



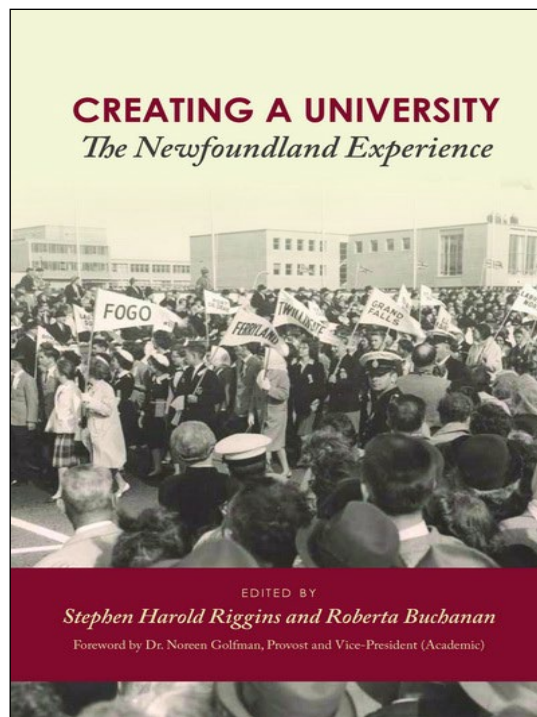
Rhodora /Mark Graesser

Your Voice

MUN Pensioners' Association (MUNPA) Newsletter • Vol. 17, No. 2, June 2019
Editor: Steve Wolinetz • Design and Formatting: Mark Graesser

"Creating a University" Launched

Creating a University: The Newfoundland Experience (ISER Books) is an unusual book. Edited by Stephen Harold Riggins and Roberta Buchanan (Sociology and English) and launched before a standing room only crowd in the Junior Common Room on May 2nd, it already has a number of firsts: It is the only book that treats Memorial University's history from its establishment in 1949 to the 1980's, the first book to emerge from the Memoir Group, MUNPA's oldest special interest group, and the only book whose publication MUNPA, along with MUN's Provost, Noreen Golfman, has co-sponsored and funded. A quick look at its table of contents will tell you why: This is a book of stories about an institution that all of us, whether fighting to unionize or change facets of it, or just doing our jobs, have helped make it what Memorial has become.



grappled with students ready to graduate under regulations that had yet to be written. In the second, "Another Viking Invades Newfoundland," Kjellrun Hestekin recalls early days of the music school in a rat-infested temporary building where the Arts Annex now stands in ways that make you want to laugh and cry. Sadly, neither is still with us.

Should you read this book? Yes, if you like a good story and want to know more about how Memorial became what it is. But don't take my word for it. Ask others or locate a copy and decide for yourself.

Steven Wolinetz, Editor

Creating a University is available directly through ISER books, by visiting their office or [website](#), online from Chapters or Amazon, and at retail stores like Broken

Books, Downhome, Chapters, Coles, and the Memorial University Bookstore.

Creating a University is not an academic history or sequel to Malcolm MacLeod's *A Bridge Built Halfway: A History of Memorial University College* (1990) but rather a collection of stories that were either read aloud in the Memoir group or elicited through a call for contributions.

This is a book you will want to read. Read at the launch, the stories that bookend the collection attest to that: In the first, "The Creation of Memorial University of Newfoundland," David G. Pitt tells us how in 1950 he and others

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FROM THE EDITOR

This is the last note I will be writing as Editor. As most of you know, I am now MUNPA's new President. I won't be disappearing from these pages, but rather appearing in them in different ways. I'm moving on with some regret; the task I set out for myself, revamping *Your Voice*, is only partially completed. This year and last, I and others – Patrick Tyler in 2017-18 and Mark Graesser and Bernadette Power last year – turned out a better looking publication, eclectic in its first year, with contributions from the Memoir Group and more about what our focus and interest groups were doing, and more predictable last year, with rubrics like Jim Wyse's *Pension Matters* and Glen Roberts' *Know Your Benefits*, as well as Jane Foltz' president's messages and Lois Bateman's *West Coast News*. I am grateful to each of you for your contributions. Nevertheless, one irony remains unresolved: That *Your Voice* has been **our** voice rather than yours, our members.

