

# WLU RETIREES' NEWS

A Publication of the Wilfrid Laurier University Retirees' Association

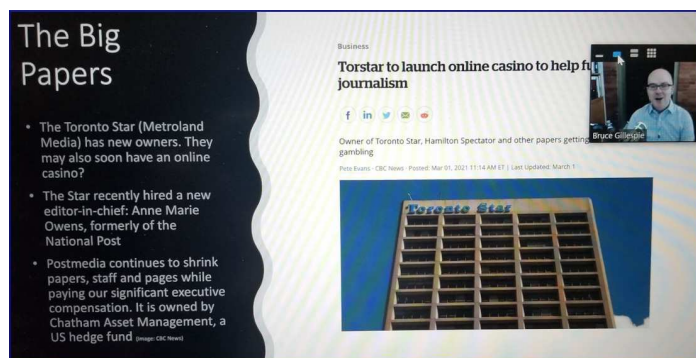
To contact the executive: [retirees@wlu.ca](mailto:retirees@wlu.ca) WLURA website: [www.wlura.ca](http://www.wlura.ca)

Fall 2021

## Canadian Journalism: The Present State

by Gerry Schaus

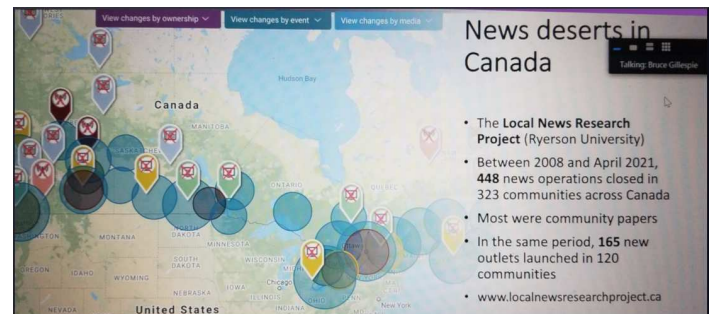
As a final event of the academic year, held in conjunction with the Association's *Annual General Meeting*, Prof. Bruce Gillespie, Coordinator of the Digital Media and Journalism program at Laurier's Brantford campus, presented a lively discussion of the current state of journalism in Canada.



A former journalist himself and author of *News Writing and Reporting: An Introduction to Skills and Theory* (Oxford University Press), Bruce summarized some of the challenges facing Canadian journalism today, including growing public distrust of “legacy” media, competition from social media, loss of advertising revenue and the emergence of “news deserts” in Canada. The future is not all bleak, however, as his talk revealed.

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Among the items of bad news, the “Big Papers” are in trouble financially, with the exception of one or two major outlets such as *The Globe and Mail*. Prof. Gillespie predicted that the Post Media, for example, may cease to exist in the next 10 years, and so join 448 news operations in 323 communities across Canada that closed between 2008 and 2021.

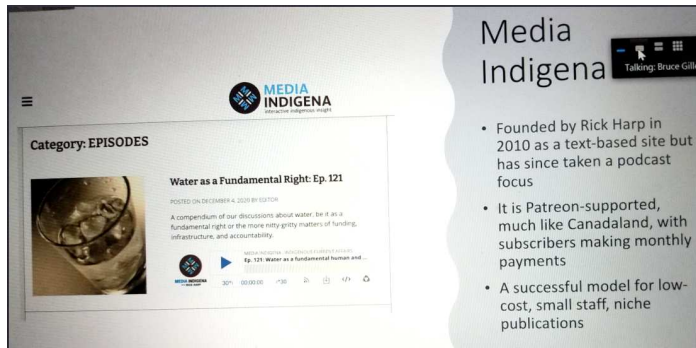


Even medium-sized cities like Barrie and Guelph no longer have their own daily paper here in Ontario. Imagine *The Toronto Star*, a mainstay of news in Canada's largest city, having to find financial support by launching its own online casino! The new owners of Torstar are having to think outside the box to make ends meet.

