From the UVRA President

We are now well into 2013, so I hope you are keeping your resolutions! The Board has continued to work hard, with good progress in a number of areas identified at the retreat in November.

Today, I want to welcome Linda Metters as our latest addition to the Board. She agreed to serve as Secretary. Linda started at UVic in 1990 as the secretary to Bob McQueen (Vice-President, Finance). Subsequently, Linda stayed in Accounting Services as secretary to Bob Worth (Executive Director of Financial Services), followed by Murray Griffith. She retired in 2008, but came back to work for Administrative Support Services in 2010, and now works in various departments on campus. Clearly, Linda brings experience and great skills to her position on the Board.

There are a number of positions on the Board and in the Committees that will become vacant at the end of this administrative year (at the June AGM). So if you are interested in serving on the Board or the Events Committee, or the Benefits Committee, please contact Isobel Dawson <idawson(at)uvic.ca>.

Serving usually means making or finding the time. My own involvement gives me much satisfaction. But we need your help too, no matter how busy you think you are.
It was identified at the retreat in November that we should try and raise our profile in the University. One way in which we have tried to do this is to circulate our newsletter to all the departments in the University.

Thanks to Peter Liddell and Lois Jones, we are hosting a forum to outline the EHB, Dental and Travel Insurance that has been developed with Johnson Inc. as an option to the policy currently offered by Pacific Blue Cross.

We also finalized the proposal for the Elder College. We connected with units in the University who shared our interests and goals, such as the Alumni and Development Office.

Jamie Cassels, our incoming President, has expressed an interest in meeting with the UVRA to see how we can work together.

We are in the process of drafting a Memo of Understanding between the UVRA and the University that expresses a strong working relationship.

Of course, the Masterminds Series is starting in April.

I would be remiss if I didn’t comment on the outstanding success of the various activities that have been offered through the Events Committee under the amazing direction and energy of Winona Pugh. The last few events have been oversubscribed indicating the popularity of these activities and the enthusiastic support of our members.

Volunteer Appreciation Week is coming up in April. So, here is my acknowledgement and thanks for the many UVRA volunteers, without whom we would not have an Association. There must have been 1,000’s of volunteer hours contributed per year to help the UVRA function, from volunteering at the office, serving on the committees, taking on specific tasks, sending out information, making sure our finances are in order, compiling and distributing the newsletter, and other jobs - too many to mention.

With your encouragement and help we will continue to try and keep the UVRA a vibrant organization that serves the needs of all UVic retirees and especially our members. Through the efforts of Kathy Harris and Linda Metters, you will have received by now a survey to solicit your input on how we can better serve your needs and enhance our effectiveness. Please take time to complete the survey and return it in the pre-paid envelope.

Spring is the air and beauty is all around us. It is certainly one of my favorite times of the year when everything is fresh and new again.

David Docherty, President

UVRA Volunteer Recognition

During National Volunteer Week celebrated annually in April, the UVRA will recognize their volunteers with an on-campus luncheon, to show appreciation for the many hours they have contributed to keep the office staffed, and to serve on committees and on the Board. Invitations to honour those special members will be mailed by April 5, 2013.

Kathy Harris
Masterminds — a reminder

The Masterminds lecture series highlights the continuing contributions of the University of Victoria’s retirees to the University and to the community. With the generous support of the University of Victoria, the UVic Retirees Association and the Centre on Aging, a series of four free lectures by UVic Retirees will be presented each Wednesday from April 10th through May 1st.

To obtain a complete description of the following presentations, you are referred to the January 2013 edition of the “Grey Matters!” newsletter. (Google ‘UVRA’ and click ‘Newsletters’)

April 10, 2013 • Dr. Ed Ishiguro
“Probiotics for Better Health: Time to Switch Gears”

April 17, 2013 • Dr. Howie Wenger
“Gearing Up For High Performance: The Athlete’s Quest”

April 24, 2013 • Dr. Reg Mitchell
“Using Chemistry to Enhance Our Bodies: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly”

May 1, 2013 • Professor Juliana Saxton
“An Unusual Job for a Lady: The Intriguing Role of an Orator”

Lectures start at 7:00 p.m. Harry Hickman Building, Room 105, University of Victoria. Please register by calling 250-721-6369.
If you do not have a UVic parking permit, evening permits are available in all parking lots for $2.25. Parking lot #4, near the stadium, is the closest.

