

Keeping in touch: a message from CURAC/ARUCC

CURAC/ARUCC Winter Newsletter

As we are all aware, the spread of Covid-19 has obliged us to cancel the 2020 AGM and conference scheduled for May 13-15. The CURAC/ARUCC [Winter Newsletter/Infolettre](#) includes reports on what the Local Organizing Committee had planned for us and on the attractions of the UBC campus and the city of Vancouver. The articles show not only the fine work of the organizers – from UBC, Simon Fraser, and the University of Victoria -- but also what we are missing as we follow expert advice and self-isolate. However, with a little luck, we will be able to look forward to gathering at UBC for a great conference at a later time. I can assure you that the UBC campus and the Vancouver area are attractive almost any time of year, rain or shine!

Interview with a World Leading Virologist

Coping with the flow of information on the Covid-19 situation is a challenge, we know. Some member associations have circulated science-based information that might help cut through the fog. For example, SFURA circulated an interview with one of the world's leading virologists (which can be found here: <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/expert-opinion/100-questions-peter-piot-lshtm-director>).

On a lighter note, here is an example of how another retiree association (Retirees' Association of Lakehead University) is using gentle humour to keep in touch with its members at this difficult time, thanks to Brian Phillips, Chair, RALU Communications Committee.

Seniors and Covid-19 - Some Common-Sense Suggestions

Seniors, in general, may not have the stamina to wait in long queues or jostle with anxious crowds to purchase items remaining on shelves, so it is only common sense that seniors take the Covid-19 situation seriously and make some preparations.

There is an important difference between panic buying for hoarding and sensibly planned preparation. In this now epidemic event, the most experienced disease control specialists are loudly saying that panic is counter-productive to the containment and slowing down of disease transmission. As one Facebook meme pointed out to hoarders, **if you hoard all the hand sanitizers, soaps and disinfectants, then you are now surrounded by people who have not been able to use these products and you have, in effect, placed yourself at greater risk. As with vaccines, the more people that have such protection the safer is the population at large.**

Unfortunately, there are some (too many) in our societies who lack social conscience and are ready and willing to take advantage of such situations and prey on natural concerns and fear with a wide variety of scams and a torrent of misinformation. Seniors, please seek reliable sources of information, such as Health Canada www.hc-sc.gc.ca, Public Health Agency of Canada www.publichealth.gc.ca, and Government of Canada: Health www.healthycanadians.gc.ca.

There is no vaccine and realistically there will not be a reliable, ready to distribute vaccine for something like 18 months. There are no homemade or internet remedies, despite the many adverts and products being touted. If you seek a mask, only an N95 marked and NIOSH approved mask will be effective. The social media is full of ads offering masks that are excellent for particulate matter but are ineffective for airborne bacteria and viruses. Note that only if the mask is carefully fitted to one's facial contours will it be effective. The common error is to pinch the mask at the nose and leave channels on either side of the nose. Fit by using two fingers and pressing the metal strip from the outside towards the nose.

Panic buyers or blackmarket dealers are stripping shelves of hand sanitizers and, oddly enough, toilet paper (though Covid-19 is a respiratory virus and diarrhea is not one of the symptoms). However, there is no substitute for frequent 30 seconds plus hand washing. A homemade skin sanitizer can be made from a mix of 91% isopropyl alcohol (also known as rubbing alcohol) and aloe vera gel, which is necessary to add moisture to your skin because alcohol will dry it out. In these recipes, the typical ratio is two thirds rubbing alcohol to one third of a cup of aloe vera gel.

Toilet paper is a relatively new invention. The thick Eaton's catalogue may no longer be published, but a lot of flyers come through the mailbox, and before paper existed, people used a piece of material, though sack cloth could be a bit harsh on the 'under beneaths'. Don't flush newspaper or material. A closed container should be used and the contents then added to the garbage. While frozen food is an obvious choice and a full freezer is nice to have, there remains the risk of extended cuts in electricity, so tinned and dried goods are a more secure option. Such items as dried 2%, soy, coconut and almond milk one can find in a bulk food store. In an emergency situation one may have to do without fresh produce and diet and weight goals might have to be temporarily put on hold. Numerous meals based on rice or pasta, or repeated bowls of soup may not be exciting but will sustain you. If you have a pet, think ahead for them too. Businesses are likely to be hurting and will seek ways to maintain customers. It is possible that a surge of home delivery programs will be seen. Take advantage of this if it can substitute for joining a line up at a cashier's desk. It may cost more but could be worth it.

The majority of those infected by Covid-19 will experience symptoms that can be treated by over the counter medications. Making sure one has medications on hand for dry coughs, runny noses and sore throats is common sense, and while thinking about it, request refills of needed prescriptions well in advance and ask for a 90 day supply.

It is never wise to have a lot of cash at home, but bear in mind that ATM's have to be stocked and a lot of business activity could be at a standstill or considerably slowed down. Making sure that one has some cash on hand is wise, but stuffing the mattress with banknotes is likely to attract unwanted attention.

Those who live alone and are used to meeting friends and going to classes or clubs may find self-isolation and social distancing a bit depressing. Use the phone, email and social media to chat and maintain contact with people and avoid comparing disaster news or dwelling on the negative.

In isolation one will have plenty of time for hobbies. Make sure you have whatever materials you need on hand. Get a pile of books, sort those photographs, write your memoirs, do a jigsaw puzzle, finish that

quilt. Keep busy and do not sit and mope or remain glued to the TV, and especially avoid FoxNews. There won't be much new sport to watch but there will be plenty of replays.

Spring is on the way. Get outside, enjoy a quiet walk, sit on a park bench. And, talk to others. Social distancing does not mean ignoring others. Greet them with the Namaste greeting, keep your distance (at least a metre, if not three if they are coughing). They may well be as glad to talk to you as you are to them. So, RALU members and indeed all Seniors, do not panic, engage common sense, make sensible preparations, make self-isolation as enjoyable as you can, **maintain a sense of humour and keep in touch.**

Fred Fletcher, Communications Chair, CURAC/ARUCC

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