One disturbing issue that has arisen in the past four years is “fake news.” While a recent American president liked to label the most trusted U.S. news outlets as sources of “fake news,” the real story has been that untrustworthy news outlets, with no qualms about distorting the news to suit the political views of its undiscerning audience, have more than thrived. Gillespie pointed out that steps are being taken to fight such sources of fake news. A number of training programs now exist to educate children, high school students and the public in general about fake news. Websites have been created for this purpose. They include Media Smarts, News Wise, and International Fact Checking Report. Unfortunately, in Canada there is nothing equivalent to the Pew Research Centre in Washington, D.C., and with one in five Canadian adults getting their news from social media, sources where there is little to no regulation, the battle for truth in news is frightening.

There is also some good news, however. Indiegraf, launched in May 2020 by Erin Millar, is a funding organization for recent news start-ups. It has already provided two rounds of funding for five or six such start-ups on each occasion, and is looking to help more. *The Pointer*, a new newspaper for Peel Region, founded by San Grewal, bases its financial plan on subscriptions from readers of \$10 per

month. The Overstory Media Group in western Canada is a new independent media outlet whose goal is to open 50 local outlets and hire 250 journalists to service small regional markets by 2023, certainly an ambitious goal. Furthermore, digital newsletters have blossomed using popular template software, and there is an explosion in podcasting, including Media Indigena launched by Rich Harp in 2010, meant for niche markets.



Help has also come from the federal government with a tax deduction of up to \$300 for subscribers to Canadian newspapers (restrictions apply, see box below for details). Several not-for-profit news outlets have also been created, allowing donors to receive tax receipts for their gifts. One such example is The Narwhal, based in western and northern Canada, which focuses on environmental issues.

If there is one strong take-away that Bruce's captive audience was left with, it is that, for good or bad, *"The Times, they are a-changing."*

## News Subscription Tax Credit

The federal government has introduced the Digital News Subscription Tax Credit for subscriptions purchased in 2020 through 2024 inclusive.

Individuals who are eligible can claim the credit on Line 31350 of their T1 Income Tax and Benefit Return. Details on how individuals can claim the digital news subscription tax credit can be found on the Canada Revenue Agency website at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/income-tax/personal-income-tax.html> and follow the links for "Claiming deductions, credits . . ." then "Digital news subscription expenses."

## My French Passion

by Jim Wilgar

Though never a scholar in French literature, I've long been passionate about this car, my 1970 Citroën 2CV. Though little known outside of France, almost 4 million were produced from 1948 to 1990 as a "people's car."



The stipulations for it were amusing. It was to hold four people and carry a basket of eggs over a farmer's ploughed field without breakage! Hence, a light car on a remarkable four wheel independent suspension. To get 80 kms from a litre of fuel, its top was foldable canvas, only three lugnuts per wheel, body panels of aluminum, and elastic bands for the seats. Even the engine is light: two cylinders, air cooled, 30 hp. No window cranks nor fancy arm rests, etc. It needed to be easily modified to carry wine casks or animals, so seats are easily removed.

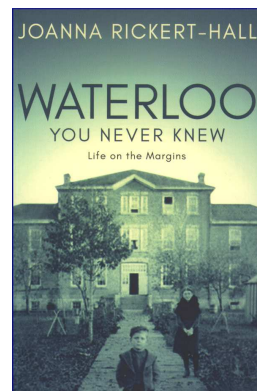
André Citroën was the genius behind this and other extraordinarily advanced cars. Regrettably, he died penniless after creating this simple, sturdy, easily repaired car that became an icon of France!

My 2CV (pronounced "deush" for "Deux Cheveaux" or two horses) has been my pleasure to own, maintain, and share with curious observers. Want to go for a ride?

## Friday Afternoon Gatherings

### Joanna Rickert-Hall: The Waterloo You Never Knew

by Alan Auerbach



The best part of reaching Grade 11 was that we didn't have to take the same required and hated course – History! (But then, every next course seemed to start with its history. We couldn't win.)

