

ARC News

ARC's Bi-monthly Newsletter • Volume 1, Issue 5 • August 2010

On The ARC Shelves?

Do you have a spare copy of a recent publication? Consider donating it to ARC for the Retiree Publications Shelves. Please sign it first!



Forest - Patricia Howard

Professor Howard returned to painting and drawing after forty years as a professor of English. She says that “this was one of the best decisions in my life.”

She has studied with Moira Clark, Megan

Williams, Thomas Hendry, and Peter Por.

Patricia Howard: Recent Watercolours and Portrait Drawings

September 13 through December 10, 2010, the Academic Retiree Centre presents an exhibit of seven works by artist Patricia Howard, retired Professor of English at New and Innis Colleges, University of Toronto.

All of Patricia Howard's watercolours are painted on Arches paper (cold or hot press, 140 or 300 lb.). Her drawings are on various kinds of high quality acid-free paper (or mylar).

Patricia Howard's work has been exhibited in Toronto at the Civic Garden Centre, The Women's Art Association, Victoria College (University of Toronto), The Arts and Letters Club, the Avenue Road School of Art, the Heliconian Hall, and the Toronto School of Art.

Visit with Patricia Howard at a “Meet The Artist” social at ARC on Friday, September 17, 2:00-3:30pm. Please RSVP to academic.retiree@utoronto.ca by Tuesday, September 14.

Announcing the *Senior Scholars Annual 2009*

Just published to the web, it features 99 contributors. A brief history of the once-named *RALUT Publications and Honours* is provided by Professor Emeritus Cornelia Baines on page 5 of this issue of ARC News.

Here is the web link to the PDF document:

<http://www.faculty.utoronto.ca/Assets/Faculty+Digital+Assets/Faculty+Files/ARC/Senior+College/annual2009.pdf>. All are encouraged to forward this link widely!

Hard copies are distributed to Principals, Deans, Directors and Department Chairs across the University of Toronto, as well members of the Academic Board of Governing Council.





Point of Prevention Nutrition Insurance: What's in a Word?

J.D. Stewart MDHonBScDECHCCFPMACOEM

The word most often used in conjunction with vitamins is—you guessed it—“supplements.” In the minds of many, this word is deceiving, as it implies that one is receiving a healthy, perhaps even an optimal, amount in one’s daily diet. Yet this is frequently not true, as there are at least two intervening realities. First, almost no one carefully plans our daily food intake to include the healthy/optimal amounts of each of the essential vitamins and second, virtually no one absorbs 100% of all these vitamins from food in a biologically useful/active form.

The Canada and U.S. food guides reasonably make a further assumption, namely that the healthy/optimal levels are the same for each person. Thus vitamins taken “on-top-of” our food are in reality insurance against our imperfect diet and uneven absorption. Also of importance, is that each individual varies in their biochemical need for vitamins and this need varies with time and daily changes in our biological environment and life circumstance.

It was with over a decade of pressure, nudging by health professionals that both the U.S. and Canada finally changed their respective “food guides” from recommending nutrient/vitamin levels that represented the fine line between raw survival and illness, toward more optimal levels. Health is not simply survival.

At present there are, with the exception of Vitamin D, no readily or even, not so readily available tests to measure objectively an individual’s absorption of

a specific essential vitamin in general, let alone from a specific food.

Vitamin D can be measured by a blood test with some accuracy and is considered useful, especially in more elderly people, as they tend to go out of doors less often and aging skin is not as efficient in producing the vitamin.

In practical terms, we are left with the questions of how we rationally chose our, shall we say, nutritional insurance providers, and how much do we purchase?

These questions have become more critically important in an epoch when our population wants to, even expects, to live healthier more active, productive lives as they become older.

There is also a strong psychological component to health and aging that will be explored later. I recall a line frequently repeated by my Scottish father and Irish mother: “Growing older is a fact of life; being ‘old’ is a state of mind.”

As with exercise, the payback of great nutrition, as we know, does not occur in days or weeks, it takes years, thus if you have not been paying careful attention to your food intake for a long time, it is not reasonable to suddenly start consuming copious amounts of vitamins in an effort to ‘catch up quickly.’ Start slow and be consistent.

It is also true that as we age, our ability to absorb other essential vitamins from our food decreases. Thus more “nutritional insurance” is wise as the years pass. The exact rate of this change varies from on person to the next with there currently being no ‘rule-of-thumb’ to guide us.

Presently data, mostly gathered from the more exact science of molecular biology, supports taking one, so-called, “B complex” per day, one 1000 IU ‘Omega 3’ capsule, Vitamin E 400 IU containing only the ‘d’ isomer, Vitamin D 1000 IU one drop per day, and Vitamin C 500mg, also per day.

