



McMaster University Retirees Association

Spring 2023

<https://mcmaster-retirees.ca/>

## President's Corner



As I write this message we are experiencing a burst of summer weather, which feels very strange, if not unwelcome, after winter seemed to last forever. I know this will not last more than a few days, but most of us are making the most of it, accelerating lawn and garden care while we can. Next week we will launder our shorts and sleeveless tops, and put them away for another month or so. But at least we had a taste of what lies ahead.

I was absolutely thrilled and gratified in February when I asked you to consider contributing to our Graduate Scholarship fund so that we could award a scholarship this year. You responded quickly and positively, and we reached our goal. I am so impressed and cannot thank you enough. Normally when an endowment fund is set up, there is no payout for the first two years while the fund generates enough interest to support the scholarship payment. MURA has provided funding for the first two years from our small surplus, which will enable a recipient to be chosen this year (in the fall).

It's also exciting to confirm that we are hosting our first in person social event since December 2019. Look for details of the June Spring Fling in this newsletter. I will be delighted to see MURA members in person rather than through a 13 inch screen. We

are also planning to get back to our traditional Holiday lunch in December, so please watch for those details in a future newsletter.

---

**Notice of Annual General  
Membership Meeting**

Date: Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Time: 1:00 - 2:30 PM

Location: Zoom, online or by phone

See p. 3 for details and please plan to attend.

---

Also in June, please plan to attend our Annual General Meeting on June 14. At that time we present our activity for the year, as well as our financial statements. We also elect new council members, and will have a special speaker to round out the event. We are keeping the AGM as a virtual event, since that allows as many people as possible to attend, rather than limiting it to those in Hamilton and the surrounding area. Please see how to register for the AGM in this issue.

Seems like many of us have become 'walkers' in retirement – maybe even more so as a result of the COVID shutdowns. Mary Gauld, MURA's special events coordinator, is planning a series of curated walks around Hamilton and the Niagara region. I plan to attend as many as I am able. They will happen rain or shine. There will be no particular agenda or guidance, just a chance to get out and enjoy the fresh air with some McMaster friends. And maybe try some new walking routes. Members will be informed about upcoming walks by email. Most walks will end close to a restaurant where those who choose can continue to chat over food or a drink.

I hope to see many of you in person or virtually soon.

Susan Birnie  
[birnie@mcmaster.ca](mailto:birnie@mcmaster.ca)  
905-870-2500

---

# News from MURA

## Notice of Annual General Membership Meeting

**Date: Wednesday, June 14, 2023**

**Time: 1:00 - 2:30 PM**

**Location: Zoom online**

MURA members may participate either online or by phone.

**Please register by 8:00 pm Monday, June 12.**

**To participate online:**

- RSVP by email to [mura@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mura@mcmaster.ca), with the subject line "MURA AGM"
- Please include your full name in the email. We will send you a link and password for the Zoom meeting via email on Tuesday, June 13.

**To participate by phone:**

- Leave a voice message for MURA at 905-525-9140, ext. 23171
- We will contact you with a phone number and password for the Zoom meeting by Tuesday, June 13
- Please note that the closest Zoom phone connection is a 647 (Toronto) area code, so you may incur long distance charges.

Please plan to attend. All participants will be entered into an attendance draw for a \$25 electronic gift certificate to Amazon or Chapters.

---

### Special Presentation to the AGM Maintaining Good Health in Retirement

Is there a health-related change you need or want to make? If so, then don't miss this presentation where you'll learn research-based approaches that have been proven to help people reach their goals, whether it be starting a new exercise program, losing weight, or managing a health condition like diabetes.



**Dr. Diana Sherifali** is a tenured Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at McMaster University and the inaugural holder of the Heather M. Arthur Population Health Research Institute/ Hamilton Health Sciences Chair in Inter-Professional Health Research at McMaster University. Dr. Sherifali's health services research has focused

on co-designing, evaluating, and implementing diabetes interventions to support patients and health care providers. Dr. Sherifali has explored the role of coaching through pilot studies, community-based studies, and evidence syntheses. More recently, Dr. Sherifali has co-designed, implemented and/or evaluated technology solutions to support individuals living with type 2 diabetes, collaborating with industry and academic leaders in digital diabetes self-management. Finally, Dr. Sherifali is the Lead of the McMaster Evidence Review & Synthesis Team (MERST). MERST produces high-quality literature reviews, which are the bedrock of evidence-based healthcare. Her work has been funded, published, and presented nationally and internationally.

**Business Meeting:** Including reports of Officers, amendments to the constitution, and Council Elections. The report from the Nominating Committee follows.

---

## 2023 Nominating Committee Report MURA Council 2023/2024

**Honorary President** \*: Alvin Lee

**Executive**

Past President (ex officio): Hank Jacek

**President (Nominated): Susan Birnie** (One-year term, to 2024)

**Vice President (Nominated): Jan Nicholson** (One-year term, to 2024)

Treasurer (ex officio)\*: Diana Parker

Secretary (ex officio)\*: Nora Gaskin

**Councillors**

**Nominated for office, three-year terms until 2026:**

**Virginia Aksan**

**Jane Mah**

Continuing in office until 2025:

Mary Gauld      Richard Stubbs

Jan Nicholson

Continuing in office until 2024:

Cliff Andrews      Dina LoPresti

Barry Diacon      Kathy Overholt

\*Appointed

In accordance with Article 8.01 Section 3 of the MURA Constitution: "Further nominations for the nominated positions will be received by the Secretary of the Association up to seven (7) days prior to the date set for the annual general meeting from nominators who are regular members of the Association together with the verbal or written acceptance of the nominee. Nominations will also be received from regular members at the annual general meeting."

## Nominating Committee

Hank Jacek (Chair)  
Helen Ayre  
Heather Grigg  
John Horsman  
Kathy Overholt

---

# Proposed Changes to MURA's Constitution

## Executive Summary

The proposed constitutional changes accomplish the following:

- Reduce the number of members required to call a special meeting of the association from 50 to 25.
- Allow virtual and hybrid meetings of members, specifically annual general meetings and special meetings.
- Incorporate Bylaw 2, which adds the Secretary of MURA to the list of officers with signing authority.
- Make Article 11 (Constitution Amendments) consistent by clarifying that amendments may be made at special meetings as well as at annual general meetings of members.
- Incorporate Bylaw 1, which calls for the annual review of MURA's financial records by an independent party.
- Add more inclusive language throughout the Constitution, as specified in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Make minor wording and formatting changes.

We have experienced a number of changes in lifestyle since the MURA Constitution was last amended in 2006. Many of the changes are proposed to update the Constitution to our collective new reality.

## Explanation of Proposed Amendments

### 4.02 Special Meeting

A special meeting of members shall be held at such time and place on the University campus as the Council may determine,

1. upon resolution of the Council, provided two thirds of the votes cast at such meeting of the Council are in favour of calling a special meeting
2. upon written requisition of ~~fifty~~ **twenty-five** regular members of the Association delivered to the Secretary of the Association, which requisition shall set forth the business proposed to be transacted at such special meeting



Council is recommending reducing the requirement to twenty-five (25), the same number required to propose constitutional changes (section 11.02). Based on the current membership of about 2,600 regular members, approximately 1% of regular members would be needed to convene a special meeting.

#### **4.13 Form of Meeting**

Council, at its sole discretion, will determine the form of the meeting (in person, virtual, or hybrid) and where applicable, the platform to be used for said meeting. Remote and hybrid meetings shall be deemed as taking place on the University campus.

The current Constitution has no provision for virtual meetings; it requires member meetings to be held on the McMaster campus. Since the pandemic was declared in March, 2020, and based on the federal and provincial declared states of emergency and subsequent best practice health restrictions, MURA's Council meetings and annual general meetings have been held virtually.

This amendment brings the Constitution in line with MURA's current practice, which was forced by the pandemic, and allows Council to decide the most suitable form for future executive and council meetings, as well as annual general meetings and special meetings. In person meetings would have all participants gathered physically in one room. Virtual meetings would use technology to allow all participants to be physically isolated from each other in geographically distinct locations. Hybrid meetings would be a combination of in person and virtual, with participants choosing how to attend.

#### **6.07 Signing Officers**

All instruments in writing requiring the signature of the Association shall be signed by any two of the President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, or Secretary as the Council may direct or by such other persons as the Council may determine.

Council proposes the incorporation of the current Bylaw 02 into the Constitution. Bylaw 02, passed by Council in 2017, expands signing authority to include the MURA Secretary.

#### **11.01 Constitution**

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the regular members of the Association present at any annual general meeting or special meeting of the Association, provided the proposed amendments are sent with the notice calling said meeting of members.

#### **11.02 Proposed Amendments**

The Council or any twenty-five regular members of the Association may propose an amendment to this Constitution. All such proposed amendments

shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Association at least sixty days prior to any annual general meeting **or special meeting** of the Association.

### **11.03 Effective Date**

This Constitution shall be **in** full force and effect when it is adopted by a two-thirds vote of the regular active members of the Association present at a duly called annual general meeting **or special meeting** of the Association.

The proposed change clarifies that the Constitution may be changed at special meetings as well as annual general meetings. Section 11.01 currently makes this stipulation, but Sections 11.02 and 11.03 were missing this information.