I wish we had Joanna Rickert-Hall as our teacher because, as her talk back on April 30 showed, she's a different kind of historian who deals with a different kind of history.

Traditional history is always about the Big People, the ones whose sombre portraits look down on us from gallery walls. Who ruled between what dates. Whose troops won what battles when. Which of their countries prevailed when.

But marginalised people have histories too, and when they're local, their lives can have lessons for all of us. That's what Joanna studies. She sees herself as a history "truth sleuth" who tracks down little-known stories that we had no idea of, and tells them to whomever's interested.

Her recent book is *Cultivating Community in Waterloo You Never Knew: Life on the Margins*. Waterloo could be any small Canadian community. Its street names reflect the accomplishments of those who built our institutions of industry, government, and education. But what of the weird and wonderful who lived apart from the mainstream but who were just as real? What of the rumrunner, the ex-slave, the grave-digging doctor, the séance-loving politician, the sorcery-practising healer?

She writes for readers who would like to identify with their ordinary counterparts from the past. And maybe for future readers who would like to learn about you. You might like to know how the average person dealt with the savage outbreaks of cholera or smallpox – just as a future generation might wonder how you handled Covid.

The book was designed to start a discussion, serving as a mirror so today's readers, while living their own history, can identify with ordinary people of the past whose illuminating stories are worth hearing.

By learning about our forebears we find that our social problems (mental illness, senility, deadly diseases, homelessness, vagrancy) bothered them too. They didn't have our wide array of coping programs, but started some that echo to this day. For instance, our Grand River Hospital opened in 1893, the Waterloo County House of Industry and Refuge flourished from 1869 to 1947, and the Berlin Gaol opened in 1862 and provided its residents with two meals a day until 1978. Unlike now, our ancestors could easily find a wide range of spiritualists, mediums, and "charm healers," some with names that still resonate.

All of this is why she aptly contends that "All history is local and it connects all of us . . . we are creatures of the past and the future."

### Deep Thought (1)

1. If poison passes its expiration date, is it more poisonous or less?
2. Which letter is silent in the word "scent," the "s" or the "c"?
3. What are you vacating when you go on a vacation?
4. Why is the English letter "W" called double U? Isn't it a double V?
5. Why isn't a fireman called a water-man?
6. If money doesn't grow on trees, how come banks have branches?

## Friday Afternoon Gatherings

### Benefits and Pension News

On September 24, members connected via Zoom to hear Krista Boertien and Julie Carr from the Human Resources Department answer our questions about on-going concerns, especially questions about access to our benefits through Sun Life.

Following this, Alastair Robertson, retiree representative on the Pension Committee of the Board of Governors, gave a brief report on two items of interest.

First, the latest data show that the Laurier pension fund is enjoying a healthy rate of return this year thanks to strong stock-market gains. Over the period from January 1 to July 31, 2021, the pension fund earned a year-to-date rate of return of approximately 8.3% – a seven-month total that exceeds the 7.5% return over 2020.

Second, he reported that on July 1 of this year, Ontario's University Pension Plan (UPP) began operations with 35,000 members at three inaugural institutions – the University of Toronto, Queen's University, and the University of Guelph – with total assets of \$10.5 billion under management. At the end of 2020, Laurier established a Multi-Lateral Working Group of employee and retiree representatives to build knowledge of the UPP by learning about its design, its governance, and the steps that would be required if Laurier were to pursue membership in the UPP. He reported that the working group, on which he served as retiree representative, held five meetings between Dec. of last year and April of this year and successfully fulfilled its function. It is expected that further stakeholder education will follow. He then answered questions about the UPP from those present.

## President's Message

by Gerry Schaus



I sit at the moment in an 18th-century sitting room of a converted old aristocratic house, surrounded by wall paintings of young gentlemen dancing with their beloved amidst romantic garden settings while I wait for my room to be prepared and sanitized. Outside the open door on the second floor, the modern noises of market day in Catania (Sicily) filter through in a constant hum of conversation and chatter in this ancient, once Greek, city, while the locals go about their business of shopping and socializing.