Your Voice would be a better and livelier publication if you took the time to write something, even a brief letter to the editor. I can think of two foci that could be added: One is **Travel Notes**, telling others about trips or tours you have taken, places you have enjoyed, or solutions for the problems you encountered. MUNPA's travel sessions have always been popular. This could be as well. Short pieces are ideal, 200 to 400 words, and photos are welcome.

The other is **Remembering who – or when**. Many of us remember stories from school or university – e.g. times when teachers tripped over the wastebasket or professors gave the wrong lecture. The same should be true about friends and colleagues, and working at Memorial. Have a look at *Creating a University*. I can't commend it to you enough. Those stories should generate others. I can't speak for the new editors, but I

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PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the 2019 Pensioners' Association Annual General Meeting, held 6 June at the Fluvarium in St. John's, my two year term as President of MUNPA came to an end, meaning that I am now Past President. It was an interesting two years, most enjoyable, an honor and a privilege to serve in that capacity and to work with former colleagues and friends on behalf of all MUNPA members. My AGM address offered thanks, recognition, and congratulations to so many of our members, especially the Members of the Board, Chairs of our various Committees, our Office Assistants, as well as those from the University who continue to support MUNPA in so many diverse ways. It is now a privilege to have this space to say thank you to all of our members, and to say how very much I appreciated your support, and your feedback. It is also now time to welcome and congratulate new members to the Board, Jean Snook, Ann Ryan, Andy Foster and Mary Sparkes, and to wish the new MUNPA Executive and Board a fantastic and productive year.

Enjoy your summer and hope to see you in September at some of our events.

Jane

suspect they would be happy to publish some, if not all, of them. Shorter pieces are better than longer ones, but we can experiment with putting longer pieces on our website.

In the coming year Bernadette Power and Ann Ryan will co-edit YV and Mark Graesser continue with layout and design. However, nothing can happen without content and help from you. Our focus and special interest groups would collapse if members didn't take an active role running them. MUNPA's Awards Committee includes not only board but also ordinary members. Both our Programme and Communications Committees need additional help, if not on a regular, then on an occasional basis. You don't need to be in St. John's to participate: Almost all of us have access to Skype or Facetime, and we can connect via webcast, not only from Signal Hill and Grenfell Campuses but also, from our own homes. MUN's Bluejeans software, which we have been using for Board meetings, does the trick.

Have a great summer.

Steve Wolinetz

MUNPA Annual General Meeting

June 6, 2019

MUNPA held its 2019 AGM at the Fluvarium on Thursday, June 6th. Organized into two parts, the morning sessions focused on a single theme, Keeping Healthy with Diet and Exercise. Heidi Murphy, dietitian with Loblaw's Dominion supermarkets, guided members through **Health Canada's new food guide** (<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>), showing how the 2019 Food Guide differs from the 2007 guide, as well as earlier iterations. The 2007 guide stressed eating from four food groups, scaling portions to gender and age, and the importance of regular activity. In contrast, the theme for the 2019 food guide is eating and living well, more loosely defined.

According to the new food guide, "healthy eating is more important than the foods you eat." The key is a diet that high in fibre, vitamins and minerals, getting a larger share of proteins from plants and particularly whole grains instead of meat or poultry. Explaining that the new food guide is a work in progress – successive editions will elaborate on it – Murphy showed how to incorporate plant-based proteins and healthy fats into meals and snacks. However, no need to summarize. You can download Heidi Murphy's presentation from the [MUNPA website](#) and see for yourself.

