from a slide show Lea gave to USRA earlier, this famous Camino is an ancient network of pilgrimage routes to the shrine of the apostle St. James the Great in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Their trek of one spectacular route this spring proved historic in more ways than they had anticipated. Here she describes their recent adventure getting home prematurely:

“Many of you know that Dan and I are enthusiastic trekkers, and that we love Spain. We left for Spain in late February, intending to walk the Camino Mozarabe from the ancient Mediterranean port of Almería to the Roman-Spanish city of Merida (a distance of approximately 750k). We had no idea how quickly the world was about to change. We walked for two weeks in relative solitude, through flowering almond and orange orchards and olive groves. The snow-capped Sierra Nevada was breathtaking and stayed in sight until we reached Granada.



*Dan Pennock hikes Spain's Camino Mozarabe.*

“But news reports became sobering, then alarming. When we were two days out of Cordoba, on March 14, Spain declared a state of alarm and we decided it was time to come home. In Spain and on the Camino, overnight, everything changed. The lively streets and squares of Spanish towns were now empty. The bars and cafés were closed. Police, and ultimately the army, began to patrol the streets, telling people to get inside and stay there.

“We briefly considered hunkering down in Cordoba till our early April flight from Madrid, but when that flight was cancelled, we decided to get to Seville and try flying from there. More bookings and cancellations followed; eventually we were fortunate to get seats on the last Lufthansa flight out of Sevilla to Munich, from there to Frankfurt (where we spent the night in an eerily deserted airport and were grateful for our Camino sleeping bags), and then the last Air Canada flight from Frankfurt to Calgary.



*Lea Pennock sleeps overnight in Frankfurt Airport*

“We'd love to return some day to do the last 400k of our walk, but for now we're grateful to be home among family and friends, and to be healthy and safe. We wish the same for our colleagues and friends in the USRA.”

## Members No Longer with Us

Since the November 2019 newsletter, we have learned that the following USRA members have passed away. In some cases, especially when members have moved to other cities, we do not hear of their deaths for some months or years, if at all. Please let us know if you learn of the death of a former employee of the University of Saskatchewan or its affiliated colleges and research institutes, or his/her partner's death, so that we can honour in this column those who have been an Ordinary or Associate Member of USRA.

- **Garry Drabble** was born September 10, 1940, at Hafford, SK, and died July 8, 2019 (age 78). He is survived by his wife Carolynn. Garry grew up on the family farm near Speers, worked as a travelling salesman, and served as a community volunteer in Saskatoon.

- **Leila Maud Ewing**, born in Kingston, Jamaica, March 24, 1927, died January 23, 2020, in Saskatoon (age 92). She was predeceased by her husband Dr. Cecil Ewing.
- **Dolores Gradish (nee Glop)** died November 23, 2019 (age 84) and is survived by her husband Professor Emeritus Michael Hayden. Del was born in Toledo, Italy, on June 13, 1935, and immigrated with her family to Timmons, ON, in 1936. She later studied art and education. After the unexpected death in 1974 of her first husband, Stephen Gradish, a faculty member at STM, she supported their children as a high school teacher.
- **Dale Hills** died on August 27, 2019 (age 75). He is survived by his wife Grace. Pursuing opportunities in the grocery business, they moved around Saskatchewan, their home province, arriving in Saskatoon in 1975. Later in semi-retirement, Dale supervised the grounds crew at the University of Saskatchewan.
- **Zorika Milin**, born in Sombor, Serbia, September 26, 1926, immigrated to Canada in 1969 with her husband Radomir. He predeceased her. She died at Samaritan Place in Saskatoon, February 24, 2020 (age 93), and is survived by her son Milivoj (Dragica) and daughter Zlatica.
- **William (Bill) Edward Sinnett**, June 21, 1939 – April 20, 2020, is survived by his wife Gail. Born on a family farm near Sinnett, SK, he was a USask alumnus (B.Comm. 1970) and a Chartered Accountant (1972) who, after developing Touche Ross and Company's computer audit process, finished his career in the University Administration's Business Services (1986-1999).

- **Michael Evan Stoneham**, Professor of Mechanical Engineering (1968-1997), was born in Portsmouth, England, on February 2, 1933. He died February 6, 2020 and is survived by his wife Olwen.
- **Edward (Ted) Wesley Underhill**, M.Sc. (SK), Ph.D. (RI), D.Sc. (SK) was born in Regina, January 28, 1931, and died November 22, 2019 (age 88) in Edmonton. He is survived by his wife Marilyn. He was principal research officer at the National Research Council (1988-91) and was awarded a University of Saskatchewan honorary degree for his career.

For notices in memoriam of former employees of the University, as well as current students, employees, and others honoured when the flag on the Thorvaldson Building is flown at half-mast, please see U of S In Memoriam maintained by the University Secretary:  
<http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/documents/flag-at-half-mast.php>

## Monthly Seminars by Zoom?

During these unprecedented times, as you know, we have had to curtail the USRA's monthly educational noon hour seminar series. However the USRA Executive recently met virtually and discussed potential ways to keep connected with our members. Our executive met over the popular videoconference platform Zoom. It worked very well. We are well aware that there has been some negative publicity around this application but it mainly stems around open meetings and users not particularly knowing how to best use the application. Using the full capabilities of the software allows complete control over who can participate in the meeting.

The USRA Executive has therefore decided to host a trial presentation in the next few weeks using the Zoom Videoconferencing application. If this goes well, we will plan to deliver more presentations until we can meet in person again.