I have just finished leading an adventuresome tour group around the island, adhering to the established Covid-19 protocols as best we could while taking in the





The sitting room in Catania, Sicily

sights of Greek temples, Roman mosaics, Punic sanctuaries, and mediaeval Sicilian baroque churches. We were one of the first “post-pandemic” groups to venture out again under the aegis of the Archaeological Institute of America after the travel shutdowns of 2020–21. We stood fully vaccinated, tested and masked, ready for whatever challenge was thrown at us. I’m happy to report that just yesterday I took another Covid-19 rapid antigen test and it turned out, fortunately, negative. It’s not business as usual by any means here in Italy, but it’s getting there.

Meanwhile, back in Canada, our Retirees Association held its first event of the new academic year – a presentation by Human Resources on pensions and benefits – and the Executive met by Zoom to discuss the student Award that was approved at the WLURA Annual General Meeting in May. The Association might have to go in a different direction for this award since the plan to give a bursary to a mature WLU student in financial need is not acceptable to the University for several reasons that we were not aware of when the Award was first discussed and approved. No matter. We’ll find a different path and a different, perhaps just slightly different, goal. We shall see.

We’re delighted to welcome several new members to the Association Executive for this year – Carl Langford, David Peirson, and Shannon Purves-Smith. We’re looking forward to an end to the Covid-19 restrictions preventing us from meeting in person, but for the time being, it looks like we’re going to be Zooming rather than face-to-facing for a while longer.

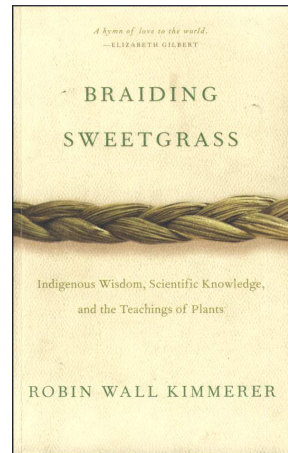
Finally, a member of my tour group leaned over in the bus and told me that after a round of golf, a wizened Clint Eastwood was asked by his golfing partner where he was going now. Clint, in his gravelly voice, replied, “I’m going home to try to keep the Old Man out.” I thought about that for a moment and said, “Yep, that’s what I’m going to do too – keep the ‘Old Man’ out, every possible day for as long as I can.”

Have a great autumn!

## Book Review

# Braiding Sweetgrass

by Steve Izma



Why is a book first published in 2013 suddenly re-appearing on Canadian bestseller lists? I first heard about Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* in 2020. I wondered at my ignorance of it as I read the first few chapters; it should have entered into my many conversations that criss-cross between environmentalism and Indigenous knowledge.

Kimmerer is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and a botanist living and teaching in upper New York State. The *New York Times* claims that the sudden appearance of the book on its bestsellers list in mid-2020 occurred after six years of word-of-mouth. Sounds like a conspiracy.

Increased public awareness in Canada of the effect of residential schools on Indigenous peoples has likely propelled the book’s popularity. Kimmerer includes such events as background for her discussion of the damage done to the handing down of the wisdom of her ancestors.

Through a combination of traditional stories and botanical research, Kimmerer breaks apart the standard Western concepts of the wilderness, especially aspects that we approach with distaste and trepidation. The urbanite’s fear of dirt, to begin with, takes a thorough beating with her many descriptions of gardening and plant and soil restoration. She digs deeply and joyfully into elements of natural life – like wetlands, amphibians, fungi, insects, algae – that most people approach with pesticides and weapons of mass eradication.

Through more than 30 gems of essays she presents a problem, usually engendered by our society’s enthusiasm for transformation of nature into marketable commodities, and describes the sometimes complementary but often contrary approaches of applied science and Indigenous wisdom.

Sometimes she draws out subtle distinctions, and sometimes ones that startle our mechanistic mindset, such as how the Anishinaabe word *Puhpooew*, which translates as “the force that causes mushrooms to push up from the earth overnight,” would seem so out of place in a typical science textbook.

