

ARC News

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Senior College Encyclopedia

An article about the Senior College Encyclopedia in *The Bulletin* on January 12th featured this photo, right, of Professors Ken Rea and Sandy (Alexander) Gregor taken by Johnny Guatto. Read the feature at: <http://news.utoronto.ca/capturing-u-ts-history-online>.



Ken Rea (L), Sandy Gregor photo Johnny Guatto

In the past two months, the Academic Retiree Centre has taken on six new volunteers, and five of them attended an orientation given by Ken and Sandy on contributing to the Senior College Encyclopedia. It is interesting and worthwhile work for volunteers to undertake while on duty at ARC; UofT's history is a rich and labyrinthine tapestry with many unusual threads, and seems to draw interest from everyone from undergraduate students to retired professors. Any and all who would like to lend a hand are encouraged to get in touch with the project at sce.college@utoronto.ca. Retirees are particularly nudged to help document areas in which they played a part of the history themselves!



Photos taken at Fort York February 8 by Joe Whitney – see p.7 for details

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Benefits Finder

Thanks go to Ruth Pike for recommending a very useful website of the Government of Canada that provides customized links to both federal and provincial programs and services. See <http://www.canadabenefits.gc.ca/f.1.2ch.4m.2@.jsp?lang=eng>.

Doug Creelman's "Pension & Benefits Fridays"

In addition to the Pension and Benefits help that the University offers for retirees (see http://www.faculty.utoronto.ca/arc/Pension_and_Benefits_Help_for_Retirees.htm), RALUT (Retired Academics and Librarians at the University of Toronto) are offering some one-on-one assistance.

On Friday mornings, Doug Creelman, Vice-President and former RALUT Benefits Committee Chair, will be available for helpful, confidential consultation.

Come to the Academic Retiree Centre any Friday morning, 9:30 to noon, 256 McCaul Street, just south of College, Suite 412. Or call on a Friday morning (416-978-7553) to talk to Doug.

Response to *The Common Cold...An Uncommon Approach* by J.D. Stewart (ARCNews, Dec11)

Years ago when at the university around 1948, the Americans had a place on Salisbury Plain (UK) called the Harvard Common Cold Research Centre. For about one English pound a day, they would entice poor undergrads with free food and transportation to Salisbury to take part in Common Cold experiments.

We lived with a mate (mine female) in a Nissen Hut and were not allowed to see any of the other volunteers or others so as not to pick up extraneous infections.



A Nissen Hut

Our food was delivered by masked personnel to an entrance room separate from our living quarters so as to prevent any kind of contamination from reaching us!

One of the experiments we did was have snotty school kids from neighbouring schools play a game, a kind of relay race, in which we had to pass match boxes from snotty noses to our supposedly clean ones to see if we would come down with a cold. We never did!!!

Between 1946 and 1989, when the unit closed, some 20,000 people volunteered for this all-expenses-paid break.

*submitted by Joe Whitney
Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Geography
and Program in Planning*



Point of Prevention

J.D. Stewart MD HonBSc DECH CCFP MACOEM

FALLING... It's Not For You

Falling in love is frequently a very positive event; falling to the floor is definitely not. The less fit you are and generally the older you are, the more likely the event will have a seriously negative effect on your life.

In the February 3, 2012 Mortality & Morbidity Weekly Report of the Center for Disease Control, they reported that the rate of nonfatal, medically consulted fall injury episodes, as expected, rose dramatically with age so that those over 75 had a rate 4.4 times that of those younger than 45 years.

I could, as many authors have, restate the various personal and fiscal costs associated with falls that are, to say the least, staggering; however, our focus here is on prevention. Having spent several years at Sunnybrook Health Science Centre in geriatrics and in that branch of preventive medicine known on the street as Occupational & Environmental Medicine, where accident and injury prevention have been a primary focus for a very long time, I will share with you my insights and effective practical ideas for not falling to the floor/ground.