### **14.01 Auditor/Financial Reviewer**

The Council, on the recommendation of the Executive, shall appoint an Auditor or Financial Reviewer for each financial year. The Auditor/Financial Reviewer shall be a person, not a member of Council, who is deemed qualified by Council to review MURA's accounts and statements. This person shall prepare a report indicating their findings after the review.

Council proposes the incorporation of Bylaw 01 into the Constitution. Bylaw 01, passed by Council in 2017, requires that MURA's financial transactions be reviewed annually by an independent person who will report their assessment as to the accuracy of those transactions to members.

Council also proposes incorporating the use of gender-neutral pronouns in the Constitution, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code amendments of 2012 regarding gender identity and gender expression. When binary pronouns such as 'he', 'she', 'him', and 'her' are used we propose adding non-binary pronouns such as 'them', 'they', and 'their', as appropriate, throughout the text.

Several minor wording and formatting changes are proposed. While these changes do not change the intent of the constitution, they enhance its readability. Examples of these minor changes, made only when appropriate, are: changing 'government' to 'governance', removing the word 'the', changing 'and' to 'or', spacing, changes in bolding of text, renumbering bylaws, removing references to previous revisions, amendments, and adoption of the constitution.

## Welcome New Retirees

*Compiled by Kathy Overholt*

Susan Emigh, Public Relations  
Paul Gatt, Chemical Engineering  
Deborah Marinoff Shupe, Faculty of Science  
Doris McGuire, University Technology Services  
Zorka Mistic, Custodial Services  
Jennifer Newton, Pathology  
Anne Pottier, Library Services & Facilities  
Sherri Tillotson, Custodial Services  
Judy Visentin, University Technology Services

---

## MURA Spring Fling 2023



Welcome to the nicer weather! It's been a while since MURA Council has felt comfortable enough to plan an in-person gathering. We are hoping the time has come.

We have booked the **Phoenix Patio** in the Refectory Building for **Tuesday June 6 from 11:30 to 2:30** and hope that you will join us. We will be outdoors on the best patio in Hamilton. (Unless the weather turns really bad, in which case we will move inside).

A BBQ will be served from 12:00 to 1:00 (vegetarian or non-vegetarian options), along with salads, potatoes etc., non-alcoholic drinks, and dessert. The cost per person is \$25.00. A cash bar will be available.

**Space is limited to 125 people, so please make your booking ASAP to avoid being disappointed.**

Please buy your tickets online with a credit card at <https://campusstore.mcmaster.ca/MURA>. Ticket purchases are limited to two per person. **Please note any special dietary needs in the Comments box on the checkout page.**

If you do not have a credit card or online access please call Mary Gauld, MURA's event coordinator, at 905-906-5604 **on or before May 19**. Mary will facilitate your registration.

---

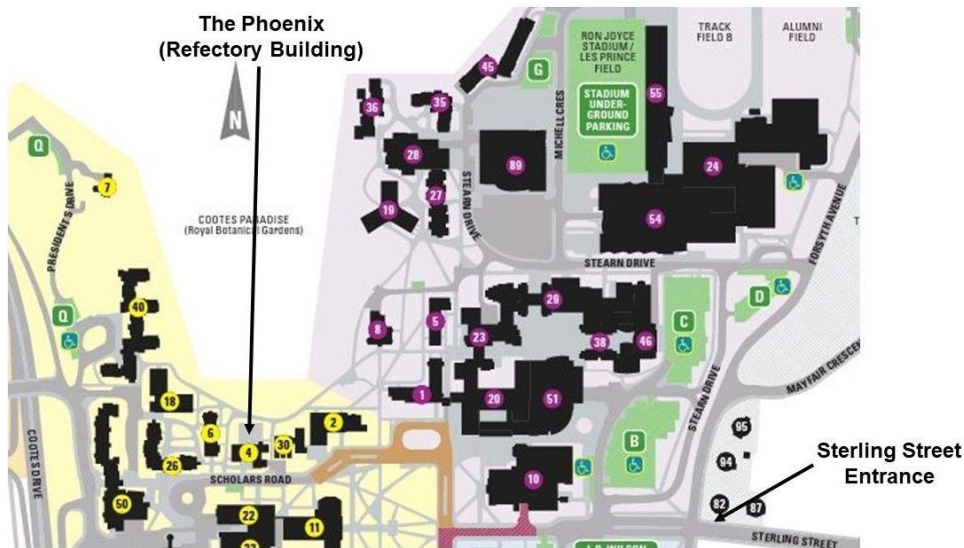


While masks are no longer required on the McMaster campus, we encourage you to bring and wear a mask if you are most comfortable doing so.

We hope that you can join us. It has been too long.

**Complimentary Parking for the Spring Fling**  
*MURA thanks Parking Services for their generous support*

**NOTE: Sterling Street is closed for construction near the entrance to campus, but the entrance is open. Use King St. and Forsyth Ave. as the detour route. Allow extra time as traffic will be slow.**



**Retirees who do not have a McMaster parking permit and transponder** will have access to any parking lot showing “Visitors – Open”. The Sterling Street campus entrance shown on the map leads to Parking Lots B, C and D and the underground Stadium lot.

Park in *any parking lot showing “Visitors - Open”*. Take an entry ticket from the machine at the lot entrance and exchange it for a complimentary Rebate Voucher at the luncheon registration table. Your Rebate Voucher can be used at the exit gate to “pay” for your parking when you leave your parking lot. If none of these lots show “Visitors - Open”, use the Help button at a lot entrance that indicates “Full to Visitors” to gain access or be directed to an available lot.

**Retirees with valid transponders** may park in any lot that shows “Transponders – Open”. During May to August, retiree parking permits allow access to Lots B, C, D, H, I, K, N, P and the Underground Stadium at all times.

**For the mobility impaired:** If you have an Ontario Accessible Parking Permit and require reserved accessible parking, or the walking distance from the parking lots to the Phoenix is problematic for you, please call Mary Gauld, MURA’s event coordinator, at 905-906-5604 **on or before May 19**. Mary will facilitate your parking needs.

## McMaster Note Cards



### “Fall Colours at Mac”

Original watercolour by Stephanie Lisak, McMaster Retiree

9 x 4-1/8”, 80 lb. textured paper, inside is blank

**\$1.50 per card, plus postage**

**You can arrange to pick up your cards in Hamilton to avoid postage costs. They will also be available for purchase at the 2023 Spring Fling on June 6<sup>th</sup>.**

Proceeds to the MURA special projects fund

- To order online and pay by email money transfer, email MURA at [mura@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mura@mcmaster.ca)
- To order by post, mail your request to **MURA, Gilmour Hall B108, McMaster University, 1280 Main St. W., Hamilton, ON L8S 4L8**

Please include your name, postal address, phone number or email address, and the number of cards you would like.

- Online payments: please make your e-transfer payable to [mura.treasurer.22@gmail.com](mailto:mura.treasurer.22@gmail.com)
- Mailed requests: please enclose a cheque or money order for the amount of your order, payable to MURA

**Cost: \$1.50 per card, plus postage**

**Postage charges within Canada:**

- 1 to 5 cards - \$2.20; 6 to 10 cards - \$3.60
- more than 10 cards: \$3.60 per every 10 cards; \$2.20 for any additional number from 1 to 5

As an example, for MURA to mail you 25 cards:	Cards	\$37.50 (25 x \$1.50)
	<u>Postage</u>	<u>\$ 9.40</u> (\$3.60 + \$3.60 + \$2.20)
	Total Cost	\$46.90 (Cards + Postage)

Non-Canadian addresses – please contact MURA for a postage estimate at the above address, or by email to [mura@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mura@mcmaster.ca) before placing an order.

## Retirees in the News

By Marcia MacAulay

### Choosing to Support Future Students

**Evan Simpson**, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Philosophy, and former Dean of the Faculty of Humanities has chosen to support students through a gift in his will. Recognizing the impact education has for many students, and knowing first-hand the importance community support can play in shaping university activities, Evan is leaving a gift in his will to support the Faculty of Humanities, with hope it may inspire others to do the same.

Read Evan's story [How a past dean is choosing to support future students through a gift in his will.](#)

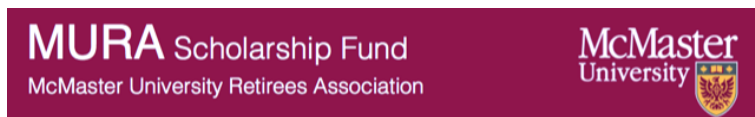
To learn more about how you can make a difference through a gift in your will to McMaster, please contact Eli Clarke, Manager, Estate Giving & Legacy Planning at [clarke27@mcmaster.ca](mailto:clarke27@mcmaster.ca) or 905-525-9140, Extension 21533.

---

### Remembering a Former McMaster Chancellor

**John Panabaker**, McMaster's Chancellor from 1986 to 1992, also served on the Board of Governors for 12 years including two years as Chair. McMaster recognized his contributions with an honorary Doctor of Law degree in 1981, an induction into the McMaster Alumni Gallery in 1982, the 1997 McMaster Students Union Alumni Association Lifetime Leadership Award, and the McMaster Alumni Associations Distinguished Service Award in 2011. He was also awarded honorary degrees from the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, received the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Confederation Medal, and became a member of the Order of Canada. A dedicated McMaster philanthropist, Dr. Panabaker made significant contributions to many projects over decades including the creation of the John H. Panabaker Trust Fund and the Panabaker Digitization Trust. His generosity enabled the McMaster Museum of Art to digitize their entire permanent collection.