As a biologist, I was stunned that such a word existed. In all its technical vocabulary, Western science has no such term, no words to hold this mystery. You’d think

that biologists, of all people, would have words for life. But in scientific language our terminology is used to define the boundaries of our knowing. What lies beyond our grasp remains unnamed.

Even well-intentioned science can come into conflict with action derived from the experience of those close enough to the ground to observe on a daily basis what scientists only experience in an either abstract or temporary way. Probably because of her family's experiences of the wild, Kimmerer's botanical practice goes beyond just observing plants. Her integration of traditional wisdom with her academic research convinces her that networks of life forms means mutual survival, not survival of the fittest. She looks at the colleagues of plants, explaining how an amazingly agile give-and-take within the network keeps needs and abilities in balance.

We have many examples of books and media describing this interdependence. The Princess Cinema in Waterloo recently presented a documentary based on *The Hidden Life of Trees*, a book that examines the co-reliance of trees and mycelium, the fungi networks that operate underground in forests to connect trees to each other and to a variety of soil nutrients.

Given Kimmerer's wider-than-botanical scope, it's not surprising that she and her daughters spent an evening helping migrating salamanders crossing a road. The salamanders' difficulties in crawling across pavement (which is much less slippery than the leaf-embedded forest floor) expose them to road traffic. As this rescue squad pursued their tasks, they were surprised to encounter a group of students who were studying the mortality rate of salamanders in just this situation. Because of the nature of their study, they could not interfere with the fate of the salamanders, so even though they were building an argument for protection of the amphibians, the nature of the research prevented them from engaging in that very protection. Kimmerer, knowing already that the mortality was too great, put more faith in direct action than in the slow, bureaucratic process of gaining environmental legislation that would solve the problem in the long run. But she clearly understands how both strategies are needed.

Reading this chapter gave me a much greater understanding as to why local environmentalists worked so hard to prevent the building of a new road through Hidden Valley in southeast Kitchener, an effort made more urgent after the discovery of Jefferson Salamanders in the valley's forests.

## Seniors Producing Children's Stories

by Don B. Smith, CPA



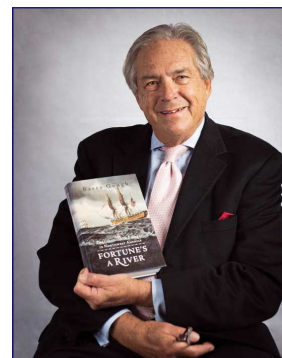
Don B. Smith

I am long retired from the WLU Business faculty. I've recently published a book of stories based on personal experiences and observations that tells the stories of several entrepreneurs, some true, some fictional.

I was experimenting with various formats to see if any fit my talents. To my surprise, a children's story, "Lucky Linda Loon," hit the mark. It is now the basis of a weekly series of children's stories that adults seem to like, written by several members of a seniors' writing group based in Fergus, Ontario. These stories are fact-based, not fairytales. I have included a link to the first one, "Lucky Linda Loon," for you to look at: <https://www.flipsnack.com/paulvis/lucky-linda-loon-book-1.html>.

Many grandparents read these stories with their grandchildren and have been enthusiastic about them.

## Barry Gough awarded Honorary Doctor of Laws



Barry Gough

Barry Gough, one of Canada's leading historians and a long-time faculty WLU faculty member, has been awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws for distinguished contributions to Imperial and Commonwealth history by the University of Victoria. He is the author of many prize-winning and critically acclaimed histories dealing with the Royal Navy and the British Empire.

Gough's works include *Fortune's a River: The Collision of Empires in Northwest America* (Harbour, 2007), which won the John Lyman Book Award for best Canadian naval and maritime history. His *Pax Britannica* (2015) won the Mountbatten Maritime Award for literary excellence. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, Fellow of King's College London, and Life Member of the Association of Canadian Studies.

