



Your Voice

MUN Pensioners' Association (MUNPA) Newsletter Vol. 16, No. 1, February 2018

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**Gary Jeffery working on
mummer figure
(woodcarving group)**

**Additional photos and info
pages 4 and 5.**

Also ...

• President's Message	2	• Snow: A Story by Jo Shawyer	7
• From the Editor	3	• MUN Memoirs to be Published	8
• What's Been Happening in St. John's ..	3	• A Fish Story (blog)	9
• Upcoming Events	4	• Letters	10
• Bright Lights Festival (photos)	5		

Jane Foltz

President's Mid-winter Message

It is nearing mid-winter, already! Seems like we just got through the holiday season. However, as we know, the end of winter is just a date on the calendar and that living here in Newfoundland, we can expect many more weeks of winter weather.

MUNPA MEMBERS NOT INCLUDED IN PARKING BAN

In early January, MUN announced a temporary parking permit ban on campus. I wish to thank Steve Wolinetz for taking the lead on this issue. It was quickly resolved, as it was not the intent of MUN to include MUNPA members in this ban. MUN has since indicated that a new category for our members will be created for the on-line parking application form, meaning that we would have a separate category and would no longer be included in the Visitor category.

THANK YOU TO HR

Another thank you must go out to the Department of Human Resources. A recent request to them to send us separate monthly listings of new members was favorably received. The request was made so that we could formally welcome all new members to our Association in a timely manner and to inform them of what being a member offers them, a practice that was evidently done several years ago. The information that was previously mailed out is currently being updated and our welcome to them will soon be reinstated.

COFFEE GET-TOGETHER FOR SURVIVING PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARIES A.K.A. SURVIVORS

To our members who have been referred to as survivors (in the sense that you are the principal beneficiary of a MUN employee's pension) and who are included in this category as the result of the passing of your loved one, please mark the date, **Mon., April 23**, when we will host a Morning Coffee at the Fluvarium for you. We may not have the names and addresses

of everyone in this category, so if you know of someone who may not be on our list, please let us know. It is intended that the coffee be informative, focusing on their MUN benefits and their inclusion in all MUNPA activities, as well as a nice friendly morning get together.

MEMOIR GROUP LOOKING TO LAUNCH PUBLICATION

And you will soon be able to read about the history of Memorial University. At a meeting of the Board in January, we received an appeal from our Memoir Group for financial assistance towards their publication of *Creating a University: The Newfoundland Experience*, edited by Stephen Riggins and Roberta Buchanan. The appeal was approved by the Board and resulted in our providing funding to them for up to \$3100. The Memoir Group was started in

2003 by a group of MUN retirees and is MUNPA's oldest and longest running interest group. We congratulate the many authors and the Group as a whole for taking on this project. We very much look forward to reading their memoirs.

MANY INTERESTING EVENTS FOR THE WINTER

If the winter weather is getting you down and you are looking for something different to do, you might want to check out the many interesting events that our Programming Committee has put together for offering over the next several months.

Complete information is available on our web site at www.mun.ca/munpa. Please note that there is no cost to attend these events and your spouse or partner is also most welcome to join you. A great way to keep in touch with friends and former colleagues, enjoy a cup of coffee or tea with them, as well as participating in our offerings.

Best wishes ...



From the editor

This edition of *Your Voice* (YV) has been slow coming out because copy has been slow coming in. However, the addition of Mike Wilkshire's photo essay and Jo Shawyer's essay on Snow means that I now have more than enough.

Several of you have indicated that you like the new-style YV. But keeping it flowing depends on copy. I've included Abe Ross' letter of commiseration as well as the reflection I elicited from him as a reminder that an active newsletter depends on you, our readers, letting others know what you've been up to; e.g. where you have traveled and what you've been doing. Pictures are worth a thousand words, particularly if they are high resolution. That is something we are working on, but remember that YV is just a newsletter.

Please send letters, comments, and better yet, short items (up to 1000 words or so) to yourvoice@mun.ca.

Steve Wolinetz
yourvoice@mun.ca

What's Been Happening in St. John's Genealogy Session with Wanda Garrett



Wanting to know who you are and where you came from is a common human trait. Most of us know who our immediate families were, but finding out more can be a challenge. Wanda Garrett (Craft Group) has been investigating her family tree for most of her adult life. In January, she told a group of us not only how to get started, but also how to probe deeper once you were underway.

One basic piece of advice was to start with one family and work backwards in time rather than pursuing multiple branches and lines of inquiry. Wanda suggested beginning with written records, including family bibles, letters, photos, and diaries and journals rather than oral histories, which are not always accurate. As with any piece of research, a crucial part of the process is

recording not only the information you find on family history sheets or a dedicated computer program, but also to record the sources used so that you can check back if discrepancies emerge.