See the *Daily News* article [Remembering McMaster Chancellor Emeritus John Panabaker.](#)



**MURA Graduate Scholarship Fund**  
– It's fully funded!

#### First Recipient to be named in December

Thank you to the many retirees and friends of MURA who have contributed generously to the MURA Graduate Scholarship endowment fund. The funding goal has been surpassed, so the first annual \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded in December. This

award supports graduate students who are focusing their research and education on technological advances related to seniors.

Please continue to direct your McMaster donations to this fund to make it grow. For example, with an additional \$5,000, the scholarship could be increased to \$1,250.

Donate online at [MURAscholarship.ca](http://MURAscholarship.ca), or by phone at 905-525-9150, ext. 24224. Every gift will help support McMaster graduate students. Donations are tax-deductible.

MURA members have been generously supporting academic awards since 1992. A separate, fully-funded endowment continues to provide an annual \$2,500 in-course scholarship and a \$750 graduand prize to undergraduate students studying society's aging population.

---

## Recent Passings

*Compiled by Kathy Overholt*

Eleanor Boyle, Financial Services, April 27, 2023  
William Coleman,\* Political Science, March 24, 2023  
Ann Kolkin, Medicine, February 22, 2023  
Florence Macintosh, Hospitality Services, March 4, 2023  
Graeme MacQueen, Religious Studies, April 25, 2023  
Veronica Morrison,\*\* Faculty of Humanities, April 3, 2023  
Ann Petrachenko, Bookstore, March 5, 2023  
Marielle Skinnarland, Student Wellness Centre, March 4, 2023  
Marjorie Smith, Committee on Scientific Development, March 6, 2023  
Donald Sprung,\*\*\* Physics & Astronomy, March 7, 2023  
Richard Swinson, Psychiatry, February 21, 2023  
Gerhart Teuscher, Modern Languages & Linguistics, March 3, 2023  
Gus Tsokas, Hospitality Services, March 9, 2023  
Ronald Vince, English & Cultural Studies, January 27, 2023

\***William Coleman** – View the Faculty of Social Sciences tribute [Celebrating the life and achievements of William D. Coleman](#).

\*\***Veronica Morrison** – MURA Council Member

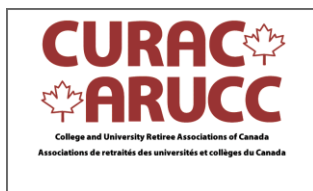
Veronica was involved with MURA for over 10 years. She first served on MURA Council for a 2-year term from 1995 to 1997, during which time her portfolio was described as “Courier Contact”. She then served on Council for two additional 3-year terms from 1997 through to 2003 and acted as Vice President in 1999/2000. Veronica was also the *MURAnews* Editor for 5 years (2002 to 2007).

\*\*\***Donald Sprung** – View the *Daily News* article [Donald Sprung remembered as an extraordinary physicist, teacher, mentor](#).

---



## CURAC Report (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada)



The 2023 CURAC/ARUCC Annual Conference, its first face-to-face conference post COVID-19, is being held in Saskatoon from May 31 to June 1, hosted by the University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association. Post-secondary retiree association members from across the country will gather to share ideas and information, and to participate in educational sessions themed “The New World”. McMaster retirees are welcome to attend. Details can be found on the [CURAC website](#).

---

### What’s Happening @ Mac

*By Marcia MacAulay*

#### McMaster University’s Health Leadership Academy (HLA)

McMaster University’s Health Leadership Academy is on a mission to transform Canadian health care. The HLA is realizing its mission through innovative new programs through a partnership between McMaster’s Faculty of Health Sciences and the DeGroot School of Business.

One HLA initiative is a collaborative [National Health Fellows Program](#) focused on helping senior leaders implement improvements and learn from health-care innovators and disruptors across the country and internationally. This program will culminate in a health forum this September in Hamilton.

The HLA is also offering a [Collaborative Health Governance](#) program which launched last year and addresses challenges facing both health and social sectors boards. In addition, a health improvement and faculty innovation program will launch later this year.

Visit the Faculty of Health Sciences webpage: [McMaster Health Leadership Academy on mission to transform national health care](#).

---

#### Art Meets (Health) Sciences in New Collaborative Anatomy Class

Art students at McMaster have long followed in the footsteps of the legendary artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Mansur ibn Ilyas, drawing preserved specimens of bones,



organs, and structures, as well as bodies that have been donated for the purpose of education and research.

Now, a more formal arrangement has students from the School of Arts learning their craft alongside Faculty of Health Sciences students in the interprofessional education (IPE) dissection course. This collaboration between art and science has students from both faculties not only learning from the specimen in front of them, but also from each other.

See the *Daily News* article: [Art meets \(health\) science in new collaborative anatomy class](#).

---

## **Brighter World**

### **Latest News in Research at McMaster**

*by Dawnelle Hawes*

#### ***Health & Medicine; Infectious Disease***

#### **McMaster scientist wins prestigious award for superbug research.**

Dr. Lori Burrows, professor in Biochemistry & Biomedical Sciences at McMaster has been making news with her research into the types of infections that continually morph to become drug resistant. The global impact of these infections has been a health crisis that kills more than one million people annually.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Burrows has been honoured by the Canadian Association for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (CACMID) with the 2023 John G. FitzGerald award for her lab's research into "an ubiquitous drug-resistant pathogen that causes pneumonia and other hospital-acquired infections". Dr. Burrows says that antimicrobial resistance is one of the greatest challenges in clinical microbiology. Her lab's focus is on global solutions that encompass both new antibiotics and a "thinking-outside-the-box" application for current antibiotics.

In 2020, Dr. Burrows was also awarded the prestigious Canadian Society of Microbiologists' Murray Award for Career Achievement. She puts the funds that she received into an award called the Burrows Award for Womxn<sup>2</sup> in Microbiology. Her intent is to acknowledge womxn graduate students in microbiology for "both scientific excellence and commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion." She believes in paying it forward to her trainee collaborators (past and present) who are an integral part of any recognition she receives.

Visit the *Brighter World* article [McMaster scientist wins prestigious award for superbug research](#) for more details.

<sup>1</sup>Canada. Public Health Agency of Canada. [Canadian Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System Report](#) (Online). [Ottawa], 2021. [Apr. 13, 2023].

<sup>2</sup>The term **womxn** is an alternative spelling of the word woman, with the intent of being more inclusive of trans and nonbinary people.

---

## ***Health & Medicine; Medical Discovery***

**Shooting for the stars: How a team of researchers and students built and launched McMaster's first space mission.** *A giant leap for students and researchers.*

A team of students and researchers at McMaster has [built a satellite](#) that's capable of measuring [radiation levels in space](#). More than 150 students and researchers have worked on the creation of a satellite since January 2015. Their first hurdle was to build the satellite; getting it into space was a whole different challenge.

CSA (the Canadian Space Agency) received the satellite in November 2022 and at 8:30 pm EDT on March 14, 2023, more than 20 members of the team watched their satellite launch from Kennedy Space Centre. It was secured aboard a Falcon 9 rocket which was headed for the International Space Station (ISS). This was an incredible high point to eight years of hard work and late nights.

The yellow-coloured satellite is about the size of a loaf of bread and called NEUDOSE (Neutron Dosimetry & Exploration). It is designed to measure the amount of radiation, which can detrimentally impact astronauts in space. Particularly dangerous are the amounts of radiation endured on a prolonged mission such as to Mars.

After one to two months aboard the ISS, the astronauts will send NEUDOSE into low Earth orbit. The satellite will continue to send back data to McMaster ground station for analysis and distribution world-wide.

Dr. Andrei Hanu, adjunct assistant professor of Physics & Astronomy and NEUDOSE co-principal investigator reflected, "We want our instrument to become the default Canadian radiation instrument for future missions to the Moon and eventually deep space....Right now, this is a technology demonstration mission, but eventually NEUDOSE will be a standard radiation instrument."

See the *Brighter World* articles [How does the NEUDOSE satellite work?](#) and [Meet the team that built McMaster's first satellite](#).

---

## ***Health & Medicine; Infectious Disease***

**McMaster researchers crafting post-COVID condition guidelines.**

Dr. Holger Schünemann, McMaster professor in the departments of Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact and of Medicine, in conjunction with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is developing official guidelines to address post-COVID-19 condition (PCC), more commonly called "long COVID." These guidelines, to be published early in 2024, aim to cover identification, prevention, assessment, management, follow-up and monitoring of people with PCC. Dr. Schünemann's project

will focus on PCC's impact in Canada. The federal government has invested \$9 million in this project.

Researchers intend to “create easy-to-use tools to bring evidence into clinical practice and the community, paying particular attention to equity-deserving populations.” As well, “Another component of this project will evaluate the uptake of the tools and recommendations to understand what was successful and what needs to be improved for the longer term.”

According to Health Canada, physical or psychological symptoms lasting for more than 12 weeks after contracting COVID-19 are classified as PCC. Quite different from the initial COVID infection, adult symptoms can most commonly include fatigue, sleeping issues, shortness of breath, cognitive problems (e.g., memory loss, difficulty thinking or concentrating) or mental health symptoms (i.e., anxiety or depression, among others). Severity of symptoms can vary and sometimes may disappear and reappear for no apparent reason.