It is most useful to think of fall prevention as having two major components, one being the external environment, the *milieu exterior* and the other, our internal environment, the *milieu interior*. The first is of course, how we prevent the falls in the first place and the second is how we as individuals decrease our susceptibility to injury if (or one may reasonably say, when) we fall. There are—and you have all probably read many of them—articles on how to decrease your risk of falling

by choice of footwear, furniture type & placement, floor coverings, stair rails, assistive devices and lighting.

From my real life experiences, lighting, especially at night, is the most important environmental factor. As most of us grow older, the night-time trips to the bathroom increase, and then there is letting the dog or cat in or out. Many people fall trying to turn on the light; here it is wise to have a small amount of light on overnight in the bathroom, coupled with a light(s) that turn themselves on with motion sensors. For stairs there are now stick-on battery-operated movement sensor lights for stairs and hall.

Footwear choice has many variables, the most critical of which is the specific nature of floor covering and particularly stair surfaces. It is not to be “fashion forward” when buying or choosing to wear shoes, but you must become “surface savvy.” Loose rugs, furniture type and placement, presence and use of railings, and keeping assistive devices within easy reach are obvious and important in fall reduction.

The most critical point, for me, is to change your environment and your approach to that environment long before you think you, or someone you live with, need it. This way, you develop and practice good environmental fall prevention as a matter of course.

It is our *milieu interior* that modifies our susceptibility to falling and to injury if we do fall. It consists of our current sense of balance, muscle and tendon fitness, vision (both day and night), nervous system function (reaction time),

and bone strength. This internal environment cannot be changed overnight like a light; prevention here must start very early.

Probably the most rapid changes can be achieved in the areas of muscle/tendon fitness and bone strength. Please take particular note of the word “strength” not “density.” Most are familiar with the measurement of bone density by health practitioners; bone strength depends not only on density, but also on the precise nature of the interior structure of your bones. This structure is heavily dependent on the external stresses applied to the bone through regular exercise, and on one’s daily nutrition primarily in the form of calcium, magnesium and hormone/vitamin D. A bone’s interior or marrow is not a haphazard sponge-like structure, but is better compared to the load-bearing struts of the Eifel Tower.



In a similar fashion muscle and tendon fitness are also dependent on regular exercise and proper nutrition. For muscles, the most critical factor in fall prevention is muscle tone, not strength, as a toned muscle more rapidly responds to neurological messages to contract to for example, maintain balance. Tendons are similar; ones that are too tight or too lax predispose one to falling again as they do not react fast enough to maintain balance. Tendons are primarily built of collagen fibers that are linked together by what are called “disulfide bridges,” two sulfur atoms from adjacent collagen fibers bonded together, the greater the number of these bridges, the stronger the tendon. The disulfide bridges are susceptible to being broken by oxidation that can be prevented by anti-oxidants in the diet, particularly Vitamin C.

Vision precision is dependent, as we all know, on Vitamin A and protection from excessive sun and light exposure, as well as annual eye exams, accompanied by appropriate corrective lenses worn in the intended circumstances. The use of bifocal and multifocal lenses, particularly in lower light levels on stairs, have proven a significant factor in falls.

Balance is a complex interplay of several components: there is the central nervous system—primarily the cerebellum—that requires input from your eyes, ears/balance organs the semi-circular canals, position sensors primarily in muscles, and depends on the peripheral nervous system’s conduction speed. So far, it appears that people who have engaged in sport or other balance-dependent activities over many years have a reduced probability of falling as they become older, other factors being equal.

A somewhat curious observation is that people who have had and raised children have less chance of falls later in life. This has been interpreted by some that having spent years dodging toys on the floor and small children themselves helps train the cerebellum and improve overall balance.

The so called brain or B vitamins are an ongoing factor in nervous system function/fitness.