If you are unfamiliar with Zoom, please visit the website [zoom.us](http://zoom.us). This site contains lots of useful information about using the application. You can also join a test meeting to become familiar with the technology and its controls, especially if you have not used this technology before. If you have anyone who could possibly support you or know others who have used this technology it might be useful to chat with them prior to the meeting. Since this first presentation will be our first attempt, we expect that some users may experience difficulties. We will not be able to troubleshoot any issues during the presentation, but we will attempt to assist via email after the presentation so that you can participate in upcoming sessions.

### **How this virtual presentation will be executed:**

You will receive an email message in advance of the presentation informing you of the speaker, the topic and the date and time. You will be asked to register, by email, by a specific date just as you have done previously. Prior to the meeting, you will be sent a confirmation email, which includes the instructions on how to join the meeting.

### **The day of the meeting:**

Please log in to the meeting several minutes prior to the start time of the meeting. You will be connected to the meeting at the appropriate time. A moderator will provide brief instructions to all participants prior to our speaker beginning, including how you



can ask the speaker a question. At the end of the meeting, please click on the “Leave Meeting” button to disconnect.

We hope that you will join us for this inaugural presentation and if all goes well, you can expect more to follow using this technology.

## Soliciting Award Nominations

In anticipation that we can proceed with our awards banquet in September, we are soliciting nominations for our Prime of Life Achievement and Continuing Contribution awards. If the awards banquet is delayed, awards will be presented whenever the banquet is held.

These awards are open to any retiree of the U of S. Retirees are anyone who has retired from a staff position at the University of Saskatchewan and its federated and affiliated colleges, including staff employed under research grants and contracts.

Criteria for these awards and nomination forms for them are available on the USRA website (<http://usra.usask.ca/>) and select the Awards tab or ([http://homepage.usask.ca/~ss\\_usra/Award\\_s/mainAwards.html](http://homepage.usask.ca/~ss_usra/Award_s/mainAwards.html)). If you know of anyone worthy of these awards, please complete a nomination form and send it to one of the addresses on the form. Nominations can be submitted at any time; submissions received by June 30 will be awarded in the next annual USRA banquet.

## Your Family Has a 2020 HS Graduate? See This New Scholarship Opportunity

Do you have a child or grandchild about to graduate from high school and interested in post-secondary education? A new

scholarship opportunity for 2020 graduates has just been announced by CURAC (College and University Retirees Associations of Canada), the national umbrella organization to which all Ordinary Members of USRA belong. Read this, USRA members, and pass on the news to eligible family members:

To CURAC/ARUCC Member Associations:

Johnson Insurance (<https://www.johnson.ca/>), a company that partners with CURAC to provide travel insurance to our members, is offering scholarships to students with a parent/guardian or grandparent who is a CURAC member.

Johnson will award 50 scholarships, valued at \$1000 each, to eligible students completing high school in 2020 and starting post-secondary education in the fall of 2020. Please see the attached poster and visit <https://www.johnson.ca/scholarship> for more information. Under the eligibility criteria, CURAC qualifies as a Johnson recognized group.

Please pass this message on to your members. It would be great to see a CURAC member's grandchild win one of these scholarships.

Bev Stefureak

Chair, Benefits Committee  
College and University Retiree Associations of Canada /Associations de retraités des universités et collèges du Canada (CURAC/ARUCC)

### Postscript from USRA:

According to the website <https://www.johnson.ca/scholarship> :

“The 2020 Johnson Inc. Scholarship Program is scheduled to open on April 22, 2020, however, this date may change as the situation around novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to evolve. Please visit this website for scholarship program updates and to access the application form and obtain full requirements and submission instructions.” The currently announced deadline for submission of the completed application form with official high school transcript of final year marks is July 15, 2020.

## Message from Saskatoon Council on Aging

The safety of older adults and the community is paramount. The Saskatoon Council on Aging is playing their part to flatten the curve for our healthcare system. We have cancelled programs and activities until June. Our phone lines remain open and staff are working remotely. Any senior needing help to get groceries or needing a friendly volunteer caller may contact a new volunteer group called the YXE Community Response to COVID-19. Their email is [yxecovid19help@gmail.com](mailto:yxecovid19help@gmail.com). Their hotline is 306-361-4357. There are also many other organizations that are helping. To keep updated visit our website [www.scoa.ca](http://www.scoa.ca) and click on the COVID-19 banner. ***We will get through this together! Please pass this email on to others. Print the COVID-19 Resources for Seniors page (next page) and share with those who do not have email!***

June Gawdun

Executive Director  
Saskatoon Council on Aging

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# COVID-19 Resources for Seniors



## Grocery Delivery

YXE Community Response to COVID 19  
Hotline: 306-361-4357  
yxecovid19help@gmail.com

CHEP Good Food Inc.  
306-655-4575

## Phone Support

YXE Community Response to COVID 19  
Hotline: 306-361-4357  
yxecovid19help@gmail.com

Canadian Red Cross -  
Friendly Phone program for Saskatchewan  
1-306-216-6602

## Community Resources

211 Saskatchewan  
Call 2-1-1

## Health Questions

Saskatchewan Healthline 8-1-1

**NEW:** Doctors can  
provide appointments  
by telephone -  
Contact your physician's office  
for more information

Saskatoon Council on Aging [SCOA] PH 306-652-2255  
www.scoa.ca | admin@scoa.ca