After the break, Dr. Jeannette Byrne, from MUN's School of Human Kinetics and



David Thompson and Heidi Murphy

Recreation talked on **Healthy Aging Through Physical Activity**. Dr. Byrne argued that how we age depends not only on our genetic inheritance, but also, where we live, who we are, our access to health care, and "health behaviour." The last – under our control – depends on physical activity, what we eat, smoking and drinking, taking prescribed medications, and visits to physicians. Physical



Jean Snook and Chris Dennis

activity is important because it lowers rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and type 2 diabetes, and lowers the incidence of colon and breast cancer. Exercise also improves mood, cognitive function, and strength, balance, and flexibility. Her message – that physical activity improves wellbeing – is, as Dr. Byrne pointed out, is not new: Hippocrates said it in 350 BC, Edward Stanley in 1870, and Kenneth Cooper in 1960. According to Cooper, "we do not stop exercising because we grow old." Rather "we grow old because we stop exercising."

Addressing the question of how much, and what, Dr. Byrne argued that we should be engaging in moderate to vigorous exercise – i.e. activities that cause us to sweat or be out of breath for a minimum of 150 minutes per week in periods of at least ten minutes. If possible, these should combine aerobics strength and balance exercises. However, suggesting that exercise

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is a “magic pill” that too many of avoid taking, Dr. Byrne recognized that there were barriers to exercise, and suggested ways that they might be overcome.

Dr. Byrne’s message is one that members of the Health and Aging Group and people who have attended previous AGMs, have heard before. You can download her presentation from the [MUNPA website](#) if you want to examine it in greater detail.

The business meeting took place in the afternoon. Jane Foltz, reported on what she and the board had been doing in the previous year. Highlights included our move to the Signal Hill Campus, our participation in the Open House organized in late September, and our own opening event, in October. Jane also noted, the sudden and unexpected death of our office assistant, Gwyn Barrowman. You can download Jane’s report, as well as other committee reports by clicking on the link at the bottom of the AGM page on our website. The meeting concluded with the election of a new board of directors and, as per usual practice, a members’ forum.



**Contributors to *Creating a University*,
at the launch on May 2, 2019**

Front: Stephen Riggins and Roberta Buchanin, editors. Left to right: Jeff Webb, Melvin Baker, Robert Pitt, Neil Rosenberg, Raoul Anderson, Noreen Golfman, Michael Collins, Jo Shawyer, Sharon Buehler, Ian Hewson, Marilyn Porter, Harold Clase, Steven Wolinetz

MUNPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2019-20

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President	Steven Wolinetz <i>Political Science</i>
Vice President	Chris Dennis <i>QEII Library</i>
Secretary	Sheila Singleton <i>Registrar’s Office</i>
Treasurer	Audrey Power <i>Computing & Communications</i>
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Bob Helleur	<i>Chemistry</i>
Donna Jackman	<i>Biochemistry</i>
Bernadette Power	<i>Education</i>
Brian Power	<i>Computing & Communications</i>
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Anne Sinnott	<i>Biochemistry</i>
Jean Snook	<i>Modern Languages</i>
Jim Wyse	<i>Business Administration</i>

West Coast Representative

Mary Sparkes*	<i>Student Services</i>
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* Indicates new member

The MUNPA Entrance Scholarship

This year the MUNPA Entrance Scholarship was awarded to first year student Kailey Ikussek-Rogers. In response to some questions posed by our members at the AGM, the Endowment and Scholarship Reports for 2017-2018 have been posted to our [website](#) to provide specific information on this Entrance Scholarship.

Annual Tribute Awards

**Nomination Deadline
is August 31, 2019**

For details, go to the [MUNPA website](#).

Out and about

NATIVE PLANTS OF THE BOREAL FOREST

May 2, 2019, Todd Boland, Research Horticulturalist, at the Botanical Garden presented a very informative talk on the Native Plants of the Boreal Forest around St. John's. It was well attended, even though snow and rain were evident that day. The weather cleared by event time.

Todd spoke to the group for about an hour, on the various trees, shrubs, and flowers of the local Boreal Forest, things that one could see on the Avalon. He also told us how to identify various species, depending on whether the needles were flat or round, the sex of the species, and the various names associated with a particular species, especially the local names given to them. Todd also answered a number of questions on the topic, and then took us on a tour of the Garden. There, we saw various examples from his talk including our Provincial flower, the pitcher plant. We walked along the



trail down towards Oxen Pond, and while it was too early in the season for many of the flowering plants, we still found many green species to admire.