Starting with sources like those indicated above is only part of the process. You can go further using special collections, such as the Gert Crosbie Collection or the Mildred Howard Collection, Daily News Deaths for Newfoundland and Labrador families, but also information from head stones, passenger lists, border crossings, almanacs, and family histories. As the photo at right indicates, persistent searching can elicit troves of information.



Upcoming Events in St. John's

3D Printer Workshop
Wed., Feb. 21, 2 - 4:30 pm
w/ Simon Hawkenson
QEII Library
LIMITED SEATING

Travel Session:
Antarctica Observed
Thu., Feb. 15, 2 - 4 p.m.
w/ Tony Dickinson (Bio.)
at the Lantern

Surviving Donald Trump:
American Democracy
Under Stress
(Panel Discussion)
Wed., April 4, 2- 4 pm
w/ Steve Wolinetz and
Michael Wallack (Pol. Sci.)
at the Lantern.

First Aid Mini-course
Thu., Mar. 8, 1:30-4:30 pm
by First Aid Vitals NL
(Red Cross' Training partner)
17 Major's Path

Gardening
Q&A Session
Thu., April 19, 2 - 4 pm
w/ Peter Scott (Bio.)
at the Lantern

Quidi Vidi Brewery:
Tour and Tasting
Fri., Mar. 23, 2 - 3 pm



Woodcarving Group

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As the three photos demonstrate (this page, the previous page and the front page) its members have been busy.

Under the direction of Helger Eckenweber, participants learn the skills of relief, figure and driftwood carving. Participants carved small Christmas items in the Fall but you can carve an item that interests you. Basic small hand tools will be provided on loan at the meetings. A supply of wood can be arranged for those who need it to be provided.

If you have had a hankering to carve wood or want to learn more about what is involved, please feel free to join them. Beginners and novices are welcome.

The next meeting is Thu., Feb. 22, 1 - 4 pm in the Board Room of the Mt. Scio Research Facility.



Shutterbug Group at Botanical Garden's Merry and Bright Light Festival

by Mike Wilkshire



The fresh snow made for interesting special effects.

In December 2017 MUNPA's Shutterbug group, a small band of photography enthusiasts, had an outing to the second edition of this very popular event at the St. John's Botanical Garden, with many more lights than the previous year. In fact it was so popular that it was sold out! It was an ideal opportunity for members of our group to hone their skills in low-light photography. I was so taken with the event

that I went back for another look after a snowfall had added to the magic of it.

For those unfamiliar with the event, the staff took a month-and-a-half to prepare a wide variety of impressive light displays in the garden, and opened to the public after dark between 6 and 9 pm. The number of visitors was so great that a very efficient

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The animals were popular for selfies.

shuttle bus system was put in place leaving from the Marine Institute parking area, which certainly alleviated the pressure on parking close to the garden. Hot chocolate was available, as was a range of seasonal gift items.

This is just a small sampling of what was on offer: if you missed it, try the 2018 edition.

**A log wall
provided
another
opportunity
for decoration.**



See photos from other group members at <https://munpaphotos.shutterfly.com/pictures>.



The gazebo certainly looked wintry but welcoming.



The wise old owl.



Away in a manger -- actually, the alpine house.



A STORY SNOW

by Jo Shawyer, MUNPA Memoirs Group

Snow. Why haven't I thought of snow as a subject for a memoir when I have lived with snow all my life?

I grew up in southern Ontario, that area which today you can see on the Weather Network maps as suffering from "The Lake Effect". This is due to its position in the path of a south westerly weather flow across the Great Lakes. It can also be described as being "on the edge of The Snow Belt" which lies to the north.

I remember the snow best from when I was a child. Of course, the snow was higher than our heads, as all older people say, but we were shorter then. Walking to and from school, a mile and a half down the ice covered country road was a daily experience, December to March. I loved an ice-y road. I could slip and slide and pretend that I was skating like beautiful Barbara Ann Scott. She was Canada's famous figure skater who won a gold medal at the 1948 Olympics. Her photograph was in the newspaper and she was referred to as "Canada's Sweetheart".

On my way home from school, I took time to climb all the snow piles which the snow plow had created by pushing huge chunks of snow to each side of the road. These mountains of snow were wonderful fun. I would scramble up them, walk along them, balancing carefully, and then slide down to the road level again. Sometimes the wind sculpted the snow into parallel drifts which lay strung across the road, festoons of finely powdered snow. They were beautiful ridges of shadow and light which followed the direction of the wind. I had to break through these fragile drifts to make my way home. And so they were ruined.

When I arrived home, my mother would take a broom to me at the kitchen door to knock the caked snow from my woolly snow pants and woolly jacket and woolly mittens (no polyester then). All winter long, our kitchen was hung about with outdoor clothes, drying, steaming gently in the warmth of the wood burning stove.