People who may be at greater risk of PCC include female gender, people who had more severe cases of COVID-19 (e.g., hospitalization, time in intensive care), and people with underlying chronic conditions.

Preliminary evidence still suggests that having two or more doses of a vaccine before contracting COVID-19 may help to reduce the risk of developing PCC.

See *Brighter World's* [McMaster researchers crafting post-COVID condition guidelines](#) and, from the Public

Health Agency of Canada, [Post-COVID-19 condition \(long COVID\)](#) for additional information.

---

### **Contacting MURA**

**Mail** Gilmour Hall B108, McMaster University  
1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON  
L8S 4L8

**Phone** 905-525-9140, extension 23171  
(voicemail is checked once a week)

**Email** [mura@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mura@mcmaster.ca)

**Website** <http://mcmaster-retirees.ca/>

### **Contacting Human Resources**

**Mail** Gilmour Hall 304, McMaster University  
1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON  
L8S 4L8

**Phone** 905-525-9140, extension 22247

**Email** [hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca)

**Website** <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/retirees/>

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Study Looking for Volunteers to Participate in Mobility Programs

Are you experiencing recent changes in the way you walk two kilometres? Researchers at the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University are looking for adults (**age 55-75**) with **early changes in their mobility** to take part in a study. You will be asked to participate in a 12-week mobility program, either virtually or by telephone, and undergo four virtual assessments with a physiotherapist over 36 weeks. To be eligible, you must have a tablet or laptop computer with internet service at home. [More information about this mobility study can be found here](#). If you are interested in participating, please contact Susanne Sinclair [ssincla@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ssincla@mcmaster.ca).

---

## McMaster Convocation Assistants

The Office of the Registrar welcomes retirees to become involved in the most exciting days of McMaster students' academic lives — convocations.

Volunteers are needed to assist at convocations, where your role would be to meet, greet and direct students and guests, check tickets and/or distribute hoods and diplomas to students. You will work alongside a full-time employee who can offer assistance and training.

If you are interested in signing up for any of the days listed below (full or half day options), please complete the online [Volunteer sign-up form](#) by May 5<sup>th</sup> for May ceremonies or May 26<sup>th</sup> for June ceremonies.

More details on convocation can be found on the Office of the Registrar's [Upcoming graduation events](#) web page, or by contacting Rachel Huang in the Office of the Registrar at [convo@mcmaster.ca](mailto:convo@mcmaster.ca).

### Spring 2023 convocation ceremonies:

Wednesday, May 24, 2023, afternoon

Thursday, May 25, 2023, afternoon

Monday, June 12, 2023, afternoon

Tuesday, June 13, 2023, morning & afternoon

Wednesday, June 14, 2023, morning & afternoon

Thursday, June 15, 2023, morning, afternoon & evening

Friday, June 16, 2023, morning & afternoon

### Approximate volunteer shifts (for all events):

Morning: 7:30 – 12:30 pm

Afternoon: 12:30 – 5 pm

Full day: 7:30 am – 4 pm

## **An Invitation to Become a Volunteer Workshop Facilitator**

The Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA) has developed a series of virtual and in-person workshops created to encourage, educate and empower older adults to age positively and safely get around in their communities, and to inspire older adults to keep moving!

The workshop series includes: *Let's Ride a Bike, Let's Take the Bus, Let's Take a Walk, Let's Drive a Car, Navigating the Health Care System, Positive Aging.*

The HCoA is recruiting volunteer facilitators to lead the workshops. We will provide training, resources and ongoing support for you in this important role.

This is what we are looking for in volunteer facilitators.

- Excellent oral and interpersonal communication skills
- Comfortable speaking in public and/or facilitating groups
- Good English language skills; speaking other languages is an asset
- Familiarity with PowerPoint and using computers for presentations
- Experience with virtual platforms such as Zoom is an asset

*If this sounds like you, please send an email expressing your interest to the HCoA at [info@hamiltoncoa.com](mailto:info@hamiltoncoa.com). You will then be sent an application form. Once you submit the completed application form, you will be contacted and provided with information about time commitment, upcoming training opportunities and volunteer facilitator responsibilities.*

---

## **Your Money/Your Health**

### **Diet and Healthy Aging**

*By John Horsman*

A well balanced, nutritious diet is a must for keeping our bodies healthy, especially as we age. Research has shown that a healthy diet helps with weight control, improved mood and mental well-being, managing blood pressure, diabetes, heart health and much more. There is so much information, both in print and online, that it can be difficult to keep abreast of the latest and greatest relevant information. Here's a look at some of the ways diet can affect our health.

Certain diets can benefit heart health, including the flow of blood through our veins and arteries. Here's an interesting fact: An adult human has approximately 60,000 miles – nearly 100,000 kilometers – of blood vessels in their body. That is roughly two times the circumference of the earth. That network of veins and arteries keeps blood flowing, supplying tissues and organs with oxygen and other nutrients for a healthy body. Most



often, diseases affecting the heart and blood vessels are the result of plaque deposits causing narrowing or even blockages. This is most often caused by high cholesterol. Lifestyle choices like diet modifications are a good way to reduce the risk of and combat heart disease. For example, the National Cholesterol Education Program Step II Diet, the Portfolio diet, can reduce cholesterol and other fats in the blood as well as reduce inflammation, blood pressure and coronary heart disease. [Also see Nora Gaskin’s article on ‘Managing Cholesterol with Diet and Lifestyle Changes’ below.]

Diet modification can also help manage blood pressure. Hypertension increases the risk of developing many diseases and can lead to early death. Plant-based diets that contain limited amounts of animal material may help to reduce blood pressure. Some of the more common plant-based diets include DASH – Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension, the Lacto-ovo vegetarian diet, the Nordic Diet, and the well-known Mediterranean Diet. Before making any major dietary changes, it is a sound idea to discuss your plan with a healthcare professional. This is especially true if you have a chronic disease or medical condition that may be affected by your change of diet.

Adopting a healthy diet not only has beneficial effects on physical health – weight control, reducing risk of chronic disease – but also on improved mental well-being and mood.

The [McMaster Optimal Aging Portal](#) has featured resources including videos and blogs where you can learn more about diets and how they impact your health. Some examples: a video post and blog on vegetarian diets and weight loss; blog posts on mental well-being and diet; a blog post on the Portfolio Diet and your heart health, and a blog post on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption to get your blood pressure down.

Food prices are rising faster than our pensions, so it makes sense to get the best information available and make intelligent choices about what to eat for the good of our pocketbooks and bodies.

---

## Managing Cholesterol with Diet and Lifestyle Changes

*by Nora Gaskin*

[According to the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal](#), “High cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for heart disease and stroke. A healthy diet and active lifestyle can reduce your cholesterol levels and improve your well-being.”

[There are two main types of cholesterol:](#)

- **LDL (low-density lipoprotein), aka “bad” cholesterol**, makes up most of your body’s cholesterol. High levels of LDL cholesterol raise your risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **HDL (high-density lipoprotein), aka “good” cholesterol**, absorbs cholesterol in the blood and carries it to the liver, which flushes it from the body. High levels of HDL cholesterol can lower your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Cholesterol levels can be altered with diet and lifestyle changes and/or medication. If your cholesterol is considered mildly or moderately high, you may be able to lower your LDL and increase your HDL without medication.

## **Lifestyle changes**

### **1. Exercise**

Moderate physical activity can help raise HDL and lower LDL. If you don't currently exercise much, start slowly, and consult your doctor before starting an exercise or fitness program.

[The World Health Organization \(WHO\) recommends](#) that adults should:

- do at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or
  - 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or
  - a combination of the two
- and
- do muscle-strengthening activities (like weight training) on two days per week, and
  - incorporate lots of physical activity into their day-to-day life and spend less time sitting.

Walking, jogging, cycling, and swimming are examples of aerobic exercise. Any aerobic physical activity that lasts at least ten minutes is beneficial. It doesn't matter if you exercise for 30 minutes in one go or incorporate three ten-minute activities into your day.

### **2. If you smoke, quit**

Quitting smoking can help raise HDL, lower LDL, and improve the health of blood vessels. [According to the Mayo Clinic](#), the benefits occur quickly:

- Within 20 minutes of quitting, your blood pressure and heart rate recover from the cigarette-induced spike
- Within three months of quitting, your blood circulation and lung function begin to improve
- Within a year of quitting, your risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker

For quitting strategies, one good online resource is [Patient education: Quitting smoking \(Beyond the Basics\)](#).

### **3. If you need to, lose weight**

Carrying even a few extra pounds contributes to high cholesterol. Healthy, moderate eating and increased activity can help.

## 4. Drink alcohol only in moderation

Too much alcohol can lead to serious health problems, including high blood pressure, heart failure and strokes.

