

BURA

AUTUMN 2013

Newsletter

Brock University Retirees Association

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Upcoming

BURA Events: October – December

Wed., October 16:

Film: 20 Feet from Stardom

Supper Buffet: 4:45 pm at Tang Chinese Cuisine, 216 Glenridge Ave (in the Plaza)

Film: 7:00 pm Empire Theatre, Pen Centre

Cost \$25, includes buffet and film

Wed., November 20

Presentation: Fraud Awareness: How to Identify Mass Marketing Fraud, Identity Theft and Other Scams

Speakers: Brock Godfrey and Jennifer George (TBC)

Lunch: 11:45 for noon at St Catharines Golf & Country Club, 70 Westchester Ave.

Cost \$20, includes lunch and presentation

Tues., December 10

Quartet: Vintage Blend

Lunch: 11:45 for noon at Holiday Inn Parkway, 327 Ontario Street

Cost \$25, includes lunch and entertainment

2014 January – June

Event planning is underway and tentatively includes talks about Heraldry and Flags; Travel; Art.

Please send items for our next Newsletter to jpreston@brocku.ca

Presentations

At the AGM in June, BURA Service Awards were presented by Sybil Wilson.

Evelyn Janke has completed her term as Treasurer and will remain on the BURA Executive as Councillor.

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Sandra Ensley has completed her term as BURA's web master.

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Sybil also thanked Merle and Derek Richards for providing their video projector and screen on several occasions.

From Pat Dirks

New Scholarship

I have recently established The Gerald Dirks Scholarship for Advancement of Braille Literacy to honour the memory of my late husband, Dr. Gerald Dirks. Gerry joined the Politics Department (as it was then called) in 1966, and actually taught members of Brock's inaugural graduating class of 1967. This scholarship, established in 2013 by the World Braille Foundation, an international foundation incorporated as a Canadian charity, recognizes Gerry's passionate and extensive use of Braille throughout his academic career during which he combined a successful teaching career with research and writing and rose to the position of full Professor.

At the official launch of his scholarship, I remarked that it honours Gerry's memory by "recogniz[ing] both the central role that Braille had played in the enrichment of his life and his conviction that, no matter where they happened to be born, blind and visually impaired children should be provided with the opportunity to learn Braille." Gerry would not have been able to earn a B.A. from the

University of British Columbia, an M.A. from Queen's University and a Ph. D. from the University of Toronto without the excellent Braille skills he acquired as a young child; skills that had earlier made it possible for Gerry to become the first blind student to be integrated into a regular high school in Vancouver. This scholarship honours Gerry's commitment to Braille literacy, inclusive education for blind and visually impaired children and the expansion of employment opportunities for blind adults, by furthering these causes within the African Union.

Full details about the scholarship are available on the World Braille Foundation website [www.worldbraillefoundation.com] and on the web by doing a search for Gerald Dirks Scholarship. Please feel free to contact me by email (pgdirks@shaw.ca) for further information. Information about the first two recipients of the scholarships will soon be available on the web.

From Russ Plumley

Apartment Living101

After living in our house at 270 Linwell Road for sixty years, it seemed wise to seize the opportunity to acquire a life-lease apartment at the Niagara Ina Grafton Gage Village, especially after being on the waiting list since 2002.

Many have had the experience of downsizing, and in our case it was leaving a spacious seven room property with full basement and squeezing everything into five smaller rooms with no basement. Obviously much had to be disposed of in one way or another, and with help from family members and others, the move was accomplished seamlessly on May second.

If Brock University is looking for a way to assist people in making transitions of this nature, it should offer "Apartment Living 101". While our apartment is known as number 4101, it actually is the ground floor apartment

#101 in the fourth building in the complex (we've already had one visitor looking for us on the fourth floor!!).

And we really did need some help - switching from gas stove to electric stove, where to put indoor facilities for the cat, and mastering the change from washer and dryer in the basement to stacked washer and dryer in the bathroom. It was the latter situation that gave us a big challenge on the first washday.

I will freely confess that I have successfully avoided washday for sixty-six years of our married life, but today, when Shirley opened a door and put in the first handful of soiled clothes, I dutifully followed suit and together we put all the laundry in, added soap and pressed the start button. But nothing happened, and a check revealed that the water taps were not open. Try again, with the same result. A trip to the utility room revealed that the shut-off valves were still closed. Now surely the washer will go, but guess again. Would you believe that the washing machine was empty and that the soiled clothes and soap were in the dryer? I'm no stranger to embarrassment in my lifetime but this incident tops them all. Lesson number one from "Apartment Living 101" is that the dryer in on top, the washer is on the bottom, dryer controls on the right, washer controls on the left.