It is my intention over the next few newsletters to define in more detail the choice of ‘insurance providers’ while providing more specific information about each of the essential vitamins.

On The Record

by Cornelia Baines

It was Hobson’s Choice, Catch 22, quite impossible. Book in the afternoon when I am always sleepy—or book in the morning when my fingers are less nimble. I booked for 1:30 pm. Stiff fingers would never do. So what is this all about?

When I was 16 I earned my ARCT (Associateship of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto). Then followed Pre-Meds, Medicine, Marriage and Motherhood with a good dose of ill health. When I had the time to play the piano, I had no energy. So for decades, I played nothing but occasional Handel flute and piano sonatas with my husband and Christmas carols for our friends.

When you retire, you are supposed to have the time and energy to tackle activities too long ignored. Thus in my late sixties, serendipity linked me to a wonderful piano teacher (and magnificent performer), Peter Longworth by name. He has the knack of never making a student feel inadequate or worse, stupid. He steers you through incremental improvements with the utmost patience. Because of

him I tackled Brahms intermezzi and the Debussy repertoire that I had never approached before.

Inexplicably in my early 70s, I decided I wanted to play Beethoven’s last piano sonata, Opus 111. Peter kindly questioned the wisdom of this, given that concert pianists spend a lifetime engaging with this challenging and amazingly beautiful composition. Undeterred I began practising the first movement; it was not very long. It was a shock to find it took me an hour just to get through the first two pages. After a year or so, I could play the entire movement in a reasonable length of time, and it didn’t sound dreadful.

Now the question was, would I tackle the second movement? It begins slowly and simply and is exquisitely beautiful. So how could I resist? Although technically relatively simple, it is devastatingly challenging musically. The beginning is comfortably slow, but the middle section is not. I always earnestly pray that I will land on the right notes in one particularly gymnastic variation. However, the supreme challenge was at the end of the movement. There were right-handed trills which went on and on, accompanied by a melodic line in the left hand – not a big problem. The huge problem was a second melodic line in the trilling hand. Balancing trilling with the two melodies and achieving the right speed was indescribably difficult. Endless repetition. Endless patience.

After three and a half years, I was able to play the two movements with some element of musicality. Then my husband announced “We must record this”. He knew that without regular practice, what mastery of the sonata I had gained would soon be lost. Peter thought it a good

idea, but insisted that the best recording technician be engaged. And so it was that I chose 1:30 pm as the time that the expert recording technician would arrive at our house.

He arrived with his assistant and set up three mikes by the piano; long wires linked the mikes to big black boxes and computers in the dining-room. The doors to the dining room were shut and I was told to start playing. Not only was this the culmination of much practising on my part, it also was the culmination of much practising by my husband to turn pages. Pages need to be turned at exactly the right moment (difficult when the score is dense) and **silently**, but he did very well. The process is to do several ‘takes’ and then cobble together the best available version of the performance. When we were allowed in the dining room to hear the how the first movement sounded, we were astonished to see that the assistant (who was a composer and performer herself) had a list of comments specific to numbered bars of the score. Her astuteness was amazing. Each bar she critiqued could be found in each take, the takes could be compared, and the best bar could be inserted in the best take. A lengthy and intellectually exhausting process. And then the whole process had to be repeated for the second movement. Interestingly, because of fatigue, much less effort was expended on the second movement, and it proved to be the better performance.

We now own 15 labelled CDs of Cornelia Baines performing Beethoven’s Sonata Opus 111. I listen to it with mixed feelings, but there is no doubt it has been an extraordinary experience.

→ *Listen*



<http://seniorcollege.posterous.com/>

The Physical Effects of Aging

A workshop offered by the Family Care Office at UofT, *The Physical Effects of Aging* took place on Friday, July 23 led by Professor Catherine Amara of the Faculty of Physical Education and Health. Professor Emeritus Shuichi Nagata and his wife Judith attended the session, as did ARC Administrator Pat Doherty. The presentation focused on strength, a surrogate for muscle health in older adults, as the most important aspect of physical fitness, a triangle that also includes flexibility and endurance. One of the recommended resources, published by Public Health Agency of Canada, is available on the web at [Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults](#).

Feedback on the Workshop: The Physical Effects of Aging

The workshop was offered by a very enthusiastic and energetic new PhD in Kinesiology, a strong contrast to her more mature audience. Her advice on managing fitness and strength throughout life was well received and led to animated discussion. But on learning that “sedentariness,” defined as sitting or not moving about for four hours, is the greatest scourge of all, like a kind of terminal sloth, some of us began to wonder how we could ever again sit with a book or in front of a computer to work or write, without falling into this particular deadly physical sin.

