UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
RETIREES ASSOCIATION

UGRA newsletter

Fall 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I write to you as one of my first tasks as the incoming president of UGRA, and as I try to temper my disappointment that the end of summer is here! The nights are cooling. The days are getting shorter. The bears are hyperphagic as they prepare to hibernate. And the student traffic around campus is more frenzied than I have ever seen it. And Starbucks coffee lineups are all the way down Winegard Walk! But I digress. First off, I'd like to give a huge shout out to Clarence Swanton for stepping up to the plate for 2 years of yeoman duty as our outgoing President. He helped us refine our programs, stimulated a bunch of creative thinking and new ideas to enhance our association, and kept a steady hand on the organizational tiller the whole time. A big thanks also goes out to all of our volunteer board members for their friendship and collegial approach to making the last year a success. And a warm welcome to our 2 new board members for this year, Bev Hale (School of Environmental Sciences) and Betty-Anne McBey (Pathobiology). Also, Heather Bailey (Animal Biosciences) takes over from Julie Hutchins as our retiree coordinator with United Way. Together, we're committed to bringing you informative newsletters, educational speakers, opportunities for life-long learning, making scholarships available for your child, grandchild, or great-grandchild, and providing tips on everything from financial and estate planning to healthy aging strategies to stave off the



vagaries of time. Ah yes, the ultimate human ambition! So, stay tuned for regular email updates on our programs and activities. As always, UGRA is financially sustained by voluntary donations by our general membership. Head over to our website for details at: https://ugra.ca/.

This fall is also a pivotal period for the United Way campaign of Guelph-Wellington-Dufferin that supports so many community agencies that offer help to those in need. It's also been a cornerstone of philanthropy for the UofG, as we have one of the most successful United Way campaigns of any university in Canada, regardless of size. And as retirees, 134 of you donated a total of nearly $113,000 towards the 2025 campaign! Incredible, but not surprising to me as I have always felt the generosity, empathy, and community spirit that defines the UofG and its employees. Maybe it's partly due to our rural roots, but I think it's just a core

Continued on pg 2

In This Issue

p 1 President's Message
p 2 Fall Forum
AGM Speaker Report
p 3 UGRA Goes Green
Passings
p 4 United Way Update
Recent Retirees
CURAC
p 5 Report on the AGM
p 6 AGRA Adventures
Cheer on the Gryphons
p 8 How to Contact Us
Do You Have Questions



Editor: Cathy Ralston
www.ugra.ca

UGRA Fall Forum

Save the Date . . .



Wednesday, November 11, 2026 from 2 to 4 pm

Arboretum Centre • Doors Open at 1:30 pm

Online option available using Microsoft Teams (opens at 1:30 pm)

Parking is free • Refreshments and light snacks served

Topics include: Strategies for healthy aging

continued from pg 1

philosophy that permeates this place. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you'll find more details about our United Way campaign, and our new donation goal for this year. My personal mantra has always been that, "You get back more than you ever give", so consider contributing to the United Way, either here or in your home community.

If you haven't been following UofG news lately, you'll be pleased to know that UofG successfully lowered its projected operating deficit for the 2025/2026 fiscal year. And, thanks to a massive $6.4-billion provincial funding injection into Ontario's postsecondary sector, the institution now forecasts fully balanced budgets for the next 3 years. The next few years won't be easy, but the senior leadership group seems committed to investing in the future, building long-term financial stability, and protecting our core programs and institutional values. Nobel goals indeed. And on top of all that, our athletes are still rocking it at the local, provincial and national levels. GO GRYPHONS!

What's up next? We've scheduled our Fall Forum for November 11 from 2-4 p.m. Come in person or take part online. More details to come.

And just a FYI!.... The University of Guelph Retirees Association aims 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. The UGRA endeavors to keep you up to date on the university community through emails, newsletters, and meetings. All UofG retirees are automatically members of UGRA, and, in turn of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC). CURAC offers many benefits to us, including attractive discounts for insurance, travel, hearing aids, eyewear, and retirement living, as well as access to educational events at participating institutions. For details on CURAC benefits, check their website https://curac.ca.

The UGRA is run by retirees who volunteer their time and talents on your behalf. Funds needed to run our Association come mainly through voluntary members' contributions as well as newsletter advertising. Feel free to send feedback or suggestions for programs or topics for speakers by email to ugra@uoguelph.ca.