West Coast Principal Beneficiaries Lunch

What is more pleasant on a lovely spring day than a leisurely lunch in the sunlit Carriage Dining Room at the Glynmill Inn in Corner Brook? A small group of Principal Beneficiaries and MUNPA Grenfell Committee members did just that on Friday, April 12, 2019. From the front center, clockwise around the table: Maureen Mennie, Kathleen Snow, Susan Malley, Edna Hodgett, Sharon Walsh, Bernie Meiw.

Revusky bequest to Centre for Newfoundland Studies

By Joan Ritcey

The Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS) is a Canadian Studies collection within the Memorial University Libraries. Its mandate is exhaustive: to collect all published materials, retrospective as well as current, relating to all aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador.

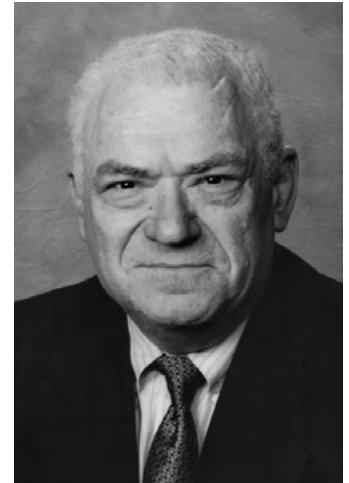
Recently the Centre received a wonderful monetary gift from the Estate of Dr. Samuel Revusky. It is to be used to purchase books, documents, maps and other publications, as they become available on the scarce-and-rare book market; to allow the Centre to obtain expensive treasures that might slip through the library's hands when regular funding is not available. Dr. Revusky wished that the materials obtained for the library collection be selected with the help of his dear friend Dr. Graham Skanes and be named in his honour.

Graham Skanes, now retired from Memorial, is a former Head of the Department of Psychology and former Dean of Continuing Education. After retiring he became an antiquarian book dealer. He has a strong interest in the preservation of Newfoundland culture and literature. Dr. Skanes has donated many rare volumes from his private collection to the CNS. Working with the Acting Head of the Centre, Ms. Colleen Field, he will provide assistance in uncovering the items to purchase from Sam Revusky's legacy fund.

Dr. Revusky's eminent research and teaching career with Memorial spanned more than 30 years and many readers of this newsletter will remember him well. Dr. Revusky came to work at Memorial in 1971 when the Psychology Department was in a period of growth. At that time, Sam was hired as Full Professor and his wife, Bow Tong Lett, as Assistant Professor. Sam was an intellectual and iconoclast. And many were in awe of him. Not surprisingly, he didn't suffer fools gladly, a trait that made him a difficult colleague at times. According to Graham Skanes:

He was a wildly eccentric person, whom I admired for his eccentricity. It was never a dull day when he came round the office. He always fought on matters of principle.

Sometime in there, Sam ran afoul of the Canadian Council for Animal Care. Sam used rats in his research and the CCAC came round on inspection tours.



Sam Revusky

Sam's lab was on Mt. Scio Road in a converted Story Family dwelling. The chief veterinary inspector for the CCAC went into Sam's lab and immediately broke into an allergic reaction. He then wrote a report that condemned Sam's lab and was going to shut it down. Sam was incensed. To see Sam incensed was a sight to behold. He came to me for help and I immediately said to myself they can't do that. They can't send a man with allergies to rats to inspect a rat lab. So, I supported Sam. I stood with him four-square as we argued up to the President.

So, Sam and I became friends. The respect that I had had all along for him was now matched by his for me. We had a shared interest in books and Sam would bring me along stuff that he liked and I would reciprocate. After 1982 I moved away from the Psych Dept. and became Associate, and for a year, Acting Dean of Science. Then I was Dean of Continuing Education. Sam and I lost touch a bit during those years but there was still a tendril or two connecting us. When I took early retirement in 1996, Sam and I moved closer again. We swapped books and I told him about the book business and the selling and the donating to CNS that I had done from time to time. So Sam wanted to recognize me as a friend in his will and in order to do that he chose to make the donation to CNS, in which he knew that I was so fondly interested.