Judith Nagata, attendee

Senior College

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, while initially operating under the auspices of the Academic Retiree Centre on the St. George campus of University of Toronto. Senior College is currently in the process of being officially recognized by the University of Toronto.

Senior College currently has 85 Fellows and is looking forward to its second year of weekly programs. Please check the websites in mid to late September for the 2010 Fall Program of Senior College:

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

or

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

The *Senior Scholars Annual 2009* was recently published by Senior College and RALUT. Ninety-nine contributed!

For more information, contact Senior College at (416) 978-7553 or senior.college@utoronto.ca.

A Short History of the *Senior Scholars Annual* (formerly *RALUT Publications and Honours*)

by Cornelia Baines

Providing members of RALUT with the opportunity to document their publications and honours was the brainchild of Germaine Warkentin. Initially such submissions were inserted throughout the pages of *The Reporter* over several issues, but inevitably changes seemed appropriate.

This is the second year that Publications and Honours have been reported simultaneously for one defined calendar period as an independent package. Last year this information was published and distributed in hard copy. This year it will be available electronically with obvious savings achieved in production and mailing costs. More important, this year's report has been assembled and attractively laid out by Pat Doherty and it will be easy for most retired academics to print it.

But aside from developing a well-designed and impressive format, other changes have occurred. The material accepted for publication has been extended from listing published papers, chapters and books, invited academic talks and honours received, to include other accomplishments such as the curating of art shows, writing government reports, or the organizing of conferences—indeed virtually anything that the respondent regards as a significant achievement. All this certainly results in a much more complete description of what retirees from the University are doing.

Finally it must be acknowledged that a few have questioned the need for such a document. As a scientist, I have a great fondness for quantifying and describing. It is important that not only we, but also others, are aware of the magnitude of the achievements of retirees. And since it is voluntary, no-one is forced to respond. But we should all be grateful that so many choose to cooperate with this project.

Speakers Bureau

As part of its mandate “to facilitate and encourage retirees’ involvement and contribution to the larger community beyond the University,” the Academic Retiree Centre is forming a Speakers Bureau to begin service in the fall of 2010. The Bureau will list retired faculty, librarians and senior administrators who are willing to give talks or lead discussions and the subjects on which they have expertise. The list will be sent to schools, seniors’ homes, service clubs and other organizations in the GTA community.

➤ If you are willing to be a member of the ARC Speakers Bureau, please email academic.retiree@utoronto.ca, indicating (1) Your name and phone number(s) (2) A brief description (keywords) of your fields of interest, indicating some of the topics on which you wish to speak (3) Any restrictions regarding your availability—such as days of the week or times during the year.

Work Study Positions: Help Wanted

Senior College received approval for 4 Work Study positions; three assistants for a Senior College project (encyclopedia of the University of Toronto), Job Order No. 2011.WC.0388, and one writer/reporter Job Order No. 2011.WC.0389 to cover program events. Please share the information with any students who might be interested! Work Study program information:

<http://www.careers.utoronto.ca/jobsearch/workstudy.aspx>.

The Academic Retiree Centre (ARC)

ARC has comfortable study carrels, secure lockers, and a kitchenette. It’s a friendly and comfortable space. Keep in touch by joining our listserv to receive news and notices of events on a regular basis. Request a subscription by email at academic.retiree@utoronto.ca.

Read ARCNews online at http://www.faculty.utoronto.ca/arc/ARC_Newsletter.htm.

ARC Board of Management

Chair: Edith Hillan, Vice-Provost, Faculty & Academic Life

Co-Chair: Peter Russell, University Professor Emeritus, Political Science

David Cook, Principal, Victoria College

John Dirks, President and Scientific Director, The Gairdner Foundation; Professor Emeritus of Medicine

Sara-Jane Finlay, Director, Faculty & Academic Life

Esme Fuller-Thomson, Associate Professor, cross-appointed to faculties of Social Work, Medicine and Nursing

George Luste, President, University of Toronto Faculty Association

Marian Press, Academic Librarian, OISE Library

Jack Stevenson, President, RALUT

Joan Winearls, Retired Librarian, University of Toronto Library; RALUT Senior Scholars Committee

Staff

Pat Doherty, Administrator

Volunteers

Douglas Creelman, Rick Hayward, Tony Key, Alexander Ma, Ken Norwich, Nadezda (Eva) Smirnova, John David Stewart, Mary Vohryzek, Wolf von Kalben, Cicely Watson, Ke Kiana Xu.

Academic Retiree Centre
University of Toronto
256 McCaul Street, Suite 412
Toronto, ON M5T 1W5
Tel. (416) 978-7553
email academic.retiree@utoronto.ca