

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Here comes the Sun! As I write on a cold grey day in May, I am hopeful that the sun will be shining and the air comfortably warm by the time you read this. At least the spring flowers seem undeterred. There is a profusion of cherry blossoms in my neighbourhood and the spunky daffodils in the garden seem determined to push through regardless.

Like the cold weather, my time as your president nears its end. I have enjoyed this role, where I have come to know many of you better than I did previously, and had the opportunity to meet retirees at other Canadian post-secondary institutions through CURAC. Yes, there was work involved, but the load was shared willingly by the UGRA executive and I am grateful for their collegiality and assistance. I'm confident my successor, Alan Filewod, will enjoy the same support. In particular, I thank past president Peter Krell, who showed me the ropes and helped pull them when needed. I shall try to emulate his example during Alan's term at the helm.

Special mention goes to two directors whose terms end in June - Sue Wi-Afedzi and Vikki Tremblay. Sue's expertise in digital communication has been indispensable. She maintained the website, our list-serve and the membership list, and moderated our Zoom meetings. This was especially appreciated during pandemic restrictions, to enable the continuation of executive meetings, forums and AGMs. Her capabilities are both miraculous and mysterious to me. Advertising revenues are essential to meet costs for the newsletter production and presentation of the forums. Vikki's contributions as advertising coordinator and also initiator of adventures have been invaluable. Over the past six years, Vikki organized several excellent UGRA travel packages. Though COVID-19 imposed a temporary hiatus, the recent trip to Costa Rica and upcoming wilderness experience in Churchill are indicative of her efforts to provide interesting and informative excursions for our enjoyment. Peter Krell's recollections of Costa Rica follows. Thankfully, Vikki has generously agreed to continue assisting us with group travel.



I am pleased that two retirees have volunteered for the open director positions: Jane Alexander and Teresa Crease. We also welcome nominations from other interested members. All will stand for election at the AGM June 15. In addition, I thank Clarence Swanton who stepped forward last fall to fill the vacant 2022-24 seat as an appointee of the executive, subject to confirmation by UGRA members at the AGM. Clarence has been fully engaged on your behalf and will represent us at the CURAC AGM in Saskatoon May 31 to June 2.

Two years ago, in celebration of UGRA's 30th anniversary, we initiated a drive to raise \$30,000 for the UGRA Scholarship, to double the annual award from \$1,500 to \$3,000 in perpetuity. Due to your generous donations, that fund is now at \$27,500 - only \$2,500 short of our goal. Please consider helping us reach our target by the time of the AGM, contributing significantly to the educational aspirations of deserving students who are a child, grandchild or great grandchild of a UGRA member. Please see <https://ugra.ca/scholarship>.

Thank you for indulging my (some might say pathological) "need to be needed" over the past year. I hope I have served you well.

*Pat Shewen
President*

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UGRA

Editor: Cathy Ralston

www.ugra.ca

Annual General Meeting 2023 | Thursday, June 15, 2023, 10:00 am - noon

Arboretum Centre (doors open at 9:30) or by Zoom (will open at 9:30 am)

10:00 Keynote Address: Cybersecurity 101

Presented by Students in the Master of Cybersecurity and Threat Intelligence Program, Department of Computer Science, University of Guelph

Annual General Meeting Agenda (approximately 10:45 a.m.)

Welcome and Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of the June 16, 2022 AGM

(https://ugra.ca/sites/uoguelph.ca.ugra/files/uploads/2022/DRAFTAGM_Minutes2022-06-16.pdf)

Business Arising from the Minutes of the 2022 AGM

Reports from the Executive Committee

- President's report
- Treasurer's report, report of the reviewer and nomination of the reviewer for 2023
- Activities/newsletter report
- Membership report and communications
- Other Reports
- Report on UGRA Scholarship endowment drive
- United Way

Election of the Directors

Questions and Comments from Members

Transfer of Presidency

New President's Remarks

Other Business

Adjournment

Call for Nominations

The UGRA Executive Committee is the leadership team that acts on behalf of the interests of University of Guelph Retirees by:

- Advocating for retirees on University matters such as pensions, benefits, and privileges
- Communicating University news relevant to UofG retirees
- Organizing educational and social events for UofG retirees

At the annual general meeting in June, UGRA members elect persons to the Executive for a 2-year term. All UofG retirees are members of the UGRA, eligible to vote at the AGM and to hold an executive position.