Maybe I could be the professor who teaches that course! After all, I was a man of letters, and adding PROF before my name and B.Ed after only seems apropos.

From Barbara Bucknall

Barbara Bucknall was hoping to have an art show at the Kennedy Art Gallery this fall, but all the shows for 2013 have been cancelled as the gallery is in poor repair. Instead, she hopes to have shows at the Mahtay Café in the New Year and at NAC next summer.

She has been working since Easter on a

novel in verse about the previous existences of her heroine, the witch. She has narrated her existence as a follower of Jesus of Nazareth and as the slave girl of Helen of Troy, with stops in Sheol in between. In preparation is her life as the daughter of an alchemist living in 17th century England under Oliver Cromwell and who is friendly with a Sephardic Jew versed in the Kabbalah. They won a small black boy and live near Bristol. This is taking a lot of research. Help is being offered by Steven and Fran Heinemann, Morris Cohen, Barry Joe, and Carl Wolff.

From Don Ursino

Avanti Chamber Singers 2013-2014 Season

If you enjoy listening to choral music, then consider attending a concert of the Avanti Chamber Singers. This 30-member choral group was established in 2006 by Dr. Harris Loewen, Associate Professor of Music at Brock University. Under his direction, Avanti is now entering its 8th season and once again will be presenting three concerts. These will be held on the Saturday evenings of November 16, February 8, and April 26. All singers are initially auditioned for selection and currently nineteen of the Avanti singers are either former or current Brock faculty, staff or Brock students. The group's first CD (Glorious Light: Christmas Choral Music by Niagara Composers) was issued last season and their second CD will be released at this year's November concert.

Avanti's November concert will be held at St. Thomas Anglican Church (99 Ontario St.) in St. Catharines and will feature Pergolesi's 'Magnificat', the concert premiere of John Butler's 'Requiem', and selected songs from the Avanti CD to be released at the concert. The February and April concerts will be held at St. Barnabas Anglican Church in St. Catharines. Senior tickets for each concert

are \$15 and if you wish further information regarding tickets or programming, please contact either Carol Gaspari or Don Ursino, both BURA members.

'The Music Man' is coming to Niagara – with 'Vintage Blend'

Since 1945 the Port Colborne Operatic Society has been providing audiences in the Niagara Region with the production of a musical show each year. Their 2014 production will be Meredith Wilson's, 'The Music Man', a story of a salesman of musical instruments who brings his charm to River City, Iowa. This musical was first staged on Broadway in 1957 and then as a movie in 1962. In both productions Robert Preston played the role of Harold Hill, the salesman with Shirley Jones playing the role of Marion in the movie. Some of the more notable songs from this musical include 'Seventy-Six Trombones', 'The Wells Fargo Wagon', 'Till There Was You', and 'Lida Rose'.

One component of 'The Music Man' is the 'assemblage' of the four River City School Board members – Jacey, Ewart, Olin and Oliver – into a 'barbershop' quartet.

Selected for the roles of the school board members has been the vocal quartet, Vintage Blend, the same quartet that will be providing the entertainment at the BURA Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 10th.

All performances of 'The Music Man' will take place in the 600-seat auditorium of Lakeshore Catholic High School in Pt. Colborne on three consecutive weekends beginning February 15th. The Saturday evening shows (Feb. 15, 22, Mar. 1) are at 8 p.m. and the Sunday afternoon shows (Feb. 16, 23 Mar. 2) at 2 p.m. There is also a Friday evening performance on February 28th.

All seats are reserved and the cost per ticket is \$20. Tickets will go on sale in November at the Roselawn Box Office (905-834-7572) in Port Colborne.

From Peter Feldman

In the spring, after my wife Nina and I had returned from a delightful trip to New Mexico (Albuquerque, Santa Fe, the Ghost Ranch and Taos) I directed a reading of a twenty minute one-act play at the Cafe MahTay in downtown St. Catharines. This was a project of Stray Theatre, the group I started several years ago along with several of my former Drama students at Brock. The play, "Merge", was by US playwright, screenwriter and director, Neil LaBute, who has gained something of a notorious reputation for his cynical plays and films about human relations, especially male-female relations; a serious satirist, in other words.

The cafe, right across the street from the site of St. Catharines' new performing arts centre, has an ambitious program of music, poetry readings, and other events in the evenings; we were their first dramatic event. The cafe is small, located in a storefront on St. Paul Street. The play was performed informally twice and was very well received by its audiences, which included some BURA members.