In 2016, he was named Honorary President of the BC Historical Federation. A 1957 graduate of Victoria College (which preceded UVic), he received a UVic Distinguished Alumni Award in 2019.

## Deep Thought (2)

1. Disprove the following hypothesis: "Oxygen is killing us but it just takes 75 to 100 years to fully work."
2. If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?
3. How do you get off a non-stop flight?
4. Why are goods sent by ship called "cargo" and those sent by truck "shipment"?
5. Why do we put cups in the dishwasher and the dishes in the cupboard?
6. How come noses run and feet smell?

## Pension Update

by Alastair Robertson

### Some Quick Facts about the Laurier Pension Plan

Last year, according to Laurier's 2020 Annual Pension Brochure, there were approximately 3036 members of the Laurier Pension Plan, of whom about 611 were retirees and surviving beneficiaries. Under Laurier's "hybrid" pension plan, which combines the key features of a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan, retirees receive a pension amount equal to the greater of their Money Purchase Pension (defined contribution) and their Minimum Guarantee Pension (defined benefit). In 2020, about 70% of retired members of the Pension Plan received the Minimum Guaranteed Pension (MGP), and 30% were paid the Money Purchase Pension (MPP).

The Laurier Pension Plan is funded by contributions from employee members, from the University, and by the pension fund's investment returns. In 2020, members of the Pension Plan contributed an average of 9% of earnings; the University's contributions, which include minimum guarantee special payments, totalled 11.2% of member earnings. At its most recent official actuarial valuation on Apr 30, 2019, the Plan was 98.7% funded on a going concern basis with an associated \$8.9 million funding deficit that the University continues to amortize through a series of special payments.

At Dec 31, 2020, the Laurier pension fund's assets had a market value of approximately \$770 million, allocated across three broad asset classes: equities, fixed income assets, and infrastructure investments. About 57.6% of the pension fund was held in the form of equities, divided between Canadian equities (23.1%) and foreign equities (34.5%). Fixed-income investments accounted for 31.5% of total assets, and included both Canadian and foreign bonds (21.1%), mortgages (9.2%), and cash and equivalents (1.2%). Infrastructure investments made up the remaining 10.9% of total assets.

Almost all of the assets of the Laurier pension fund are

held within pooled funds administered by nine external investment managers. Investment performance is regularly monitored by the University's Finance and Investments Committee, and the Pension Committee, assisted by the Investment Oversight Subcommittee, which undertakes a detailed quarterly review process. In 2020 the pension fund earned a net return of 7.46%, outpacing its pension plan benchmark and surpassing the University's long-run target rate of return for the pension fund of 6.15%, before fees.

### The Launch of the University Pension Plan

The University Pension Plan (UPP) began operations on July 1, 2021. The UPP is a jointly sponsored pension plan open to all Ontario universities, which currently offers coverage to 35,000 members at three inaugural institutions – the University of Toronto, Queen's University, and the University of Guelph – with a total of \$10.5 billion of assets under management. Trent University recently approved moving its faculty pension fund into the UPP effective January 1, 2022. Laurier, which like Trent was one of the original group of universities involved in early discussions about the creation of the UPP, is currently exploring the UPP as a future option. The Multi-Lateral Working Group of employee and retiree representatives, which the University established to build knowledge of the UPP, successfully concluded its scheduled series of meetings in April of this year. It is expected that further stakeholder education will be undertaken this fall, and will likely include town hall information sessions on the UPP for employees and retirees. Conversion of an existing university pension plan to the UPP would require a long and complex approval process that can be expected to take at least three years.

### Pension Fund Rate of Return

The latest results show that over the seven months from January 1 to July 31, 2021, the Laurier pension fund earned a year-to-date rate of return of 8.32%.