The UGRA executive has five officers, appointed by the directors – president, vice president, past president, secretary, and treasurer – and seven directors at-large. Each director is elected for a 2-year term. With re-election at a subsequent AGM, a director may serve up to two additional, 2-year terms (six years total). The vice president serves for one year, transitions to the president in the following year, and then serves as past president for the third year. The positions of secretary and treasurer are normally for a 2-year period.

The value and strength of the UGRA depends on a strong executive committee. That strength comes through the nomination of persons willing to commit to building and sustaining the UGRA program. This involves participation in 10 executive meetings each year and volunteering to support and participate in other UGRA member activities.

If you would like to be part of the UGRA leadership team (executive committee), or if you know someone who would be a good candidate, please forward your nomination by email and copy the nominee indicating their willingness to stand for election, to the Chair of the UGRA Nomination Committee at ugra@uoguelph.ca. Please send as soon as possible to allow ample time for the membership to review the list of nominees prior to the annual general meeting. Many of our committees draw from the membership for help and to broaden participation. If you are interested in contributing to UGRA in a non-elected position, submit an expression of interest by email or by contacting any member of the Executive Committee.

UGRA 2022 Operating Statement and 2023 Budget

	2022		2023
	Budget	Actuals	Budget
Receipts			
Member Contributions	\$6,000	\$7,929	\$8,000
Interest	100	147	600
Ad Revenue	2,650	3,300	3,300
Total Receipts	\$8,750	\$11,376	\$11,900
Expenditures			
Newsletters	\$4,800	\$5,460	\$6,300
Website	1,000	1,000	1,000
Board Meetings	300	226	50
CURAC Membership	0	300	300
CURAC Conference	500	0	925
Scholarship Contribution	373	500	1,000
Office and Bank Fees	500	293	375
AGM	500	0	650
Fall Forum	500	620	650
Spring Forum	500	0	650
Total Expenses	\$8,699	\$8,399	\$11,900
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$51	\$2,977	\$0



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Pura Vida, UGRA in Costa Rica *By Peter Krell*

“Pura Vida” is an expression you can use in Costa Rica when you are lost for words. Though it translates to “pure or simple life”, it refers to the Tico (Costa Rican) way of life. Pura Vida has evolved to almost any kind of greeting - hello, good-bye, how are you, all is fine, thank you.

Vikki Tremblay, a member of the UGRA executive, organized this Collette Travel “World of Nature” tour to Costa Rica for UGRA members during COVID-19. The trip was February 19 to March 3, 2023, allowing us to “get back to normal” and exercise our travelling legs. Seven UGRA members were joined by four other Canadians and nine from the USA. We agreed not to talk politics and we got along well. Our tour organizer and guide was Christian (Chris) Mata-Bollina. Nature flows through Chris' veins. He has a University of Costa Rica degree in tropical forestry sciences and is currently Research Chair at the Research Centre for Sustainable Development. He was also the founder and current director of the Costa Rican Foundation for Ecological Restoration. Costa Rica, unlike many governments, takes preservation of its natural ecosystems seriously, funded in large part by a tightly regulated ecotourism industry. Suffice to say we became well educated about Costa Rica's natural and geographic history.

After arriving at San Jose, the group toured Tortuguero National Park on the Caribbean coast arriving there by boat. Two days later saw us at the Tirimbina Rainforest Centre via the San Carlos River featuring some intimidating hanging bridges. The now sleeping Arenal Volcano is a must see in Costa Rica, and some walked along its lava trail deposited during its 1968 eruption and floated through the wetlands of the Cano Negro Wildlife Refuge. Yes, we spent a lot of time on boats or rubber rafts, but somehow avoided mosquitoes.