Finally, it almost goes without saying that various medication, alcohol consumption and several disease entities can and most likely will have often profound effects on one’s probability of falling and thus require careful reevaluation of your fall prevention plans.

I remain happy to respond to specific questions: <mailto:d.stewart@utoronto.ca>.



Speakers Bureau

Now on Facebook, the ARC Speakers Bureau is the arm of the retiree centre that is dedicated to giving back to the community. We hope that you will drop by the ARC Speakers Bureau Facebook page and befriend us!



<http://www.facebook.com/ARCSpeakersBureau>

A Suggestion—Something to Think About

You may want to follow the example of Senior College Principal Peter Russell, who has found a modest way to support Senior College. In his will, he bequeathed his literary assets (royalties, permissions, etc.) to The Governing Council of the University of Toronto with the condition that they be directed to Senior College. There may be other ways that you can support Senior College in your will. For more information please contact Peter Russell at pkruss@aol.com.



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Senior College WEEKLY WINTER PROGRAMS AT THE FACULTY CLUB

Please RSVP for Senior College programs online:
<http://www.faculty.utoronto.ca/arc/college.htm>

- February 29: **Harry Schachter** “‘Orphan’ (Rare) Genetic Diseases of Children: The Congenital Disorders of Glycosylation.”
- March 7: **Ed Barbeau** “The Power and Limitations of Mathematics”
- March 14: **Tom Alloway** “Sniffy, the Virtual Rat: A Virtual Laboratory for Students Studying the Psychology of Learning”
- March 21: **Cicely Watson and Panel** “Academic Dead Ends: Erosion of Faculty Tenure-stream Positions”

The University of Toronto’s Senior College supports and fosters the scholarly, professional and creative activities of retired faculty, librarians and senior administrators. Its mission is to serve as a beacon for intellectual exchange, academic and cultural activities for collegial interaction among members of the university’s retiree community. Senior College accepts membership applications in two categories: (1) Fellow or (2) Registered Member. The membership year begins in January.

Senior College currently has about 100 Fellows and Registered Members and has just entered its second year of weekly programs. Please check the websites for more details:

<http://www.faculty.utoronto.ca/arc/college.htm>

OR

<http://sites.google.com/site/seniorcollegecommunications/>

Senior College 7th Annual Symposium

Save the date! Taking place on **Thursday, April 12, 2012, 9AM-5PM** at the Faculty Club, the 7th Annual Symposium is on the topic **Toronto, A World City: Meeting the Challenges** and will be co-chaired once again by John Dirks and Merrijoy Kelner. Speakers will include:

- ✦ **Steve Munro**, public transit advocate;
- ✦ **Bruce Kuwabara**, KPMB architects;
- ✦ **Sheldon Levy**, President of Ryerson University;
- ✦ as well as several other distinguished and dynamic speakers

More program details will be available soon. Mark your calendar for April 12th and check the website for more information at

http://www.faculty.utoronto.ca/arc/college/2012_Symposium.htm.

Academics Work Half a World Apart

Professor Emeritus Becky Sigmon of Anthropology (UTM) recently joined Senior College, volunteered for the ARC Speakers Bureau, volunteered at ARC and for the Senior College encyclopedia—all in the space of six months or so! Read about her latest collaborative academic work in this article published by the *Otago Daily Times* of New Zealand:

<http://www.odt.co.nz/campus/university-otago/176217/academics-work-half-world-apart>