Dave Turkington

New Friends (see page one of the January 2013 issue)

The Gabriola Handbell Ringers were chuffed [delighted – ed.] to see some of us on the front page of Grey Matters!
This year we have two challenges: The new minister has to be welcomed at a special service, and our church celebrates its 100th year of serving Gabriola Island.

The ringers come from the United Church congregation, from the Anglican congregation and from the community. Only one ringer has had previous experience, and it has been interesting to see how the group have not only learnt techniques, but also, in some cases, to read music. Some of our accomplishments: a concert with the Island Singers, hymns during services, and four bells setting the solemn air of a memorial service. These activities have brought much pleasure to the community. Ringing is also keeping the brain alert, say the ringers.

Grey Matters! is very interesting. You have some fascinating lectures. Thank you.

Submitted by Margaret Taylor

We welcome our new members

Graham Donachie (Mail Distribution Services)
Christina Hantel-Fraser (Human and Social Development)
Marietta Mitchell (Library)
Lynn Pattison (Library)
Lynne Woodruff (Library)

George Smith
Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

... is a supervised walking/talking program for inactive older adults created by Kristina Kowalski, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education at UVic.

Kathy Harris took part, and reports with Peter:
Kristina’s program consists of monitoring candidates on 3 walks per week for 16 continuous weeks. Before the walking could get underway, Kristina assured herself that all applicants were sufficiently fit by running physical and mental indoor tests.
In groups of 20 at first, people briskly walked 15 minutes after the warm-up, then gradually increased to 45 minutes or more, walking trails all over town. Kristina faithfully supervised each group (11 in all per week). She’d encourage us to walk as fast as comfortably possible and to talk with one another as we walked. That resulted in those people necessarily keeping together who were walking at the same speed.
About 100 folks took part. Our progress was monitored through periodical, physical and cognitive testing in the McKinnon Building after six, nine, twelve and sixteen weeks. More than 20 student volunteers helped out with testing, supervising and evaluating. Many have plans to go on to graduate school or med school and are looking for valuable research experience and opportunities to work with different populations.
Kristina had notified the UVRA in August already, and a number of us stepped up: Kathy, Margaret Robertson, James Pearce, Jim Currie and Peter Zingeler.

Kathy writes: Personally, I found this program to be of great benefit for me both physically and mentally, and I feel much better for doing it. Another member of my group is Ted Grant, a well-known photographer, famous for taking the picture of Pierre Trudeau sliding down the banister in 1968. Ted received an honorary doctorate of laws degree in 2008 from UVic. Here is what he had to say: "It not only helped us become healthier folks, but most certainly fostered many lasting acquaintances. We may not remember a name, but the face of a smiling member of the group and a warm ‘good morning greeting’ were a bonding factors for many.” The program has ended now, and many of us are continuing the exercise as we meet on different trails, be it Lochside, Gordon Head, Willows Beach, Beacon Hill Park, the Gorge or UVic.

Margaret: I really enjoyed this program. It provided a routine, but also flexibility, so that, if we were away, we could still walk. Some of my walking was done in the Rockies and in the UK. We were also able to walk at speeds that were appropriate for us individually, so the program did not become a competition. I enjoyed meeting new people, and I hope I will still see some of them in the months to come since I plan to continue walking. We also had great weather, which added to the pleasure of participating. Kristina’s care and encouragement added a great deal to the experience, and I look forward to seeing the results of her research.