### Diet changes

- **Reduce saturated fats.** Saturated fats, found in red meat, full-fat dairy products, and some solid vegetable fats such as palm or coconut oil, raise total cholesterol levels.
- **Eliminate trans fats.** Trans fats, sometimes listed on food labels as "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil", are an industrial by-product of the process of solidifying vegetable oil. They can also occur when vegetable oil is heated to a high temperature to be used for deep-frying, so avoid deep-fried foods. Trans fats raise overall cholesterol levels.
- **Increase healthy fats** such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat. Monounsaturated fats are found in vegetable oils such as canola and olive oil. Polyunsaturated fats are found in fish, and in vegetable oils such as safflower, flaxseed, and corn oil. Both polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids help lower LDL.
- **Eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids.** Omega-3 fatty acids don't affect LDL cholesterol, but they have other benefits for heart health, including reducing blood pressure. Foods with omega-3 fatty acids include salmon, mackerel, herring, walnuts and flaxseeds.
- **Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.** Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat, add flavor and variety to your diet, and are your best source of fiber, vitamins, minerals and [cholesterol-reducing phytosterols](#). Aim for five cups of fruits and vegetables a day, excluding potatoes, corn, and rice, which count as carbohydrates.
- **Increase soluble fiber.** Soluble fiber can reduce the absorption of cholesterol into your bloodstream, and is found in such foods as oatmeal, oat bran, barley and other whole grains, kidney beans, lentils, chick peas, Brussels sprouts, apples, pears and [psyllium supplements](#). Soluble fiber can decrease LDL cholesterol.



- **Avoid refined sugars and grains.** Try whole-wheat flour and brown or wild rice instead of refined flour and white rice. Old-fashioned oatmeal is also a good choice, but not the quick-cooking versions, which have had much of the fiber processed out.
- **Add whey protein.** Whey protein, which is found in dairy products, may account for many of the health benefits attributed to dairy. [Some studies have shown](#) that whey protein given as a supplement lowers both LDL cholesterol and total cholesterol as well as blood pressure and inflammation. You can find whey protein powders in health food stores and some grocery stores.
- **Use healthier cooking methods.** Baking, broiling and roasting are the healthiest ways to prepare meat, poultry, and other foods. Trim outside fat or skin before cooking. Lean cuts can be pan-broiled or stir-fried. Use either a non-stick pan or non-stick cooking spray instead of adding fats.
- **Look for other sources of protein.** Consider eating one meatless meal each week. Fish, beans, tree nuts, peas, and lentils offer protein without the cholesterol and fats. They also contain fiber and other nutrients. Try substituting beans for meat in a favorite recipe, such as lasagna or chili. Snack on a handful of almonds or pecans.

#### Sources:

- HealthLinkBC: [High Cholesterol: Making Lifestyle Changes](#)
- Mayo Clinic: [Top 5 lifestyle changes to improve your cholesterol](#)
- Harvard Health Publishing: [How to lower your cholesterol without drugs](#)
- Informedhealth.org: [What can I do to keep my heart and blood vessels healthy?](#)
- Familydoctor.org: [Lifestyle Changes to Improve Your Cholesterol](#)

---

## A Reminder for Your End-of-Life Planning

You might be amazed to learn how often Human Resources does not find out about a retiree's death until months – or even years – after it occurs.

Make things easier for the executor of your will and your family by putting a note with your will and other important papers, instructing that Human Resources should be informed of your death as soon as possible. The Human Resources Services Centre can be contacted by phone at 905-525-9140, ext. 22247, or by email at [hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca).

Without timely notification, your estate will be required to pay back any pension payments received after your death.

You also should keep a copy of your McMaster life insurance documents with your important papers. The Human Resources Service Centre will be pleased to provide you with a copy if you need it.

## **A Note about your Powers of Attorney**

If you have a Power of Attorney document that gives someone (called your designated attorney) authority to manage your finances, Human Resources needs to be notified if your designated attorney is going to exercise their authority. The notification, including documentation, is needed to give the attorney access to the retiree's pension and benefit information and to act on the retiree's behalf on these matters.

---

## **Thinking About Enrolling in Courses at Mac?**

*By Denise Anderson*

Now that many activities have opened up again, perhaps you're thinking you want to do something that will challenge your mind. Well, how about registering for a course or two at McMaster over the coming months? There are a number of learning opportunities open to McMaster retirees, along with some financial assistance.

As you go through each step of the process (application to McMaster, admission to a program, selection of courses, financial assistance/payment of courses, and enrolment in courses), you will be provided with instructions to guide you, along with technical and academic support.

The information in this article is based on part-time studies (one or two courses per term).

### **Undergraduate Programs and Courses**

Up-to-date information can be found in the current [Undergraduate Calendar](#) or on the [McMaster Future Students website](#).

### **Bachelor's Degree**

If you don't already have a university degree, you can apply for a bachelor's degree at McMaster through the Ontario University Applications Centre ([OUAC](#)). Once accepted to a program at McMaster, you can then decide if you want to pursue your studies on either a full-time or part-time basis. Check out the [Undergraduate Calendar](#) for information on available programs.

**Second Bachelor's Degree** (note that not all programs can be done as a second degree)

*McMaster Graduates* – If you already have an undergraduate degree from McMaster, apply through OUAC using the [McMaster Returning Student Application](#). (Note: If you have attended another university or received a college diploma since you last registered at McMaster, you must follow the “graduates from other institutions” process below.)

*Graduates from other institutions* – If you completed an undergraduate degree or



college program from an institution other than McMaster, apply through OUAC using a [105 application for non-high school students](#).

## Continuing Student

If you already have an undergraduate degree and want to take more undergraduate courses for academic credit but not work toward another degree, you will be considered a Continuing Student.

*Graduates from other institutions* – Apply through [OUAC](#), and submit a completed [Continuing Student Courses of Interest Form](#). You do not need to reapply after completing a McMaster course, but instead can submit a list of additional course choices to your Faculty's Academic Advisor for approval.

*McMaster Graduates* – Instead of applying through the OUAC admissions process, complete a [Service Request](#) and include the [Continuing Student Status Update Form](#) so you can be “term activated” and enrol in courses.

## Listener

Listeners attend classes but do not complete assignments or tests. No grades are assigned, or credits earned. Not all courses are available to listeners, and only the faculties of Humanities, Science and Social Science accept listener applications. To apply, complete the [Listener Form](#) and upload it to [MacDrive](#).

## Financing Your Courses (Undergraduate)

- **Tuition Assistance\*** – As a McMaster retiree, if you are under 65, you may be eligible for tuition assistance that will cover your tuition for undergraduate degree credit courses up to 18 units per academic year (September 1 to August 31). You must complete a Tuition Assistance Application online through the Financial Aid & Awards portal, [AwardSpring](#), for each academic year.
- **Tuition Waiver\*\*** – Regardless of McMaster affiliation, if you are 65 years of age or over by the last day of a course, subject to meeting admissions and prerequisite requirements, you may enrol in *undergraduate* degree courses for credit without payment of tuition or supplementary fees. Other fees such as application fees and administrative charges may apply. A tuition waiver is assessed automatically based on your date of birth.
- **Student Awards** – While there are several different types of awards, part-time students are generally only eligible for [In-course Awards](#) and [Community Contribution Awards](#).
- **OSAP** (Ontario Student Assistance Program) – If you're taking between 20% and 59% of a 100% course load for your program you can apply for [OSAP for Part-Time Students](#).

Some undergraduate courses may be offered online but, in general, McMaster is not able to offer an entire undergraduate degree fully online.

Once admitted to your program of studies, your Academic Advisor in the Office of the Associate Dean of your Faculty can help with any questions. However, assistance is also available for basic inquiries through the chatbot on the Office of the Registrar website (look for the “Chat with us now” box). The chatbot can also connect you with a Service Representative from the appropriate department.

## Graduate Programs and Courses

**Masters or PhD Degree** – If you already have an undergraduate degree, you can apply for a graduate degree through McMaster’s School of Graduate Studies application portal. Follow the instructions on the [“How to Apply”](#) section of their website. Note that not all graduate degrees are available on a part-time basis.

**Continuing Student** – Not all programs permit students to take individual courses without being registered to complete the full degree. It is best to contact the Graduate Administrator in the department that offers the course directly for assistance.

## Financing Your Courses (Graduate)

- **Tuition Assistance\*** – as a McMaster retiree (of any age) you may be eligible for tuition assistance that will cover your tuition for graduate degree credit courses up to the equivalent of 18 units per academic year (September 1 to August 31). You must complete a Tuition Assistance Application online through the Financial Aid & Awards portal, [AwardSpring](#), for each academic year.
- **OSAP** – If you’re in a part-time graduate program, you can apply for [OSAP](#), but take note of the specific steps for graduate students.

Once admitted to your program of studies, your Graduate Administrator in the departmental office can help with any questions. Assistance is also available for basic inquiries through the chat function on the Graduate Studies website (look for the “Chat with us” bubble).

## McMaster Continuing Education Programs and Courses

Most [McMaster Continuing Education](#) programs are open enrolment, which means there is no formal application or admission procedure. To enrol in a course, simply register online. Continuing education courses can be taken as part of a program or individually. Many of the programs can be completed entirely online.

Continuing Education also offers a program for older learners called the [Learning Continuum and 55+](#). While there is no tuition assistance available for these short courses, they are offered at a very low price.

Another course offered by McMaster Continuing Education that may be of interest is [Caregiving Essentials](#), a self-paced course for people who act as a family or informal caregiver for an older adult. It is a no-cost (free) online course open to the general public.