Canadian Group of Seven UGRA Travellers: Janusz Jamrozik, Peter Krell, Eva Nagy, Jane Alexander, Bozena Jamrozik, Joan Dunbar, Sandra Ruston

From the volcano, we headed west to Playa Herradura on the Pacific coast and a visit to Manuel Antoni National Park. Later, on our last river cruise, we came face to face with Mike Tyson, not the boxer, but by the 18-foot Elder StatesCroc of the Táracoles' Rio Grande. During our 13-day tour, we experienced many natural wonders of Costa Rica. These are too numerous to list and difficult to express in words, so hopefully the attached photos suffice to give you a visual taste of our trip. We were treated to many birds like the ibis, blue heron and colourful macaws, gregarious coatis (Costa Rica's answer to our raccoons), ocelots, and all four monkey species, howlers (true to their name), white-faced (capuchin), spider and squirrel. Many animals like the sloth, bats, poison dart frogs and iguanas were only found by Chris' trained eyes since they are so well camouflaged or hidden in the undergrowth. Not to disappoint the botanist, there were many colourful plants like birds of paradise, red lobster claws, bougainvillea, just to mention a few. In addition to nature, we toured cocoa, coffee and pineapple plantations and “helped” make our own supper. All in all, we had a Pura Vida time in Costa Rica. See what you missed!



Ibis



Bird of Paradise



White-faced monkey (Capuchin)

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UGRA Spring Forum Report: “Water is Life”

Water was the subject of the day at UGRA's annual Spring Forum at the University of Guelph's Arboretum Centre on April 20. An audience of some 40 people, plus more zooming in, heard 2 guest speakers bring environmental and indigenous perspectives on what the first speaker, Arlene Slocombe, Executive Director of Wellington Water Watchers, called “water sustainability and engagement.”

Wellington Water Watchers (WWW) is a grass-roots NGO that formed out of the angry community response to Nestlé’s Aberfoyle water extraction plant in 2007. “Grass roots” in this case is more than a metaphor, because Nestlé’s extraction of 58 million cases of groundwater per year was seen as an immediate threat to regional environment and agricultural sustainability. Many in the community wondered how the Ontario government could justify licensing the sale of water for corporate profit while Indigenous communities less than an hour away struggled with boiled water advisories. Fifteen years later that is still the case.

Rallying under the slogan “water for life, not profit,” WWW spearheaded a wide community protest that challenged the government's licensing permit process. That process mandates public input but as WWW found out, that can be meaningless. In 2016, when Nestlé’s permit came up for renewal, over 25,000 people filed objections to no end. However, faced with reputational

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Recent Retirees

February 28, 2023

Sky Gilbert	Engl & Theatre Study
Ward Illsley	Student Housing Services
John Jansen	PA-Vineland
Margaret Stalker	LSD - Animal Health Lab

March 31, 2023

Beverly Buckie	Office Uni Librarian
Linda Hoffman	Res Finl Services
Carrie Steele	Career Services
Milan Mitrovic	OMAFRA Research Stns

April 30, 2023

Wayne Caldwell	Fac Env Des&Rurl Dev
Jim Fairles	LSD-Animal Hlth Lab
Cathy Genova	Hospitality Services
Stella Holley	Academic Programs
Wayne Johnston	Office Uni Librarian
Sherri Linseman	PR/SHS Environmental
Yanping Lou	Animal Biosciences
Deborah Lyons	Health & Perf Centre
Erika Madill	Campus Safety Office
Suzanne McKillop	Hospitality Services
Sandra Vadori	Hospitality Services
Brenda Van Esch	Hospitality Services

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I hope you are again enjoying exploring our world without the restrictions that COVID-19 had given us. The group that went to Costa Rica in February had a great time and Peter Krell reports on it elsewhere in this newsletter.

Just a reminder that the Churchill, Manitoba trip is available for August 21 to 26, 2023 and the tour company, Frontiers North presents the Belugas, Bears and Blooms Tour. We have secured 17 spots on this tour so you will want to book quickly.

At the Spring Forum, a few people noted the cost for the trip seems high. In our post-pandemic world, the cost of almost everything has skyrocketed. Travel/tourism is no exception. The return flight included in the package between Winnipeg and Churchill is almost \$2,000 per person. Unfortunately, we are living in a whole new world and everything is expensive. We hope you will consider joining us on this trip. Those who went in 2017 are still talking about how wonderful the trip was.