James: Like Kathy, I feel the program has provided both physical and cognitive benefits for me, and the social engagement with the participants was most enjoyable, as can be seen from their cheerful countenance on page 1. I wish to personally thank Kristina and her active volunteers Greg, Jasmine, Megan, Melissa, Ashley and Jeff (remembering six is the best I can do) and others for their work to make the program such a delightful experience.
Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds (continued)

Jim: Helen and I were late-comers to the program, but we soon caught up. We both enjoyed the camaraderie that Kristina and her colleagues encouraged. The walking and stretching regimen, increasing pace and distance were noticeably beneficial for me. The cognitive tests were interesting and challenging. But I doubt that I got brighter as I became more fit!

We wish Kristina and her colleagues all the best as they pursue their careers. Her comments will appear in the Summer issue.

Poetry

One of our retirees sent in a sample of Stephen Brodsky’s poetry. The opening passage from his novel The Kali Pact describes the heat and colour and adventure of India. Ed.

... Then the thump, jerk and roar as the craft touched down and taxied to a small warehouse-looking terminal. Simon’s first close-up glimpse of this new world, as old and mysterious as time, was of air rippling with heat, its shimmers distorting the fissured runway like a trick mirror. Now the green terraces he’d seen from the air seemed to shrink to a beckoning illusion—the first nasty trick India played on its newest feringhe. The plane rolled slap-slap-slap across the boiling tarmac and came to a sighing halt at the terminal. The dropping whine of a turbine died, and weary passengers stood up stiffly, butting each other in the aisle as they angled to haul luggage down from the overhead bins—fat gentlemen sweating in ties and turbans, a few in dhotis, women graceful in saris, some in shalwar kameez, gold wrist rings jangling.

The forward door was already open while the ramp was being positioned on the runway. Sticky warmth flooded in as Simon joined the press of Indians and Kashmiris shuffling to the exit. As he took his first step onto the ramp, the heat struck him full force, head-on like a huge velvet fist.

He felt awkwardly large and floridly alien among his dark dhoti-and-sari clad companions, as they spilled around him onto the boiling tarmac in a sea of rattling Urdu and Hindi, with occasional English words like peaks above clouds—“Wo customs shed hai.”—“Tumhara passport lao.” Most of the voices were women’s, plaintive, scolding their men for crimes Simon couldn’t imagine. How much is there for a fellow to get wrong, he wondered, just by standing up and getting off a plane? He was hearing the emphatic voices of the East for the first time.

(c) Stephen Brodsky

Editor’s Job Description, an excerpt:

... and let’s assume that most of these former UVic employees are interested to learn what their former colleagues and their friends are doing in retirement, and what indeed may be happening at UVic.

Our newsletter then is well-positioned to provide information of a personal nature, news of professional interest, accounts of unusual and surprising events in the lives of our retirees and their families, but also stories of the banalities of life told in a compelling way, or by a seasoned liar.

Tall order, you say. True, not every issue of our little periodical can boast all these nuggets. But it’s the editor’s job to give it a shot.

Peter Zingeler
Dear Retiree, this is my invitation to participate in the

UVic Speakers Bureau program

The bureau is a free community service provided by volunteers from among UVic faculty, staff, graduate students and retirees. For the past 32 years, the bureau has brought UVic speakers together with community groups, schools, clubs and other organizations in Greater Victoria and across Southern Vancouver Island.

More than 150 of volunteers signed up as speakers last year, and the UVic Retirees made a significant contribution to the program with more than 100 presentations. Through more than 350 speaking engagements each year, bureau members reach an audience of 12,000 people in our region.

The membership form (http://bit.ly/uvic-speakers-join) covers the information we need for the 2013-14 season. Your response by May 3rd will allow us to meet the printing deadlines for the new guide.

Mandy Crocker, Coordinator

The Year of the Snake

About 56 members and guests met at the Crystal Jade Restaurant on February 12th for our annual celebration of the Chinese New Year.

After a varied buffet lunch, which included some New Year specialties, we heard an excellent talk by May Q. Wong, author of the recently published A Cowherd in Paradise.

The book tells the life story of May’s parents, and recounts the impact on them of Canada’s discriminatory head tax in the first half of the 20th century, which forced them to live apart for 25 years of their marriage – her mother in China and her father in Canada.