Rich Moccia
President

UGRA Newsletter Goes Green in 2027

By Owen Roberts

Starting next year, your UGRA newsletter will be published online only. At the UGRA annual general meeting in June, members accepted a motion from the executive board to “go green” and stop publishing print versions of the newsletter.

Most other associations have already made this change, for practical and fiscal reasons.

First, printing our newsletter consumes 50% of our association's entire budget. This cost affects our ability to offer other programs.

As well, moving to electronic publishing gives us a more flexible format than our highly defined, restrictive eight-page print-copy layout.

And finally, it's environmentally sensitive to make the switch - no paper, no ink and no delivery.

For current or back issues, newsletters are posted and archived online at https://ugra.ca/newsletters.

More than 1,600 of our 2,550 retiree members have email addresses to which the newsletter will be sent. Make sure UGRA has your most recent email address by emailing an updated address to ugra@uoguelph.ca.

In other UGRA newsletter news, we're delighted that our long-time volunteer managing editor, Cathy Ralston, will continue serving in this vital capacity. Thanks, Cathy! Also, thanks to your volunteer graphics person, Marie Puddister, for her excellent job of making the newsletter look amazing.

Passings

Andre Peloquin	January 13, 2026
Nancy McPherson	April 22, 2026
Barbara Funk	April 29, 2026
Samuel Luker	May 1, 2026
Thomas Herrmann	May 4, 2026
Bertram Christie	May 20, 2026
Isabel Wilkie	June 6, 2026
Carolyn Pawley	June 8, 2026
David Farrell	June 16, 2026
Sherran Bowers	June 18, 2026
Shirley Bannon	June 23, 2026
Gisela Kittler	June 23, 2026
Benjamin Lu	July 2, 2026
George Palinkas	July 5, 2026
Vernon Hart	July 10, 2026
Mei-Fei Elrick	July 15, 2026
Helen Erison	August 24, 2026
Kevin Ecott	August 29, 2026
Elva Kocher	September 6, 2026

Town homes • Independent living and retirement apartments • Assisted living and memory care suites.



Celebrating **life** and community in the **Village**

Come and explore our unique community situated within the Village by the Arboretum in Guelph.

Book your tour! **226-251-3065**

The Village of Arbour Trails
32 Bayberry Drive, Guelph

schlegelvillages.com

United Way Update

by Heather Bailey

Fall means many things to University of Guelph retirees, including a new United Way campaign - where we will join students, staff and faculty as well as many other members of the community to raise funds that are much needed by so many in our communities. We will make Better Possible, Guelph's campaign theme.

The campaign kick-off was held on September 17 at Shelldale Family Gateway and EarlyON Centre. At the event, several speakers highlighted the important role agencies receiving UW funding are in enabling youth to reach their potential, become more resilient and better able to contribute to the community.

UGRA members are an important part of the University's UW fundraising efforts. In the 2025 campaign, 134 retirees raised $112,955 - for the 2026 Campaign the UGRA board is challenging us all to "Do Better" by raising $120,000 and increasing the number of retiree donors by 10%!

Remember, the amount of the donation is not what it is important, it is the fact that you are choosing to support our community. You can donate here: https://www.unitedwaycampaign.uoguelph.ca/retiree-donors/.

If you no longer live in the Guelph area, you can direct your donation to the community you now live in - just make a comment on the form.

If you would prefer, donations can also be made through Canada Helps. Choose Guelph Wellington Dufferin United Way from the list of charities and indicate on the comment line "U of G Retiree Campaign".

Our Fall Forum on November 11 will feature a speaker from one of the agencies that our United Way donations support.