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Sam Revusky passed away on 25 February 2017. His widow, Dr. Bow Tong Lett Revusky, arranged for his bequest through Memorial's U.S. charity, the Friends of Memorial organization, and she has taken an active interest in the donation and selection, for which the Centre is most grateful. The Centre extends its gratitude to Sam Revusky and to Graham Skanes. On a personal level, the Centre's staff members are very touched that Dr. Revusky would remember the Centre in this way.

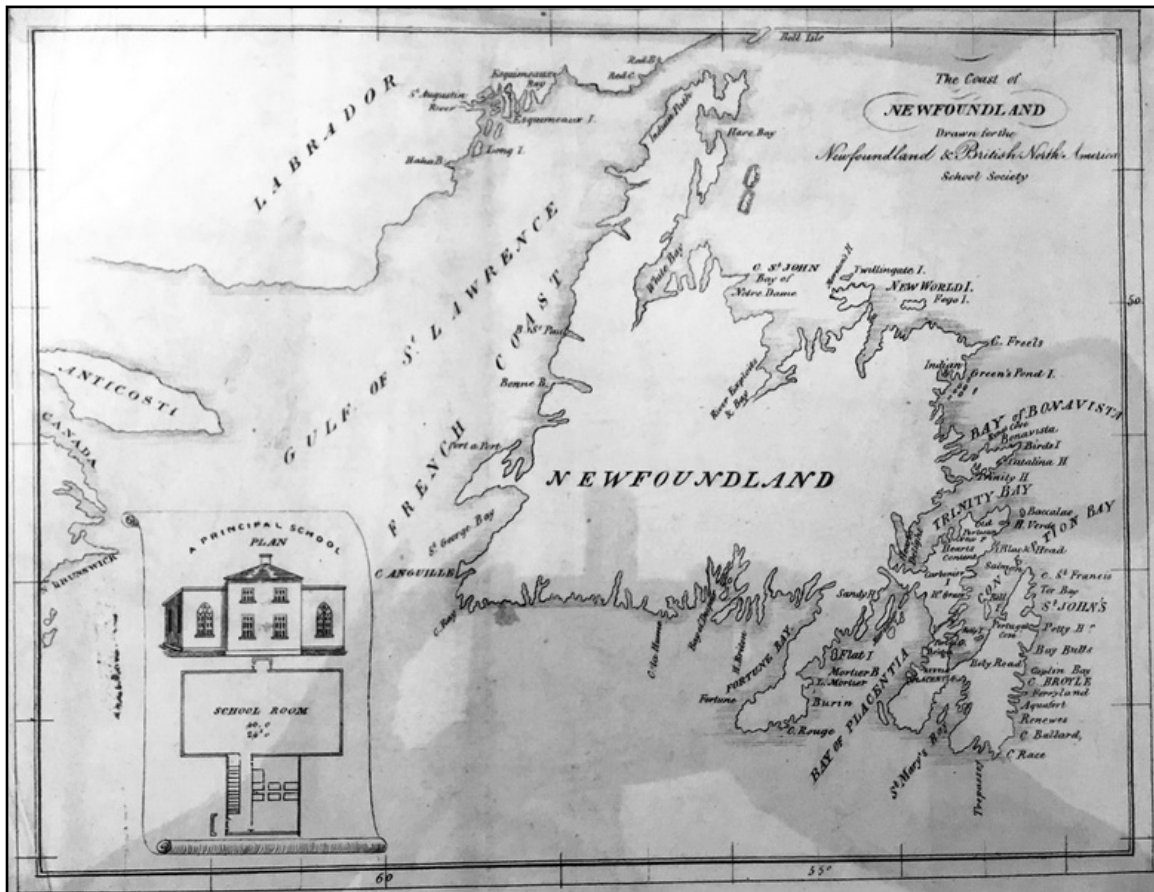
The first item to be purchased is a 19 X 26 cm. map that was drawn for the Newfoundland and British North American School Society for Educating the Poor, *The coast of Newfoundland 1838*, publisher unknown. It includes an illustration in one corner, "A Principal School Plan."