She read several extracts from the book, which brought social history to life with its fascinating details of everyday life in both countries, truly a timely, and for us, a poignant narrative of two people’s journey. The audience was spellbound, and there was a long queue afterwards to buy a copy of the book.

Thanks are due to Winona Pugh and the Events Committee for organizing this and other rewarding events.

May, an MPA grad of UVic, said that more of herself and of her book can be gleaned from MayQWong.shawwebspace.ca

She will be holding readings in Victoria at the Nellie McClung Library (6:30 pm, Thursday April 25), and at the Esquimalt Library (7 pm, Thursday May 16). Note that reservations for these two readings are required; see the "upcoming events" page on her web-site for details, and for details of upcoming readings outside of Victoria.

Submitted by John Fitch
Opus Agriculturae

John Fitch has just published a translation from the Latin of Palladius’ *The Work of Farming* (*Opus Agriculturae*).

Written during the late Roman Empire (400 AD), Palladius’ manual lists farming activities on a month-by-month basis in the Mediterranean region. It covers the growing of grape-vines, olives, field crops, vegetables, as well as livestock, fowl and bees.

This is the basis of the original “Mediterranean diet”. By virtue of its practical orientation, Palladius’ book was the chief source through which Greek and Roman farming knowledge passed into the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance.

John’s interest in farming history reflects his own experience as a small farmer (sheep and fruit trees) on the Saanich Peninsula.

Peter’s Peeves

I have a bone to pick with Moose, my Yorkshire terrier. He’s using me and my good nature to take him for walks, so he can meet other dogs. I am his dating service. I should be benefitting from his chance encounters, but I don’t, because he acts like it’s all about him: his attention-getting, his little situations, his sniffing, his growling at the leashed Alsatians, his getting tangled and sniffing again.

When is it my time?   Ed.

photo by Pearson Morey

University Club

A very special event is coming up on Saturday, April 20 - the Blues, Blue Buck and Beef Bash Dinner & Dance, with music by the legendary Bill Johnson Blues Band, and pairings hosted by Phillips Brewing Co. ($39.95). Make your reservation soon!

On Sunday May 12th is the popular Mother’s Day Celebration – a sumptuous buffet ($39.95).

Ongoing regular events include the International Buffet Lunches from 11:30 am to 2 pm every Wednesday in the Main Dining Room ($14.95 plus HST) as well as the $19.95 *prix fixe* menu in the Camas Room.

To reserve: telephone (250) 721-7935, e-mail reservat@uvic.ca

Submitted by David Leeming
Physical Activity and Wellness Corner #11

Congratulations to those of you who were involved in Kristina Kowalski’s Walking/Talking study. From all the feedback, it sounds like it was a great success and, more importantly, those who participated felt the many benefits from committing to regular physical activity. A recent headline in National Post read “Alzheimer’s disease can be delayed, prevented with light regular exercise (sic)”, even if it is just taking brisk walks in 10 minute bouts a few times a day. The headline is based on a review by the Ontario Brain Institute of almost 900 studies; so the data are really compelling.

Today however, I thought I would comment on other, more strenuous forms of activity that may appeal to some of you. I know many of our members are physically very active and may be interested in trying a slightly different approach. Certainly one of the problems associated with regular physical activity is the boredom from doing the same old routines. Most of us are familiar with the usual guidelines for aerobic work consisting of long periods of moderate intensity work, such as 30 minutes per day for 5 days per week, which can also be done in 10 minute increments, as described above. This type of physical activity will increase cardiovascular or aerobic fitness and decrease the risk of a large number of diseases, especially cardiovascular disease and now dementia. However, you can also get significant improvements in aerobic fitness and other health benefits by working more intensely. **There is clearly a note of caution if you wish to increase the intensity of your physical activity. You should make sure you have medical clearance before upping the work rate, and please make sure there are no contraindications.**

For most of us, working a little harder does not pose a higher risk, and the additional benefits - compared to working at a moderate level of intensity – are significant, especially if you have slowly increased your work rate.