## Financing Your Courses (Continuing Education)

- **Tuition Assistance\*** – Diploma and certificate courses offered through McMaster Continuing Education (MCE) are eligible for McMaster retiree tuition assistance if the courses provide at least 18 hours of instruction. Tuition assistance per course is limited to the cost of tuition for an equivalent 3 unit or 6 unit degree credit course, up to the maximum equivalent of 18 units per academic year (September 1 to August 31). You must email a completed [MCE Tuition Assistance Application](#) to [Human Resources](#) for each academic year.
- **Student Awards** – If you require assistance in funding your studies, there are several options available such as [bursaries from the McMaster Association of Part-time Students \(MAPS\)](#).

Finally, a variety of [lifelong learning opportunities](#) are outlined on the McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA) website.

\* **NOTE:** The McMaster Retiree Tuition Assistance Program does not cover supplemental fees such as student fees and administrative charges, books, instructional material and supplies, late registration fees, or other incidental expenses, and covers courses offered by McMaster University only. You should also note that tuition assistance is a taxable benefit that will be reported on your T4A.

\*\* **NOTE:** The Tuition Waiver for learners 65 years of age or over applies only to *undergraduate* courses.

## Resources

[Office of the Registrar](#)

[School of Graduate Studies](#)

[McMaster Continuing Education \(MCE\)](#)

[McMaster Institute for Research on Aging \(MIRA\)](#)

[Retiree Tuition Assistance Policy](#)

[AwardSpring](#): Undergraduate and Graduate online Tuition Assistance application

[Tuition Assistance Application: McMaster Continuing Education](#)

**Author's note:** *While this may seem like a daunting and time consuming task, the end result of completing your chosen program (or even just one course) will be an exciting accomplishment! And don't worry, there are many people who work at Mac who will help and support you along the way!*

# Local Pharmacies in Ontario are Now Able to Prescribe for Common Ailments

*Provided by Human Resources*

As of January 1, 2023, Ontarians are able to stop in at pharmacies across the province to receive prescriptions for thirteen common ailments, including rashes, pink eye, insect bites and urinary tract infections with just their health card. This service makes it more convenient to access care by removing a doctor's office visit and will come at no extra cost to Ontarians.

Pharmacists will be able to offer prescriptions for:

- hay fever (allergic rhinitis);
- oral thrush (candidal stomatitis);
- pink eye (conjunctivitis; bacterial, allergic and viral);
- dermatitis (atopic, eczema, allergic and contact);
- menstrual cramps (dysmenorrhea);
- acid reflux (gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD));
- hemorrhoids;
- cold sores (herpes labialis);
- impetigo;
- insect bites and hives;
- tick bites (post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent Lyme disease);
- sprains and strains (musculoskeletal); and
- urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Allowing pharmacists to prescribe for these common ailments will make it more convenient for Ontarians to receive the care they need, while offering patients more convenient choices for how they access and receive health care.

In addition to providing more convenience, pharmacy prescribing will also help free-up doctors' bandwidth to provide care for more complex needs, helping to reduce wait times for these services.

Drugs prescribed by a pharmacist will be adjudicated and reimbursed by your McMaster Retiree benefit plan the same way as if they had been prescribed by a doctor.

---

## You May Need to Pay for Tests by Optometrists and Ophthalmologists

*By Mary Johnston*

Regular visits to an optometrist are advised as we age. The [optometrist](#) will check your vision, assess general eye health and screen for eye disease. OHIP covers the basic cost of these visits for most retirees. The exception is for people under age 65 who do

not have any known medical condition affecting their eyes. If you fall into this category, you will be charged a fee for the eye exam by the optometrist. The optometrist determines patient fees, which are not regulated by the Ministry of Health. Some McMaster retirees under age 65 are covered for eye examinations under their post-retirement [benefits plan](#) and can recoup this cost through Sun Life. Go to the OHIP web site to find out about the specifics of [current](#) funding for optometrist visits and to the Government of Ontario website to see [changes](#) due to take effect on September 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

Retirees of any age may be charged a fee by the optometrist over and above the services covered by OHIP or your benefits plan. This is because you may not have coverage for all the diagnostic tests performed during the visit. For example, as part of a comprehensive eye exam to screen for eye diseases and disorders such as glaucoma, cataracts, retinal detachment and macular degeneration, the optometrist may perform tests that are not covered by OHIP. One such test is optical coherence tomography ([OCT](#)), a scan used to study the anatomy of the retina in fine detail. The optometrist's clinic should inform you of the cost before conducting the test. Unfortunately, such tests are not covered by our McMaster post-retirement benefit plans.

If your optometrist finds anything of concern, they will likely refer you to an [ophthalmologist](#) – an MD who specializes in the medical and surgical treatment of the eye. The basic costs associated with your ophthalmology appointment, including an OCT if needed, will be covered by OHIP. You may undergo other tests at the ophthalmologist's office, some of which you will be charged for by the ophthalmologist. These may include [fundus autofluorescence imaging](#), which at present is not covered by OHIP or by McMaster benefits plans. You should be advised on arriving at the ophthalmology clinic of tests that you will need to pay for.

Not great news if you're heading out to an eye appointment. My last visit to the optometrist cost \$85 out-of-pocket for OCT and the subsequent visit to an ophthalmologist \$70 for imaging tests. So much for universal healthcare funded by our taxes.

#### **Editor's Note: Keep Receipts**

*You should keep your receipts for any out-of-pocket medical expenses (eye exams, prescription dispensing fees, assistive devices, etc.) as you may be able to claim a portion of them on your income tax return. Visit [General Information](#) for Medical Expenses on the Canada Revenue Agency website for more details.*



# Flourishing – What is it and How Do We Achieve it?

By Ellen Ryan

In November, I attended the [Global Scientific Conference on Human Flourishing](#) online along with 3,000 others from most nations in the world. The Conference was sponsored by the [Templeton Foundation](#) and the [Harvard Human Flourishing Program](#). I was inspired by the international, interdisciplinary panels on the science and philosophy underlying the notion of "flourishing", which can be defined as "a state of being in which all aspects of a person's life are good."

## Global Flourishing Study

The Templeton Foundation is collaborating with lead scientists from Harvard and Baylor Universities on an ambitious, longitudinal study. The study addresses two questions:

- 1) *How and why do people's happiness, health, purpose, faith, virtue, and relationships change over the course of their lives?*
- 2) *How do these aspects of what it means to be human vary within cultures and across countries?*

Researchers will track self-reports of 240,000 adults and teens in 22 countries. Social scientists can mine the data banks *to investigate how love, generosity, forgiveness, religion, spirituality, and well-being change and interact over time across a broad array of human cultures and demographics.*

Research findings were presented in the conference to support the **Flourishing Scale** with 6 dimensions: happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, close social relationships, and financial and material stability. Panels of experts were gathered to offer constructive critiques of the planned study from diverse perspectives: indigenous, Global South, planetary/climate, economic, political, marginalized groups, etc.

## Strategies to Promote Flourishing in Later Life

Dr. Tyler VanderWeele, Director of the Harvard Human Flourishing Program, provides research updates through a Flourishing Blog sponsored by [Psychology Today](#). See Resources list below.

Focus on the "5 F's" for a flourishing life has been captured in this easy to remember list:

1. Faith – Spiritual strivings, gratitude, sense of purpose and meaning, search for the sacred – all these are the bedrock of a sense of well-being.
2. Family & Friends – Loving relationships are the best predictor of aging well, according to the Harvard Longitudinal Study, currently led by Robert Waldinger.

Good relationships in childhood life buffer later stresses, and good relationships later in life can overcome damaging effects from early life.

3. Fitness – We all know that physical and mental exercises support body, mind, and spirit in later life.
4. Food – Just as our mothers thought, nutritious eating and appealing dining experiences are the foundation of good health.
5. Fun – Let’s play - connect with children, play sports/games, laugh with friends, smile at strangers, breathe deeply, swing your arms, sit on a swing.

Other evidence-based activities to promote individual and societal flourishing are: volunteering, caring for others, creativity, mindfulness practice, breathing exercises, forest bathing, and humour.

For me, the most awe-inspiring milestone of the past year has been looking at the night sky by way of the images from the James Webb telescope. Reflecting on light from the early eons of the universe gives me a sense of time/distance perspective beyond my imaginings. Then I naturally take long deep breaths, swing my arms while walking, listen more deeply, and smile to myself and others.

May this be a year of flourishing – for you and me, and for our communities, and for our planet.

## Resources

Harvard’s Institute for Quantitative Social Science: [Measuring Flourishing](#)

Psychology Today – three articles on flourishing

[How to Flourish at 50+: Focus on the “5 F’s” for a flourishing life](#)

[12 Ways to Flourish](#)

[Why Caring and Character Matter](#)

Waldinger, R. W. (2016) [Ted Talk: What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study of Happiness.](#)

Waldinger, R. W., & Schulz, Marc, M. S. (2023). [The Good Life: Lessons from the World’s Longest Scientific Study of Happiness.](#) Simon & Schuster. (available for purchase on Amazon)

---

## Parking on Campus

### Permit Expiry Renewal Reminder

Retiree parking permits are issued on a 12-month basis and must be renewed annually. Renew prior to your expiry date by [email](#), [phone](#) or by [postal mail](#). Your transponder number is on the front of your transponder. If you have questions or have

not made a note of your expiry date, please contact McMaster Parking Services by email at [parking@mcmaster.ca](mailto:parking@mcmaster.ca) or at 905-525-9140 ext. 24232.