The Newfoundland School Society

The Newfoundland School Society was founded in 1823 in London by Samuel Codner, who

had a close connection to the Newfoundland fishery. Its aim was to provide public education to poor children. Though students from all denominations were specifically welcome, the society also provided Church of England religion classes to those who wanted it in communities which were too poor to afford clergy. By 1834 the Society had 45 schools teaching close to 7000 children and grew to become an important institution in Newfoundland and Labrador history. The map shows the coasts from Anticosti and along Labrador to Belle Isle, and the whole of the Island of Newfoundland. It is of research interest as it shows the French Coast of that period (1838) and indicates the Newfoundland School Society's focus on the outports. The illustration of a sample school gives graphic insight into the Society's expectations of a school building in terms of the space and function required for teaching and the hosting of public gatherings.

Joan Ritcey is a retired librarian and the former director of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies.



The coast of Newfoundland 1838

What's up (or down) with pensions?

Pension Deficits

By Jim Wyse

"Signs, Signs, Everywhere a Sign..."

(apologies to the 1970s Five Man Electrical Band)

It probably comes as no surprise that I often receive questions about how our pension plan is doing. Trying to be cute and clever, I respond that pension plan status reports appear in signs all around town: "5-year mortgage rate 3.95%", "Buying your first house? Talk to us about rates as low as 2.99%" and less happily, "Break-up buyout mortgages 3.49%". When you see roadside retail mortgage rates below 7%, you can be reasonably certain that our pension plan, and pension plans generally, are struggling greatly.

Although the current low interest rate environment is *the* major factor in our pension woes, it's not the only one. A question from YV reader Herb Gaskill reminded me that other

factors are at work. Herb asked: "How did we get from modest surpluses in times past to a \$250 million deficit now?" His question sent me scrambling for a response that went a little deeper than the rambling content of roadside advertisements.

So, in addition to the negative pension impact of historically low and relatively long running interest rates, here's some other factors that significantly contributed to the plan's current deficit:

- The 2008 financial crisis knocked most everything and pretty well everyone back financially thereby reducing the investment base on which financial wealth had to be rebuilt in the past decade.
- 2018 financial results were dismal with estimated pension plan earnings just above a quarter of one percent at 0.27%, another knockback likely requiring years of recovery time.

- With low interest rates expected to continue some years into the future, plan valuations will be based on discount rates in the 5% range versus past discount rates in the 6% range, a change that (as illustrated in the previous YV pension column) conspires to keep the plan in deficit territory.
- The actuarial folks recently came up with revised longevity tables which, no surprise, sees folks living longer which is good for "folks" but very bad for "funds" whose valuations must now anticipate longer payout periods per pensioner.
- The ratio of plan contributors to pensioners has been drifting lower and we now have less than two contributors paying into the plan for every pensioner taking money out.
- The University's recent financial struggles have precipitated an arrears on its part of close to \$100 million in 'special payments' to the plan that were intended to directly address the plan's current deficit. I should quickly note that these payments would have been over and above regular payments to the plan by the University to match employee contributions.

It seems we have something of a small army of factors attacking the plan and making financial incursions in the order of a quarter billion dollars (yes, that's billions with a "B"). However, a rate of return slightly over 7%, reliably realized, could overcome the deficit-inducing effects of **all** these factors. So, keep watching the signs and all your pension status questions will be answered; better still, watch the road signs and drive, bike, run, and walk safely while enjoying our short summer.

Jim Wyse, Faculty of Business Administration, has been a member of the Pension Advisory Committee for a number of years.

When is Pre-Approval Necessary?

By Glen Roberts

Memorial's health, dental and travel health plans provide coverage on a direct reimbursement basis for a variety of prescription drugs, and medical products and services. In the case of health and dental, Blue Cross has relationships with many pharmacies, dentists and other service providers on a direct pay basis. This means that the provider will be paid directly by Blue Cross for the product or service and you are responsible only for the co-pay amount under the plan.