Stray Theatre will have a full-scale production in the coming season at the Sullivan-Mahoney Courthouse Theatre in The Old Courthouse at 101 King Street: "Communion," a recent drama by the brilliant Canadian playwright Daniel MacIvor. We'll send you news of that production in January.

From Scott Stevens

Brock/Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being Programs

Brock University is now offering a few unique exercise options out of the Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being. We are offering a Balance and Strength Study for Seniors and a Cardiac Rehab program. There are certain fairly broad criteria to be eligible for our programming. We are located

at 130 Lockhart Dr. at the base of the escarpment and we are affiliated with the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University.

In order to participate in the Seniors **Balance and Strength** study, participants must be 55 years of age or older with no physical or cognitive impairment that would prevent exercise participation, must be able to walk independently and must be able to understand English.

A short questionnaire and a note from the participants GP are all that are needed to start the program. If eligible, participants will receive a free 12 week supervised exercise program and will also receive results of your tests.

At the end of the 12 weeks, they will have the option of becoming a member of the gym and continuing with their exercise regimen with the same supervision that they received during the study. The cost for membership is \$400 per year, or \$33.33 per month. If you wish for your spouse or a support member to join, it is \$300 for the year or \$25 per month.

For those that do not wish to participate in the study, they can choose to become a paying member immediately.

To be eligible for our **Cardiac Rehab** program, there are two avenues for entry. The primary prevention portion of the program is for people that are at risk for the following factors: Hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, dyslipidemia or obesity.

Our secondary prevention portion is designed to treat and rehabilitate those individuals who have had history of a cardiac event including: Myocardial Infarction (Heart Attack), Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery, Angioplasty, Angina or a Heart/Heart-Lung Transplant.

Those entering via the Cardiac Program need to be screened for exercise via a stress

test. This can be set up by their General Practitioner with a Cardiologist or we can have the test arranged with a local cardiologist. The stress test will determine if it is safe for them to partake in our exercise program.

Both of the primary and secondary prevention programs are supervised by individuals who are trained to customize your exercise program to your individual needs. Cost for membership is \$400 for the year or \$33.33 per month and, for a spouse or support partner, is \$300 for the year or \$25 per month.

Start dates:

Any time the client wishes to start is fine. There is continuous intake for both programs. People may attend as many times as they wish per week. It is recommended that you start with three times per week, but many of our members come every day.

OHIP does cover the cost of a stress test, but it must be by physician referral. Wait times have been about a week to ten days to get into stress tests.

If you feel that you will benefit from our programming, please feel free to contact me via phone or e-mail to set up a time to get you started or answer any questions that you may have.

Scott Stevens
Coordinator Brock/Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being
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From Joan Preston

Tech Corner: Software

If you need or want to update your software for writing and other office tasks, there is good news. Open Source software is in the public domain. In other words, it is free to use. But is it "good" and should you use it?

If your writing software is several years old, it may not open newer formats, it may lack helpful new features, and support may be discontinued. Purchasing new proprietary software is expensive and some companies are moving to a "rental" model where you no longer "own" a version of the application but must pay for/renew your license to use it (usually annually).

Is there a good/free open source writing program? Apache.org regularly supports and updates its Open Office software. It is a complete office suite with word processor, draw, presentations, spreadsheet, and databases. There is a wiki with user guides and other guides and tips (wiki.openoffice.org/wiki/Documentation).

If you already know how to use word processing software, learning OpenOffice should be fairly easy, since such programs have similar features. You can save your writing in a variety of formats and/or export it as a pdf. It will also open many formats (for example: .doc; .rtf; .txt, etc). You can insert pictures, objects, movies, tables, etc. It also has "tools" like spelling and grammar, Thesaurus, etc. and comes with numerous fonts. It is the program I use to prepare the Newsletter.

The current version, OpenOffice 4, is highly rated for ease of use, features, design and support. It runs on newer versions of Windows, Mac OS and Linux operating systems (See www.openoffice.org). But older versions are still available. If you have a computer running an older OS, see Index of System Requirements for each version (at the bottom of the System Requirements page).

On the download page (www.openoffice.org/download/), additional resources are listed. You may be interested in the apps for dictionaries, available in several languages, including German, Russian and other European languages, or apps for draw

such as, clip art or crop.

Eric S. Raymond's "The Cathedral and the Bazaar" (1997, O'Reilly) is a well-written book about the open source movement and software development.

Web Browser

A browser is a software application for interacting with the internet, like Safari or Internet Explorer. Your computer came with a browser that works, but perhaps not very well since it may do the minimum. Your browser should provide you with useful features, security, speed and compatibility, be easy to use and have good help and support.