Recent Retirees

April 30, 2026	
Jinghua Miao	Hospitality Services
May 31, 2026	
Maureen Collins	Office of the AVP Ancillary Services
Art Davidson	Food Operations
Paul Goodwin	Environmental Sciences
Vicki Isotamm	Faculty and Academic Staff Relations
Jennifer Kingswell	Plant Agriculture
Lynn Kocher-Wilson	PR Business Operations
Andrew Moore	LSD AFL Diagnostics Unit
Lori Partridge	Residence Admissions
Carolyn Pollard	Technology Operations
Joanne Ryks	CoE-Office of the Dean
Brad Stirling	Maintenance and Energy Services
June 30, 2026	
Jay Macfarlane	Maintenance and Energy Services
Ross Gillies	Technology Operations
Jennifer Jupp	Student Financial Services
Demos Leonardos	Plant Agriculture
Annette Morrison	Campus Animal Facilities
Robert Mullen	Molecular and Cellular Biology
Maria Spinato	LSD AHL Executive Office
Marta Steiner-Mosonyi	Molecular and Cellular Biology
July 31, 2026	
Carla Bradshaw	Experiential Learning
Joseph Carpino	PR Business Operations
Renee Worringer	Department of History
August 31, 2026	
Kimberley Bolton	Environmental Sciences
Shelley Gallina	Experiential Learning
Ernesto Guzman	Environmental Sciences
Kent Hoeg	Office of the CIO
Cathie Hosker	School of Computer Science
Philip John	University Centre Directorate
Kelly Lucas	Academic Advising
Dominic Marner	School of Fine Arts and Music
Janet Nauta	Ridgetown - Business Development Centre
Henry Thille	Economics and Finance
September 30, 2026	
Jeff Hamilton	Technology Operations
Greg Hastings	Campus Planning Design and Development
Monika Noble	Student Wellness Services
Stephanie Nutting	School of Languages and Literatures
Brenda Sun	LSD AFL Diagnostics Unit
Bosco Tsang	Technology Operations
Ron Ward	Office of the Assoc. University Librarian Academic
Karen Wilson	Hospitality Services
Nicole Zaduk	Maintenance and Energy Services

CURAC (College and University Retirees Association of Canada)

CURAC Events

To learn about events offered by CURAC partners, subscribe to the CURAC events calendar (https://curac.ca/en/home#events_calendar). There is a new page on the UGRA website under the CURAC tab listing groups that post videos of past events and workshops (https://ugra.ca/curac/videos-curac-partners).

CURAC Affinity Partners

CURAC offers several affinity partners that benefit both CURAC and individuals (https://curac.ca/en/member-benefits).

Report On The AGM Speaker:

The Bruce Trail and the Power of Volunteerism

by Rich Moccia



The Bruce Trail follows the Niagara Escarpment from Queenston Heights to

What began in 1960 as the vision of four determined naturalists has become one of Ontario's great recreational and conservation achievements: the Bruce Trail, a 1,300-plus-kilometre footpath following the Niagara Escarpment from Queenston Heights to Tobermory.

That remarkable story was the subject of retired University of Guelph professor Rich Moccia's presentation, "Hey, Take a Hike: The Bruce Trail and the Power of Volunteerism," at the UGRA's annual general meeting in June 2026. The presentation was, as Moccia described it, really "two talks in one": one about the Bruce Trail itself, and the other - and more important story - about the extraordinary power of volunteerism.

Moccia took his audience on a virtual journey along the trail, using spectacular images to illustrate its remarkable diversity. Hikers can encounter Carolinian forests, wetlands, waterfalls, cliffs overlooking Georgian Bay, caves and crevasses, ancient fossils and the distinctive karst landscape of the northern Bruce Peninsula. The trail and its protected lands also provide habitat for an extraordinary range of plant and animal species, including numerous species at risk.

The Bruce Trail's origins are equally remarkable. In 1960, Philip Gosling, Ray Lowes, Norm Pearson and Dr. Robert McLaren conceived the idea of creating a public footpath spanning the Niagara Escarpment. With a strong Guelph connection through Gosling, their vision gradually became reality. The Bruce Trail was incorporated in 1962 and officially opened in 1967. What began as an ambitious idea has grown into a major conservation initiative sustained by generations of volunteers.

And that, Moccia emphasized, is the real story. Today, volunteers maintain the trail, paint thousands of trails "blazes," clear fallen and hazardous trees, construct and repair footpaths and boardwalks, lead hikes, educate visitors, work with landowners and help protect environmentally sensitive areas. One striking example from Moccia's presentation was the reconstruction of a single kilometre of boardwalk that required more than 340 volunteer days and three years of work.

The achievement is even more remarkable because the Bruce Trail is not simply a hiking route. Its broader mission is to preserve a "ribbon of wilderness for everyone, for all time." The Bruce Trail Conservancy has progressively acquired and protected land along the route, with volunteers providing much of the hands-on stewardship needed to maintain both the trail and the natural environment through which it passes.

For Moccia, this offers a particularly powerful lesson for retirees. Retirement can bring something many people lack during their working years: time. It also brings decades of accumulated knowledge, professional skills, experience, social connections and, often, a desire to give something back.

Those assets can be put to work in countless ways. Some retirees may want to work outdoors, clearing trails or maintaining natural areas. Others can contribute through governance, education, fundraising, financial expertise, communications or organizational leadership. Still others may simply want to lend a hand to a cause they believe will benefit future generations.