Note that central-campus parking (with a transponder) is available to McMaster retirees as follows:

- May to August each year:
  - Access to lots B, C, D, H, I, K, N, P and Underground Stadium at all times.
- September to April each year:
  - Access to Lots B, C, D and I **after 12:30 pm on weekdays**, and at all times on weekends and holidays,
  - Access to Lots H, K, N, P and Underground Stadium at all times on weekdays, weekends and holidays.

### **A note to retirees without parking transponders**

Free parking on campus is available to retirees. To take advantage of this perk, and to view retiree parking access, go to the [McMaster Parking Services](#) web page. **The Parking Office is accepting permit applications by email only.** For further information, please contact [Parking Services](#).

---

## **Members' Corner**

The views and opinions expressed in Members' Corner are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of MURA Council.

### **Time on My Hands...**

*By Tim Nolan, Student Accessibility Services*

Is it true that people are busier in retirement? For me that can be said, only now I do not get paid for my time! When I retired, COVID was just emerging so there was not much opportunity to find a new source of busy. For those who know me, I spent virtually my entire working career at McMaster dealing with disability and accessibility for students, faculty, staff and the university alike. In retirement, I have done the same though I have turned my sights to the City of Hamilton by spending more time on city committee work. Though the effort kept me occupied, I still had time to catch reruns of old shows on CHCH TV like Danny Thomas and Andy Griffith.

The fall municipal election, however, led to new opportunities to expand accessibility horizons beyond city committees alone. Under a new umbrella organization called the Accessibility Hamilton Alliance (AHA), an effort was launched to survey candidates to understand their commitment to accessibility. Now that the election is over, our attention turns to those elected. And, knowing that accessibility affecting Hamiltonians goes beyond the city's borders, so too does the work of AHA.

Communications on accessibility have included spots on the Bill Kelly (CHML) radio talk show, local news publications such as the Bay Observer and Flamborough

Review, and correspondence with and delegations to various municipal committees around southern Ontario. Connections have been made with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the federal House of Commons Committee on Human Resources among others. The primary goal of AHA is to expand the horizons of accessibility for seniors, persons with disabilities, and taxpayers.

If you have an interest in accessibility (longstanding or recent) and would like to find something to keep you busy, please consider the efforts of the Accessibility Hamilton Alliance. If altruism is more than just a word then AHA might be for you. I do not know if good things come to those who wait, but I do know that good things can come to those who try. For more information or to express an interest to be involved, please contact me at [tnolan@mcmaster.ca](mailto:tnolan@mcmaster.ca).

---

## Insomnia

*By Elaine McKinnon Riehm, Eighteenth-Century Fiction*

Insomnia is a family affliction passed down from my mother to me and, I am sorry to say, from me to one of our sons. May it end there. It is not a question of lying in bed, and trying determinedly to sleep, moving from back to side, then side to back, crossing arms, recrossing them, fluffing pillows, smoothing sheets, or getting up to warm a glass of milk. What occurs is a home invasion of the mind.

Old friends appear without first knocking at mind's door or telephoning to say they are on their way. Unexpectedly, they simply walk in. Three grade 11 classmates appear and re-enact an incident from French class, bellowing "aux armes, citoyens" during La Marseillaise, which Miss South required us to sing daily. Before their song is complete, however, other people arrive, also unheralded. When they emerge from the shadows, I can see that Prince Andréy from *War and Peace* is among them. He bows to the company, observing Tolstoy's dictum that it is always better to bow too low than not low enough. Prince Andréy, however, is obviously not aware that bowing and curtsying are entirely out of place in a modern sleepless mind. And he is wearing too much lace in his cuffs for current fashions. Nevertheless, as always, he is charming.

I should like to have heard his opinion about the battlefield tactics of the invader, French Emperor Napoleon I, as opposed to those of the Russian Field Marshal, Mikhail Kutúzov. But Prince Andréy is drowned out by the noisy entrance of a University of Toronto friend who begins to tell a long story in his ringing voice. As casual today as when he was a student, Ron is wearing a shapeless T-shirt with a quotation on it from Erasmus. When he starts on a story, he often wanders into embellishments and details that are irrelevant to everyone but him, even into the occasional blind alley. But tonight, just in time, he returns to his amusing main theme.

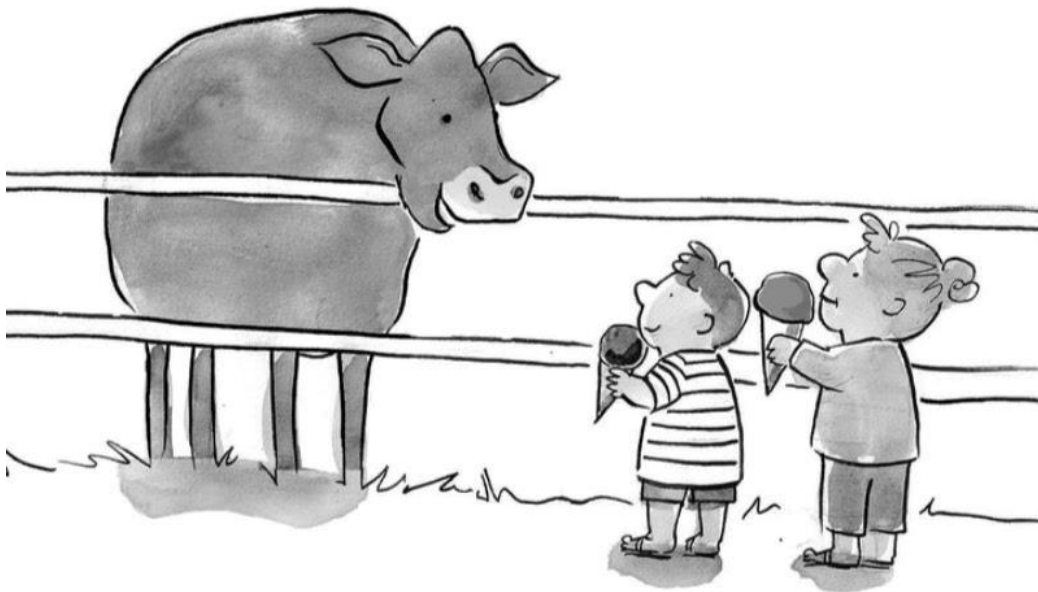
And who is this young girl with large twinkling brown eyes? Why, it is my childhood friend, Betsy! She is on the arm of the serious man from Switzerland whom she

married. She has very likely never giggled since they met, although she was an unparalleled giggler when she lived down the street.

Speaking of merry brown eyes, here comes Elizabeth Bennett, followed by Mr. Darcy. As he has not yet acknowledged that “it is many months since I have considered her as one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance,” he is looking at her with the contrary emotions of interest and disdain.

It is getting crowded in here. People move around at random; there is no sense of order or chronology, of beginning or end. If I were in control, I would summon my paternal grandmother, who was good at making introductions, giving the cold shoulder to louche behaviour, and shepherding people into agreeable groups for pleasant conversation. Apparently, however, she is not available this evening.

And thus, the night moves slowly on. Stars swing past; planets and the last quarter of the moon make their rounds. Everything out there is as it should be. But who can sleep during a gathering of such dear friends?



*“Looks like they froze my assets!”*

courtesy of *Rose Anne Prevec*  
Instagram: [@groundhog\\_hill](https://www.instagram.com/groundhog_hill)



# Nostalgia and the Writing of Books

*By Alan McComas, Medicine*

We saw the Promised Land and watched it slowly disappear...

What a way to start an essay, especially one by a neuroscientist who was invited to write about (and promote) his latest book! But the opening statement is true. For those of us who came to McMaster a half-century ago, the University and its new Faculty of Medicine (later, Health Sciences) were indeed viewed and experienced as a Promised Land. There, on the southeast area of the campus, stood this extraordinary new building made of large concrete and steel boxes piled on top of one another. Inside, spaciousness, brightness, and vibrant colours. Gorgeous lecture theatres, laboratories built to one's own design, a surprisingly well-stocked library. It was also a hospital, with its well-lit patient rooms, state-of-the-art imaging facilities, operating theatres, and outpatient consulting rooms. Oodles of money for research, too, and perhaps most important of all, a stellar faculty with big names and brilliant younger members. As if all this was not enough, there was the joy of being part of McMaster University, with its beautiful campus and its art, music, public lectures, and informal discussions in the Faculty Club. We were, we felt, part of a community of scholars and we exulted in our good fortune. In the entire world, there was no other medical school that could compare with McMaster.

That was then. So much has changed. The wonderful Medical Centre awaits its ghosts. Few people walk its corridors, lecture theatres are empty, adult patients are obliged to seek treatment elsewhere, and only a sparse collection of clinical faculty remain on campus. Interaction with other university departments, once so easy, is now difficult or impossible. Fundamental, curiosity-driven research has been replaced with drug trials, population health and statistics. Evidence-based medicine, never lost, has been rediscovered.

The University has changed too. Fifty years ago, there was still something of the former Baptist College with its order, scholarship, and reverence for hallowed names – George Gilmour, Togo Salmon, Chester New, George Grant and Henry Thode. There were more green areas on campus, places where agile young men tossed footballs and Departments would challenge each other to softball in the summer — games in which anyone, from the Head of Department to the most junior secretary, could take part. Innocence bred happiness.