If you have a relatively new computer, two of the best rated browsers, especially for security, are Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox. If you are not using one of these, you might consider trying them out. They are free and are easily downloaded and installed. They can be set to allow private browsing, tell sites not to track you, and block known attack sites and reported web forgeries. These features are located in the pull-down tabs (often called "Privacy" and "Security") under Preferences.

If you stay with your current browser, make sure that you clear your cache and your history after every session. Your history is all the sites you have visited and your computer stores this information, perhaps for a long time, if you do not clear it. In Safari, for example, pull down your History tab and click "Clear History".

Cache is temporary storage for files downloaded by your browser to display websites. On the one hand, they speed up loading because your computer reuses the information when you revisit a site. However, sites update often and your browser may reuse old stored information in the cache rather than the newer updates. As well, other sites may use the cache to track your

browsing habits and possibly find out who you are. Under "Help" in your browser, ask how to clear cache and follow the instructions.

Of course, do not click on any pop-ups. Newer browsers allow you to block pop-ups. Your browser's "Help" will tell you how to do this.

Download Google Chrome at
www.google.com/chrome/

Download Mozilla Firefox at
www.mozilla.org

From Don MacRae

By Bike and Barge from Avignon to Aigues-Mortes (Provence)

At the end of April this year we set out on our annual bike and barge trip in Europe, this time to Southern France.

We had eagerly watched the weather patterns for Avignon in the days preceding our departure: they were positive and looked promising for the foreseeable future. Not that we could do much about rain on our tour. We were captive participants by now, since we had purchased our tickets for the flight and made our reservations on the barge which we were to use as our floating hotel. We are well equipped with rain gear for inclement weather, but it is always nice to see the surrounding countryside in sunshine.

The only reservation we had was the Mistral, that cold north wind which blows down the Rhone Valley from the Alps to the Mediterranean. At times, as it funnels through the valley, it accelerates to speeds reaching 90 km/hr. Sustained winds of 50 kms/hr are not unusual when it is blowing.

And indeed it was a little windy. When you are pedalling down a steep hill just to maintain your speed you know that you are

riding into a stiff breeze. The upside of the mistral, however, is that it is usually accompanied by clear weather. So, what you lose on the roundabouts, you make up on the swings. We didn't see a drop of rain for a week and enjoyed brilliant sunshine for the entire trip. An hour after we had completed our journey and we had stowed our bikes on the ship for the last time, the rains came and didn't let up until we left France a week later.

Our journey began with our flight into Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris—one of the most "user-unfriendly" airports I have ever been in. But we found our way to the TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse), the high speed train which stops right in the airport. It whisked us at just about 300 kms/hour to Avignon. Imagine doing that in Canada? Paris to Avignon, virtually the length of the country from north to south, in about 3 hours! And it pulled into the station right on time.

We explored Avignon for the first few days of our trip, visiting the famous Pont d'Avignon, you know—the one that is really only half a bridge. Only four of the original twenty-two arches are standing today.

We visited the Palais des Papes, an immense complex which housed the Popes in the 14th century. We are told that about 1500 people involved in the organization of the Church worked in these buildings.

The cycling was great, although there were a few scary moments: crossing a bridge over the Rhône on a very windy day with 18-wheelers "sharing" the road with you can be nerve-racking at times. French drivers don't seem to be willing to watch out for cyclists as they do in Belgium, Holland, Germany and Austria.

The cycle paths themselves often left a little to be desired. When we weren't on paved roads, we followed hard-packed gravel paths. The French have a unique way of making a cycle path. I am convinced that they collect a

bunch of potholes put them side by side and fill in the spaces between with a little gravel. Voilà a bike path! At one point, I was swallowed up in one of these holes. I literally left my seat, my feet came off the pedals, and holding on only to the handlebars of my bike I came up the other side of the pothole. Exciting!

Our tour took us to the famous cellars of the Château du Pape region. In Arles we visited the amphitheatre and the ruins of the ancient theatre which is still used today. We climbed the long hill to the mountain top village of Les Beaux and had a picnic beneath the famous Pont du Gard, a Roman aqueduct built in the 1st century A. D. We visited Nostradamus' home in St. Remy-de-Provence and watched as workers harvested sea salt in Aigues-Mortes.

On the whole, the trip was great. We enjoyed every minute of it— in retrospect even the scary moments in French traffic. And the French we encountered in the small towns of Provence were exceptionally friendly.

We're planning the next trip already.

Directory changes are on the next page so you can print it and add it to your copy of the Directory.

Directory Changes

New Members

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Updates

Joyce Little (Alan Hughes widow) is now a full member.