The Bruce Trail demonstrates what can happen when people with a vision are prepared to contribute what they can - and when that commitment is passed from one generation to the next. A hiking trail becomes a conservation legacy; volunteer hours become protected land, functioning trails and places where future generations can experience nature.

The Bruce Trail represents much more than a beautiful place to take a hike. It is a living demonstration of what ordinary people, working together over many decades, can create, protect and leave behind for generations they will never meet.



Rich cutting hazardous trees — one of the many tasks that keeps the route accessible.

UGRA Adventures *by Vikki Tremblay*

Well, summer is a fading memory as we move through fall. I hope your summer was great and you enjoyed the warm weather. By the time you read this, we will be heading out for our Turkey/Egypt adventure. I received a lot of interest from our members to join this trip. Unfortunately, about a half dozen were unable to book as the tour venues and suppliers sold out. Apparently, October and November are popular times to visit.

Currently, the air travel climate is ever-changing. Some Canadian airlines have pulled more flights from their USA routes in light of the Trump administration's ongoing situation in the Strait of Hormuz causing oil prices to spiral. Stats Canada says that Canadian travel to the USA dropped 25.4% in 2025, a loss of $3.3 billion in revenue to the USA. This year it is showing similar results.

By the way, for anyone planning to travel to the European Union soon, the EES Entry/Exit System has been suspended indefinitely to avoid airport hold-ups. No date has been given for reactivation of this system. It's one less thing to worry about when planning your trip.

I have reviewed the results of our last adventure survey and second place on the vote was for Jewels of Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia. I understand that the best time to go there is late September. Is there an interest doing this adventure in 2027? Also, the next favourite was Machu Picchu and the Galapagos - would you want to do this one or maybe Japan. Please drop me a line at victoria.tremblay@transat.com and let me know if any of these trips interest you so I can get quotes.

Enjoy your fall season and I look forward to seeing you at the next forum.



Cheer on the Gryphons This Fall for Free!

With the University of Guelph right in your community, it's easy to enjoy exciting varsity sport action while supporting your local Guelph Gryphons teams. This fall, retirees can take advantage of free admission to men's and women's soccer and lacrosse games and enjoy a beautiful day on campus cheering on the Gryphons.

To view the complete varsity schedule including ticketed events, visit Gryphons.ca and select your team to view its schedule, or access the full schedule directly online.





HearingLife

Be part of every conversation **this fall.**

From crisp walks to cozy dinners at home, stay part of every story and every laugh.

A **complimentary hearing test** is a simple first step toward staying connected with your loved ones.



Book your **FREE** hearing test

30-day risk-free experience

0% financing

Guelph - Clairfields 1499 Gordon Street, Unit 3 NEW
Guelph - 690 Woolwich Street 690 Woolwich Street, Suite 2
Fergus 100 McQueen Boulevard, Unit 8

CALL US: 1-888-409-4077
BOOK ONLINE: HearingLife.ca/TBYB
Mention code: **NSP-RFEW-UGRA**

Terms & Conditions: Free hearing assessments are available for adults (19+). Child assessments are available at select clinics for a fee. Results are reviewed during your appointment. Written report fees may apply, depending on province. Not applicable to industrial hearing tests. Offer valid on select hearing aid models only. Subject to HearingLife Terms of Sale. See clinic for details. Offer not available in Quebec. 0% financing with 20% down payment. Subject to eligibility criteria. Equal monthly PAD payments required. See clinic for details.

University of Guelph Retirees Association Contributing Membership (2026) 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 PayPal
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 UGRA website:

https://ugra.ca

By Letter:
University of Guelph
Retirees Association
P.O. Box 4916
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

Did you have questions?

If you have questions about your benefits, please contact Sun Life by checking your claim at https://www.sunnet.sunlife.com/signin/mysunlife/home.wca or calling 1-800-361-6212. If you have questions about your pension or to change your address or status, please check out this website: https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/retire. If you have other questions or concerns, please contact UGRA at ugra@uoguelph.ca and we will see if we can help.

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.

All UGRA members are also members of CURAC which offers many benefits including discounts for insurance and travel, as well as access to educational events at other participating institutions. For details, check the CURAC website https://curac.ca.

The UGRA is run by a group of fellow retirees who volunteer their time and talents. The funds needed to run the UGRA come mostly from our members' contributions. With your support, we can 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 in 2026

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 $30 from you goes a long way in sustaining the UGRA so we can continue to work on your behalf.

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40064673

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH RETIREES ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 4916
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
GUELPH, ONTARIO
CANADA N1G 2W1