## In Memoriam

- ◆ Rosemary Fischer, May 7, 2021
- ◆ John Mitchell, May 22, 2021
- ◆ Mary Murray, May 25, 2021
- ◆ Charlotte Heywood, July 2, 2021
- ◆ Rod Preece, July 22, 2021
- ◆ Reta May Lienhardt, September 9, 2021
- ◆ James Doyle, October 2, 2021
- ◆ Lorna Berman, October 4, 2021



## Deep Thought (3)

1. Why is it a TV “set” when there’s only one?
2. Why does “funeral” start with FUN?
3. Do twins ever realize that at least one of them is unplanned?
4. How come lipstick doesn’t do what it says?
5. When you clean something, how do you avoid making something else dirty?

## What Is CURAC?

The College and University Retirees Associations of Canada is a not-for-profit federation of 40 retiree organizations, including our WLU Retirees’ Association. Its objectives are to coordinate activities that promote communication among member associations, share information about activities of member organizations, provide mutual assistance, and speak publicly on issues of concern to the over 15,000 such retirees.

Through CURAC membership, retiree associations share information about themselves, their activities, and their successes. This occurs at the annual meetings of CURAC, in the CURAC newsletter, and through their local websites. Best practices of associations are extensively discussed at the annual meetings. Several newsletters are sent to retirees each year. Retirees benefit through the affinity agreements that CURAC has negotiated for travel tours, trip cancellation and interruption insurance, home and car insurance, pet insurance, extended health benefits, and travel medical insurance. More information on the affinity programs is available elsewhere in the newsletter.

## CURAC Affinity Agreements

by Frank Millerd

### Registered Teachers of Ontario Plans

Members of WLURA can join the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) and participate in RTO’s group plans. You must be a member of RTO (fee is \$70 per year) to join an RTO group insurance plan, but you can join RTO without joining an RTO plan.

### RTO Extended Health Care Plan

- ◆ Pays for eligible expenses not normally covered by a government health insurance plan and that are recommended medically necessary.
- ◆ Includes, with some limitations, prescription drugs, vision care, eldercare guidance, paramedical practitioners, aids and appliances, and care after dental accidents.
- ◆ Comprehensive travel medical and trip cancellation insurance for 93 days per trip.

Retirees not now members of WLU or another extended health care plan, or those wishing additional insurance, may join RTO and the RTO Extended Health Care Plan. RTO members currently in Laurier’s plan will be accepted into the RTO Extended Health Care Plan without a medical questionnaire. Coverage also available for a spouse and dependent children.

### Joining RTO to ensure that the surviving spouse or partner is eligible to join RTO group plans:

- ◆ The surviving spouse of a deceased retiree may join RTO and RTO’s plans only if the deceased retiree was an RTO member at time of the retiree’s death.
- ◆ After a retiree dies, health and dental benefits from Laurier for a surviving spouse and eligible dependents continue for two years.
- ◆ A surviving spouse who joins the RTO plan within two years of the retiree’s death and is still a member of Laurier’s Group Benefits Plan will be accepted into the plan without a medical questionnaire.
- ◆ A retiree may want to join RTO to ensure that the surviving spouse is eligible to join RTO and their group plans.

RTO does not offer stand-alone travel insurance but their full extended health care package includes competitive travel and trip cancellation insurance.

### Other CURAC Affinity Agreements

#### Travel Planning

Two further options are Collette Travel and Trip Merchant. CURAC members, and their families and friends, save on bookings, benefit from professionally planned itineraries and the services of a tour manager, and enjoy other perks on certain tours, e.g., home-airport-home sedan service. Bookings can be made by individuals, with family and friends, as well as groups organized by our retiree associations.

#### Trip Insurance

Johnson Inc. offers two Trip Insurance plans to CURAC/ARUCC members.

- ◆ MEDOC Travel Insurance provides emergency health care as well as trip cancellation or interruption coverage.
- ◆ Stand Alone Trip Cancellation Insurance for those who already have out-of-province medical insurance. The coverage is per person per trip for an unlimited number of trips per year at a low annual premium to cover an individual, a couple, or a family. Extended family members or friends of CURAC members are also eligible.

For information on the policies and how to enrol, go to:

[curac.johnson.ca](http://curac.johnson.ca).