You will recall from other articles I have written, that 20 minutes of vigorous activity, 3 times per week, is just as good as 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, 5 times per week. This is because the number of calories burned is the same. Many of the benefits from physical activity are related to the number of calories we burn each week, the recommended number being 900-1,000.

However, there are other ways of exercising that will produce similar or even better effects. The term “interval training” is used to describe one approach to exercise which provides a variation to the usual routine. It really is working hard for a short period and then easing off for a while and doing it again...and again. For example, if you choose 30 minutes of physical activity, you can work hard for **30 seconds to 3 minutes**, then take it easy for the same amount of time, and then work hard again until your full 30 minutes have elapsed.

My own form of aerobic or cardiovascular activity is on the stationary bike: after a 5-10 minute warm-up, I will increase the resistance and pedal hard for 1 minute, then take it easier for 1 minute, then hard for 2 minutes, and take it easy for two minutes; and then hard for three minutes and then easy for 3 minutes. I repeat that if I have the time, the inclination and the energy! If you need a little longer rest you can take it. You can play around with the time of working hard and taking it easy.

I find myself watching the timer rather than counting pedal revolutions! You can apply the same principle to any physical activity such as walking, running, rowing, or water-based exercises. When you think about it, many of the exercise-dance-type classes incorporate this way of exercising.

In the next newsletter I will describe another form of interval training that has become very popular. So if you have the medical clearance and are looking for a change to the usual physical activity routines, you may wish to try interval training. Let me know how it goes!

David Docherty
A Success Story of Passion and Commitment

Viking Air was established in 1970 as a small company producing upgraded aircraft systems and parts for the much larger Aerospace division of Bombardier Inc. Realizing a gap between their production levels and the services provided to the customers by the larger company, Viking Air acquired the rights to produce two of the legacy de Havilland Canada airplane designs and to service the older de Havilland planes in 1983. The timing was ideal, as the economic down turn and the versatility of the de Havilland designs made the DHC Otter and DHC Beaver preferred alternatives to the private jets produced by their Eastern competitor. The production quality combined with the outstanding customer service made Viking Air one of the most successful aircraft manufacturers in the world. Over the next 25 years Viking Air acquired the type certificates and production rights to all of the de Havilland Canada planes including the Chipmunk, Otter, Beaver, Buffalo, Caribou, and Dash 7.

The DHC Twin Otter soon revolutionized Canadian aviation history and was in demand around the world. Designed for the difficult environment of Canada’s north, the de Havilland design proved its value as the little plane that could – do almost anything. From landing inside a small space in the soft tundra for a medical evacuation to transporting businessmen commuting between major cities, the short takeoff and landing capacity and the versatile interior of the Twin Otter opened Canada’s north, and introduced air commuting to North America. The company soon grew from 135 employees to 576, opening a new building on Victoria International Airport lands and adding a Final Assembly division in Calgary. The headquarters remain firmly established in Victoria, and the company continues to operate as a genuine family business.
Event report — Viking Air (continued)

Because of the overwhelming response by our members, the UVRA was privileged to have three plant visits provided. Each one included a video session and a detailed learning tour of the new manufacturing facility housed in a pre-World War 2 airplane hangar. Our expert guides Angie and Suzanne, who couldn't be stumped, not only navigated us through each fabricating station, but provided us with insight, knowledge and gentle humour into the operation of this successful company.

In December of last year Viking Air was recognized provincially with awards for Exporter of the Year and the Premiers Award for Job Creation. The full story of Viking Air and the de Havilland legacy is available on the Viking Air website at www.VikingAir.com

After the extensive tour, we enjoyed watching the airport activities over a wonderful lunch at the nearby Spitfire Grill.

Winona Pugh

Everybody has living, lively heroes

... and mine said:

“How can I begin anything new with all of yesterday in me?” — Leonard Cohen

“Unless both sides win, no agreement can be permanent” — Jimmy Carter

“We’re all in this alone” — Lily Tomlin

“Forget the past!” — Nelson Mandela

Ed.