Here are some “Vik’s Tips” to help make your travel experience go a lot easier.

Vik’s Tips

Early morning flights are less crowded and have less of a chance of being delayed or late than late night flights.	When choosing flights , take into consideration that layovers need at least one and a half hours to get to your departure gate for the next leg of your flight.
Flying internationally? Take down the contact info and location for your country’s embassy in the destination country.	Checking your luggage? Buy an affordable air tag like an Apple Air Tag to put in your luggage and link to your phone. If it’s lost, you can track it on your phone.
Did you know if you pack a deck of cards in your carry-on, it will light up on x-rays and become a “red flag” for TSA?	Always take a photo of your luggage before traveling to speed up the process if it’s lost – and be in the photo so they know it is your bag.
Email yourself a copy of your passport and/or visa, health card, driver’s license, etc. If you lose them, it speeds up processing time to get a new one.	When you’re given a luggage claim ticket , take a picture of it with your phone. If you lose it, you can still claim your property without the hassle.
When going through security lines at the airport, go to the farthest to the left. Most people are right-handed so go to the right.	Never exchange your cash at airports. These conversion stands are known for having the worst exchange rates.

So now you know..... Safe travels everyone!

Passings

Marguerite Andersen	January 10, 2023
Alfreda Jackson	January 26, 2023
William Teesdale	February 2, 2023
Rita Burley	February 4, 2023
Pieter Groenevelt	February 10, 2023
J Derek Bewley	February 24, 2023
Mary Beverley-Burton	February 25, 2023
Mary Gatto	March 1, 2023
Cornelia Bertoli	March 6, 2023
Vince Bortolon	March 9, 2023
Florence Rilett	March 12, 2023
John Campbell	March 13, 2023
Robert Logan	March 14, 2023
Marian Wilkinson	March 15, 2023
Eileen Cabeldu	March 16, 2023
Anne Ciccia	March 23, 2023
Elizabeth Power	March 26, 2023
Joan Sephton	April 1, 2023
Peter Devries	April 4, 2023
Linda McKenzie-Cordick	April 17, 2023
Ellen Tom	April 25, 2023
Robert Davis	April 29, 2023

Group Insurance Benefits for Retirees

The University recently notified retirees in the “newer” plan design that premiums have increased for Extended Health Care (EHC) and Dental insurance benefits, provided by Sun Life. The new plan is in effect for those who retired after the mid 1990s. Those who retired before the mid 1990s are in the “old” plan and should see no change in premiums. The documents below that explain the benefits to which retirees are entitled are effective September 2008.

A copy of the letter sent to retirees can be found here:

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/system/files/Retiree%20Renewal%20Letter%202023%20%28NEW%20PLAN%29.pdf>.

To review benefits covered by the new plan look here:

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/system/files/Group%20Benefits%20for%20Retirees%20%28New%20Plan%29%20Booklet.pdf>.

To review benefits covered by the old plan look here:

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/system/files/Group%20Benefits%20for%20Retiree%20%28Old%20Plan%29%20Booklet.pdf>.

As coverage limits, documentation required, and claim procedures for particular medical services vary, it is advisable to sign in to Sun Life and check limits before accessing any service. <https://www.sunlife.ca/en/>.

In March, Sun Life changed their pharmacy benefits manager to Express Scripts. This permits direct billing by your pharmacy. If you are experiencing difficulty with direct billing, please advise your pharmacist of this change and contact Sun Life for more information if needed.

UGRA Spring Forum Report: “Water is Life” *Continued from pg 4*

damage, not just here but across North America, Nestlé sold its water extraction division. That was a “huge win” because it demonstrated the power of public mobilization, but it was at the same time a setback because the plants were sold to a private equity firm that was even less accountable than Nestlé.