From the Ashes of War, the Birth of A Nation

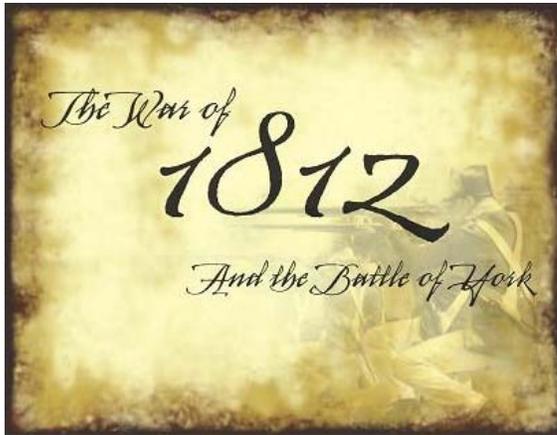


photo David O'Hara

It is a rare event indeed that goes off without a hitch. On Wednesday, February 8th, Senior College and Fort York National Historic Site made history with a virtually flawless full-day symposium of talks, demonstrations, and delicious heritage food. With over 180 in attendance, the crowd's enthusiasm for all things 1812 was evident even in the chatter of leave-taking

late in the afternoon. The event offered historical perspectives from experts in several fields, and engaged an audience keen to understand the significance of the War of 1812 and why its bicentennial is being marked on such a grand scale across the country.

The day's program is shown below.

9:00 am	The Officers' Blue Barracks Opens: <i>Registration</i> Coffee/Tea and 19th-Century Delicacies (King Cakes)
9:30 am	Welcome and Introduction David O'Hara, Fort York; Peter Russell, Senior College; Councillor Michael Thompson, Ward 37 Scarborough Centre and Co-chair of the City of Toronto's Bicentennial Steering Committee
10:00 am	The War of 1812: An Overview of the War Carl Benn, Ryerson University, introduced by Peter Russell
11:00 am	Taptoo: An Operatic Perspective Linda Hutcheon of Senior College and composer John Beckwith, with pianist Michael Rose and two singers, introduced by Germaine Warkentin
11:45 am	John Richardson: A Boy Soldier's Narrative Dennis Duffy of Senior College, introduced by Germaine Warkentin
12:15 pm	Lunch à la 1812 Food and music of the period
1:00 pm	A Walk-about of the Fort and its Exhibitions David O'Hara, Fort York
1:30 pm	The Americans Attack: A Presentation in Pictures and Words Bibhu Mohanty, Senior College, and Richard Gerrard, City of Toronto, introduced by David O'Hara
2:00 pm	Aboriginal Perspectives: Involvement of First Nations in the War of 1812 Alan Corbiere, Anishinabek and William Woodworth, Six Nations, introduced by Peter Russell
3:00 pm	Life on the Home Front: The Role of Women and Everyday Life During the War of 1812 Susan Spencer, Spencer's Mercantile, introduced by Cornelia Baines
3:40 pm	Refreshment Break
4:00 pm	The Consequences of the War of 1812 for the USA and Canada Thomas Chambers, Niagara University and Wayne Reeves, City of Toronto, introduced by Cornelia Baines
5:00 pm	Concluding Remarks Peter Russell, Senior College

Credit Due

ARC operates with much community effort and support, and gratefully acknowledges with thanks:

- ✓ **Dr. John David Stewart**, who donated a coffee grinder, french press coffee maker, and a paper shredder.
- ✓ **Prof. Ken Rea** for a coffee thermos.
- ✓ **RALUT** for stocking the kitchen with coffee, tea, sugar and milk on an ongoing basis.

Below, Sohrab Soleimani and J.D. Stewart admire the new signage at 256 McCaul 4th Floor photo Ken Rea



About the Academic Retiree Centre

ARC has comfortable study carrels, secure lockers, and a lounge with kitchenette. It's a friendly and comfortable space created for UofT retired academics, librarians, and senior administrators. The Centre is open from 9am to 4:30pm daily with assistance from volunteers and Work-Study students. All are welcome to drop in any week day. Keep in touch by subscribing to the ARC listserv! Email academic.retiree@utoronto.ca to request to be subscribed.

ARC Board of Management

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ARCNews Submissions

To submit items for publication in ARCNews, forward to Pat Doherty, editor, at academic.retiree@utoronto.ca.

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All issues of ARCNews are available online at <http://www.faculty.utoronto.ca/arc>.

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