Members who do not see a fit with the above may contact Securiglobe (1-888-211-4444), a broker that endeavours to match individual clients to insurance coverage that suits their needs.

## Home and Car Insurance

Waterloo-based Economical Insurance, a leading property and casualty insurer, offers auto and home insurance at advantageous rates to CURAC-affiliated retirees. You may call **1-866-247-7700** for a quote or go to: [www.economicalgroup.com](http://www.economicalgroup.com), using discount code E2413.

## Pet Care Insurance

PetSecure offers retirees affiliated with CURAC pet insurance at advantageous rates. PetSecure is a member company of Economical. Visit [petsecure.com/group](http://petsecure.com/group) for information.

For further information on all affinity agreements go to the CURAC web site:

[www.curac.ca](http://www.curac.ca) and click on Member Benefits.

## WLURA Executive 2021 – 2023

### President

Gerry Schaus • 519-886-4428

### Past President

Frank Millerd • 519-576-3468

### Secretary

Joan Kilgour • 519-743-7396

### Treasurer

Ed Linder • 519-579-6629

### Membership

William Salatka • 519-747-2399

### Mailing List Co-ordinator

Rob Arnold • 519-743-6484

### Pensions

Alastair Robertson • 519-884-5532

### CURAC Representative

Frank Millerd • 519-576-3468

### Social Convener

Doreen Koenig • 519-884-4986

### Newsletter, Editorial

Alan Auerbach • 519-746-4787

### Newsletter, Design

Steve Izma • 519-745-1313

### Newsletter, Photography

Vacant

### Program Co-ordinators

Joan Kilgour

Shannon Purves-Smith • 519-669-1327

Gerry Schaus • 519-886-4428

### Members-at-Large

Rob Arnold • 519-743-6484

Michèle Daviau • 519-725-3581

Dianne Hotson • 519-578-0595

Carl Langford

Jan Overduin • 519-578-8552

David Peirson

Shannon Purves-Smith • 519-669-1327

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# Upcoming Virtual Gatherings

## Friday October 29, 2021, 5:00 p.m.: Pubnight

The pubnight will, unfortunately, be virtual. A Zoom invitation has been sent out. Join us with your stories, suggestions, and questions.

## Friday November 26, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

### The Good Green Death Project, with Susan Koswan

Susan Koswan is the instigator of the Good Green Death Project, and a freelance environmental columnist since August 2018 with *The Waterloo Region Record*. Susan has been fortunate to be able to pursue her passions and causes, while raising a family. From writing a novel (*2080: The Return of Pareto*) to eco-activism, to learning how to play guitar and sing, and even being the host and community producer for a six-part series on Rogers (The Green Scene), life has been good. Now she wants to find out how can we work together to make the end of our days and beyond, greener and more meaningful. See <https://www.goodgreen-deathproject.ca>.

## Friday January 28, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

### It Could Have happened to Anyone! With Sandra Bray

Want to hear the screwy turns that twisted an unsuspecting, enterprising 1980's small investment company owner into a reluctant environmentalist, now driving an electric car and heating a ninety-year-old house with an air-source heat pump? "My EV passes ICE cars, not gas. Silent, not deadly."

Sandra states that her life changed forever through serving on a Woolwich Council Environmental Committee for less than nine months in the 1980s. With Susan Rupert Gow, she co-founded APT Environment in Elmira, in response to an application by Uniroyal Chemical to build an onsite incinerator. Four months later, chemical contamination of their aquifer was recognized, and Elmira lost its water supply. She was a changed person.

Her journey includes giving up an international art career when she quit flying and, in 2017, taking the Al Gore Climate Reality training in Pittsburgh. She now comes to us as an older person, hopefully made somewhat wiser by the journey with others, township staff and officials included, to our current environmental apocalypse. She gathers stories that will help us survive. Many are her own tales of adventurous living on the journey to net zero. Her goal is to provide happiness and next step inspirations for those wanting to make changes.