The lesson learned for WWW was that the “pathway by ministry” doesn’t work, and that activists needed to learn that as a public issue, water may be non-partisan but it is not apolitical. Hence WWW sought to work “outside the bubble,” taking what Arlene Slocombe refers to as the “10,000 foot view” that sees water health as a key issue in “climate chaos,” fueled by capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy and patriarchy. Consequently, WWW has adapted an intersectional method of community building, working closely with the Centre for Indigenous Sovereignty. The WWW model of campaign-based activism to reduce harm, engage the truth of the climate crisis and shift values and consciousness has led to participation in numerous environmental issues across the province.

Our second speaker, Dr. Susan Chiblow, joined us by Zoom to address water health through an Indigenous lens. Dr. Chiblow came to the University of Guelph in 2021 as an Assistant Professor in Indigenous Environmental Stewardship in the School of Environmental Sciences, following a long career as a water activist and public policy consultant. She began by showing a map of the Great Lakes region with their traditional names as known by the First Nations of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Huron Wendak peoples, and personalized the issue by detailing her ancestral relationship to cross-cultural learning. She asked us “Are you ready?” Ready to learn through acceptance and participation, to stand with knowledge and change the narrative. Are we ready to learn what Indigenous Peoples have always known?

Susan Chiblow reminded us that the peoples of Turtle Island were “not discovered, not lost, not conquered and did not ask or want to be discovered by Europe.” We have often heard the phrase that “water is life” but she showed us how in Indigenous knowledge that this is true in the most literal sense. Referring to the 2008 Chiefs of Ontario Water Declaration that was issued in Dr. Chiblow’s home community of Garden River First Nation, she spoke of the key principles underlying water health: we are filled with water; water is imbued with spirit; women are the keepers of water (and men are the protectors of the water keepers); water is connected to the power of the moon. And finally – and this, to my mind is where the question “Are you ready?” is critical – the declaration states “We announce and proclaim our role as the First Peoples – the original caretakers- with rights and responsibilities to defend and ensure the protection, availability, and purity of all waters for the survival of present and future generations.”



Ailsa Craig

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Did you have questions?

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Did you know?

The main objectives of the University of Guelph Retirees Association are to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between retirees and the University of Guelph and to advocate for our members in matters such as access to university facilities and resources on retiree benefits. The UGRA works hard to keep our members up to date on the University community through emails, newsletters, and meetings and from time to time, also shares information that is of more general interest to retirees.

The UGRA is run by a group of fellow retirees who freely volunteer their time and talents. The funds needed to run the UGRA come mostly from our members' contributions. With your support we are able to maintain an electronic presence, produce the newsletters, as well as hold the AGM, Spring and Fall Forums and other events and activities to keep you connected to the university and fellow retirees. You can send feedback by email or physical mail.

Be a Contributing Member of the UGRA (2023)

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, our informative website (<https://ugra.ca/>), and our various on-campus functions throughout the year. An annual contribution of \$25 from you goes a long way in sustaining the UGRA so we can continue to work on your behalf.

University of Guelph Retirees Association Contributing Membership (2023) Form

YES! I want to help promote the welfare of retirees and to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between retirees and the University by contributing to the UGRA's administrative costs.

My contribution is \$.....

Name..... Date.....

Address.....

City/Province..... Postal Code.....

Email..... Phone.....

(Note that the email address will be used for UGRA communications only.)

Please make your cheque payable to the University of Guelph Retirees Association. Mail this form with your cheque to: University of Guelph Retirees Association • PO Box 48-4916 • University of Guelph • Guelph Ontario, N1G 2W1

Electronic Payment

Instead of mailing in a cheque, you can now make a secure donation to UGRA electronically using PayPal and your credit card on our web page at: <https://ugra.ca/join-us>. You can also use e-transfer to pay using the email address ugraEtransfers@gmail.com. If you are new to e-transfers, we have provided a short primer <https://ugra.ca/join-us>



How to Contact Us

Don't hesitate to contact us with your questions, comments, and concerns. To advocate on your behalf, we truly want, and need, to hear from you. Here are the ways to contact us – don't forget to provide your name and contact information in your message so we can follow up promptly.

By Email:

ugra@uoguelph.ca

By using the 'Contact Us' tab on the UGRA website:

<https://ugra.ca>

By Phone:

519-824-4120, Ext. 52197

By Letter:

University of Guelph
Retirees Association
P.O. Box 48-4916
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

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