Now, our beloved universities, McMaster among them, are fraught with problems. Where none had existed, social tensions are now cultivated and innocent faculty risk false accusation. Free speech has been effectively abolished and to express an unpopular truth is to jeopardize a career. With government funding based on enrollment, and with the constant threat of litigation following a poor mark, the fall in academic standards has been inevitable. To make student life still easier, ChatGPT can now write the obligatory essay.

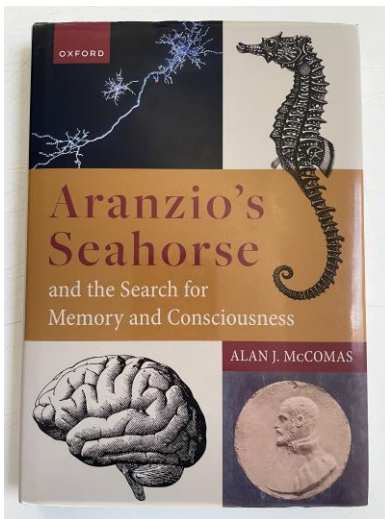
I am far from alone in having such negative thoughts, but what does their expression achieve? Why, you might ask, why not do the sensible thing and have the long-anticipated vacation in Bhutan, take golf lessons with the local professional, and start constructing a canoe in the garage? While I have done some travelling (non-exotic), I sought comfort in another direction. I began writing books. The first book coincided with early retirement from the University and was a textbook on the structure and function of muscle in health and disease (*Skeletal Muscle: Form and Function*). Unable to afford an artist, I drew the many illustrations myself with pen and ink, gradually improving as I went along. The book sold well (the only one to do so!) and ran to a second edition.



Next, I wrote a memoir (*One Eye Open*) describing wartime evacuation to the Welsh border, growing up in an East Anglian seaside resort and herring port, medical school in Newcastle upon Tyne, and moving to Canada. Intended for my children, it was printed by McMaster University. (A comment here. Fellow-retiree Ellen Ryan is right — we should, all of us, write down our life experiences!). The book that followed was very different. Entitled *The Artful Chameleon: An Exploration of Migraine and Medicine*, it recounted the remarkable story of the person most dear to me, my late wife Kate, and the life-threatening illness from which she was rescued at the last moment by magnetic stimulation to the head. This surprisingly effective treatment for acute migraine headache was the discovery of my friend and colleague, Dr. Adrian Upton. Once again, the University did a lovely job with the production and the 450 copies soon disappeared, though not into the hands of the headache specialists — then, as now, open to the blandishments of pharmaceutical companies. To my regret, in moving house, I lost an appreciative letter from the late well-known neurological author, Dr Oliver Sacks, produced on his typewriter and full of hand-written corrections.

Firmly into writing mode, I next thought to write an appreciation of the remarkable scientists responsible for revealing the electrochemical basis of the nerve impulse — upon which all our thoughts and actions depend. The term 'remarkable' is appropriate, for very often the experiments were performed, out of necessity, with home-made equipment. As the writing proceeded, I had encouragement from a late friendship with

one such investigator, Sir Andrew Huxley. Sir Andrew, a multi-faceted genius and recipient of the 1963 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, was the grandson of T.H. Huxley (Darwin's champion) and half-brother to Aldous (*Brave New World*). For a medical history book, *Galvani's Spark: The Story of the Nerve Impulse* did quite well, even winning a literary prize (neither Booker nor Giller, alas).



Next out was another medical history book, this time one dealing with certain key experiments crucial for investigating the nature of consciousness (*Sherrington's Loom: An Introduction to the Science of Consciousness*). Finally, completing a trilogy of sorts, has come *Aranzio's Seahorse and the Search for Memory and Consciousness*. Like its two predecessors, it has been published — very handsomely — by Oxford University Press (see photo).

A writer should know when to stop and I see that I am already well past the word limit kindly suggested by Helen Barton. If you have read this far, thank you for hearing the story of a fellow retiree. Should you acquire a copy of the new book, I would be happy to answer any queries concerning its conclusion — that consciousness is actually our ever-changing short-term memory. And now I really must stop...

(Note: *Aranzio's Seahorse and the Search for Memory and Consciousness* can be purchased through Amazon.ca. For queries or comments, my address is [mccomasa@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mccomasa@mcmaster.ca).)

---

## The Gift of Up - Ascending into Grace Space

*By Steve Staniek, Health Physics*

A couple of months before Christmas our daughter-in-law Ally asked if I could make a learning tower for Gracie, our 14 month-old granddaughter, in time for Christmas. I immediately felt both honoured by her request as a teacher, and somewhat foolish for not knowing what it was. Seeing my puzzled face, Ally went on to describe it as a child's step stool, and how it allows a toddler to climb up to counter height, to spend

time safely with adults as they prepare meals or snacks, and climb back down independently.

We had used traditional highchairs at tables and counters for many generations, and they always required parental assistance, both up and down. But this device brought a radical change in child learning, by providing the child with independent access on demand, to a higher world. The simple device empowered a curious child to reach and explore the adult world, where magical things were happening, and return to the comfort of the floor world when she'd had enough.

A bit of online research found that this new learning tech was being manufactured by many child furniture companies, in a range of prices depending on quality, accessories, and reputation or brand. Fortuitously, I had just the right maple plywood for the side panels, leftover from another project, and some sturdy pine boards for the step and platform. As I brought construction materials together into a loose puzzle, I felt the warm rush of excitement that accompanies creating something from the heart.

While sketching tower ideas on paper, several important unknowns came up – like how high can a toddler step, and how strong is a toddler? How high can they pull themselves? How about getting down? Where should the handholds go? Should I buy one and reverse engineer it, the way I tried with mom's clocks when I was a boy? That never went well, hmm...



The simple step stool was becoming more complicated quickly, so our son's retired Teddy Bear Bubba was recruited, because he was just about the right size. Bubba was a willing model, but he lacked the animation that would allow me to judge human factors like pulling ability, and the convenience of handhold locations.

After studying the construction of many designs, I chose industry standards instead of Teddy Bear standards for heights and handholds. I trusted furniture manufacturers who had studied the more practical aspects of what a child actually needs to climb up and remain safe, while doing it.

As work progressed on the tower it became a metaphor for freedom to learn. I fell in love with the understanding that it would liberate a child from the floor, quickly and easily. During our last visit with Gracie she was learning and using the key word "up" frequently. This would be the gift of "UP".



Spoken alone, “up” could be the most powerful word in the human language. As a direction it can simply refer to higher levels, or higher branches, and it often includes our feelings or moods, positions, interests, or enthusiasm for life. The opposite direction is “down” into life’s darker roots. Being able to control our ups and downs in different ways is a vital life lesson best learned early.

We had noticed during visits that Gracie was climbing up and onto things, especially the hallway console table. Ally had provided an assortment of climbing things in their home which Gracie played on, as a way to encourage the development of Gracie’s proprioception, or developing a sense of where your hands and feet are without actually seeing them.

When the tower design was transferred onto actual material, Grandma’s eye caught something she didn’t like. She pointed to the simple rectangular handholds, smiled, and suggested large heart-shaped handholds instead. Hearts they became! A wooden name plate would give it a proprietary touch, and could be removed when the tower was passed on. I offered Granddad’s Lifetime Warranty and unlimited maintenance, so long as it remained within our extended family.



Since the tower would eventually be passed on, I decided to make it into a kit that could be disassembled and reassembled easily with wing nuts. After assembly, I discovered how hazardous those wing nuts are when you brush up against them, so I replaced all of them with some double-ended, smooth topped, “Chicago Bolts”, originally designed for hockey helmets.

We finished the tower just before Christmas, and as we stepped back we wondered how Gracie would learn to use it. Would someone have to show her where to put her feet and hands, and how to pull herself up to the platform? How would it happen? What if she didn’t like it, and turned her back on it?



A once-in-a-hundred year snow and windstorm shut down the County for three days just before Christmas, so our visit was deferred until New Year's Eve. When we finally arrived at our son's home, we parked the learning tower in the kitchen and told Gracie that it was for her. We stepped back quietly, and let nature take its course. Gracie walked up to it and looked at it for a brief minute before resting a foot on the step. We held our breaths as her hands came up slowly and found the handholds, and she proceeded to pull herself up and under the safety bar, and onto the platform.



We all clapped when she stood herself up on the platform, and she turned to us and smiled knowingly, and began to clap. She took to it like a fish to water, and in a few minutes she had mastered “up”. “Down” required more thought and experimentation, but she figured it out over the next few days. In another month she had mastered the ups and downs of the learning tower and was able to participate in all the wonderful mysteries of food prep, beside mom, dad, and Winston who has amazingly accurate high reach.



Meanwhile in Canada  
@MeanwhileinCana

Canadians checking to see if spring has arrived yet.



Image Credit: Jamie Bussey/Comedy Wildlife Photo

*courtesy of Meanwhile in Canada*

*MURAnews* is produced by MURA members Denise Anderson (Production Editor), Helen Barton (News Editor), Nora Gaskin, John Horsman, and Marcia MacAulay. We welcome submissions from MURA members.

Contributing writers: Dawnelle Hawes, Mary Johnston, Kathy Overholt, and Ellen Ryan.