Similarly, for emergency medical services that you may require while travelling out of your province of residence, SSQ Insurance, uses a third party service provider, AXA Assistance, to coordinate your insurance coverage and payment.

Not all group insurance coverage is automatic, as there are certain benefits that require prior approval from the insurance company to be eligible for reimbursement. Here are some examples:

Nursing and Personal Care - The health plan provides coverage of up to \$10,000 per calendar year for the services of a private duty nurse at your own private residence (this does not include a convalescent or nursing home). In addition the plan will pay for the medically necessary services of a personal home care worker approved by Blue Cross for up to four hours per day. Coverage for these services requires a written prescription from your physician and prior approval from Blue Cross.

Special Authorization Drugs – The health plan covers hundreds of prescription drugs automatically and the drug formulary continues to change and evolve as new therapies come to market. There is also a certain category of drugs that are covered under the health plan on a "special authorization" basis only and require prior approval from Blue Cross before reimbursement will be made. The special authorization process requires that your

attending physician complete a Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request form indicating the need for use of a particular drug. The information provided on this form is reviewed by Blue Cross, confidentially, and you are usually notified of their assessment within 7 to 10 working days. If coverage is denied by Blue Cross, you may appeal their decision to the Special Authorization Appeals Subcommittee established by the University. Note that only special authorization drugs are eligible for appeal under the health plan.

Equipment Purchase/Rental – Charges for various types of medical equipment, including wheelchairs, scooters, hospital type beds, CPAP/respirators, etc. may be reimbursed under the health plan when these items are prescribed by a physician and pre-approved by Blue Cross. In certain cases of extended illness or disability, where the need may be longer term, Blue Cross may approve the purchase of the equipment. Reimbursement is based upon reasonable and customary guidelines established by Blue Cross.

For further information on the scope and limitations of these benefits please refer to the *Retiree Benefits Guide* located here: <https://www.mun.ca/hr/retirees/notices.php> or call MyHR at (709) 864-2434. Information on Special Authorization Drugs and appeals may be found here: https://www.mun.ca/hr/services/benefits/special_auth.php. Pre-approval request forms may be obtained by contacting MyHR as below or by contacting Blue Cross directly at 1-800-667-9133 or on the web at <https://docs.medaviebc.ca/members-EN/Generic-Form-2.pdf>

Out of Canada Referral – The travel health plan provided by SSQ Insurance offers Memorial employees and retirees a unique and perhaps not well known benefit – Referral Services Outside of Canada. When recommended by your physician and approved by the provincial health plan (eg. MCP in Newfoundland and Labrador), you are referred outside of Canada for medically necessary treatment, SSQ will provide coverage for certain medical expenses, including charges

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Shutterbug Gallery

What makes a good photo? Lighting, composition, etc., etc...
What makes an interesting photo? Often, it's the eye of the photographer. Without getting overly serious about it, the MUNPA Shutterbug Club organizes sessions to challenge members to produce images from seemingly prosaic themes, such as "trees," "fences," or "wheels." The results can be both whimsical and arresting. Here are some pictures from a wintertime theme: "kitchens."



Gene Herzberg



Liz Stanford



Grant Gardner



Gerry Humphrey



Mike Wilkshire

More photos can be viewed at <https://munpaphotos.shutterfly.com>. If you are interesting in joining the Shutterbug group, contact Mike Wilkshire at mwilks@mun.ca.

Benefits, continued

for certain medical expenses, including charges from a hospital, surgeon or physician and ambulance related costs. To avail of this benefit you must first obtain the prior approval of SSQ to be considered for reimbursement. For more information on Out of Canada Referral and the

terms and conditions of the benefit please refer to the travel health brochure located here: <https://www.mun.ca/hr/services/benefits/group.php>. You may also contact Human Resources by email at myhr@mun.ca or call (709) 864-2434.

Glen Roberts is Manager of Benefits, Pensions and Compensation, Human Resources