There was other fun too. My brothers and I liked to go tobogganing on "George's hill". Our farm lay below a prominent glacial moraine on a flat sandy deposit: once the beach of a glacial lake. The farm of our neighbour, George McCord, was sited on the top of the moraine. His land was rolling hills and gentle valleys. We could slide from his barn on the top of the hill right down toward our farm. Mind you, he always let his cattle out in good weather, to get some fresh air, standing about near the barn, and I kept my eye on them, wondering whether and when they might suddenly make a rush at us, as nervous herds sometimes do. But that never happened. Hanging to the sides of the valleys were spectacular drifts. We engineered huge caves by tunneling into these. These caves were the kind that you read about when they collapse on children and suffocate them to death. But the caves that we made did not collapse on us.

The best thing was a mild turn in the weather. Then there would be a sleet storm which coated the snowy hills with ice. We could slide down them on a piece of cardboard. We had no control, no ability to brake on the ice. We went very fast. It was a long, difficult climb back up the hill because we could get no purchase on the ice. We had to crawl on our hands and knees and grasp at the smallest stalk of grass showing through the ice, to get a hold. It was challenging and exhausting to inch up the hill, always fearing that the tiny twig or blade of grass that anchored us would snap. Then we would go sliding back down the hill just like the story of Sisyphus.

There was a downside to snow. Shoveling. My father insisted on bringing the car up the long lane from the road to be parked for the night near the house, dug out and ready for his morning run to work. It had to be done and now! In those days, if he missed a day at work, he missed a day's pay.

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Fortunately, I had two older brothers, and, unfortunately for them, they were called upon for Shoveling duty. I helped spread ashes on the lane, to provide a grip for the cars' wheels, and I helped to push the car when it was struck, and it frequently was stuck. There were no winter tires, only clumsy chains to be fastened to the wheels. But we did not have any of those.

Thinking back, winter was hard work for everyone in the family: stress for my father who commuted daily on treacherous roads to work in town; physical stress for my mother who had a lot of extra work to provide and to keep dry our winter clothing. For us,

the children, it was not much fun to walk home from school in a bitter snow storm, or to dig out the car for Dad or to haul buckets of snow indoors to melt on the stove because the pipes had frozen.

But to play in the snow, that was the best!



MUN Memoirs to be published

By Stephen Harold Riggins and Roberta Buchanan

ISER Books has signed a contract for the publication of a volume of memoirs by Memorial University's retired professors and librarians: *Creating a University: The Newfoundland Experience*, edited by Stephen Harold Riggins and Roberta Buchanan. The book originated with the MUNPA Memoir Group which has been meeting monthly since 2003. We started by writing about how we came to Memorial, and the memoirs were so interesting that the idea of publishing a book was hatched. A general appeal was made to MUN pensioners to write their recollections of Memorial, and other contributions began to arrive. Contributions were also solicited from a wide range of departments and faculties to give a more balanced view of the rapid development of the university in the previous half-century. Our 30 memoirists recount their experiences teaching at Memorial from the 1950s to the 1990s, when a small two-year university college expanded into the large "multiversity" we know today. They are from a wide spectrum of arts, sciences and social sciences, the Library, the Medical School and Business School, and were pioneers in the process of "creating a university."

The Editors

It was not until Stephen Riggins joined the group in 2010 and offered to be an editor — he was not then retired but was writing a history of the Sociology Department — that the book became a

serious undertaking. Stephen had already published an autobiography, *The Pleasures of Time: Two men, a Life*. Roberta Buchanan, one of the founding members of the Memoirs group, offered to be co-editor. Roberta has always been fascinated by autobiographies and diaries. She taught courses in Writing Our Lives at MUN Extension, conducted many journal-writing workshops for different groups in St. John's, and a graduate course in Autobiography in the English Department. She coined the term "MUNographies" for the MUN memoirs.

Several Canadian universities (notably Wilfred Laurier, Windsor, McGill, and Alberta) have published similar books by their retired faculty and staff. *Creating a University: The Newfoundland Experience* will be only the fourth book about the history of Memorial. The others are Malcolm MacLeod's *A Bridge Built Halfway: A History of Memorial University College*; Melvin Baker and Jean Graham's *Celebrate Memorial!*, and Jeff Webb's *Observing the Outports*.

Creating a University: The Newfoundland Experience is subsidized in part by MUNPA and by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

The MUNPA Memoir Group is still active, and meets at lunch time on the first Monday of the month at the MUNPA board room on Mt. Scio Road. The atmosphere is relaxed, and everyone is welcome.

A Fish Story: A Blog Without Photos

Ever since I retired we have been travelling the Caribbean looking for a warm winter hangout that is affordable. We have been to most of the Lesser Antilles. While travelling I have been writing letters to family in the form of a blog. Here is one of my letters (with personal information removed).

— Abe Ross, Psychology

Okay, so I am, as many of you know, new to the game. I don't think about the story until after it's finished and by then it is too late to take pictures. So my friends, you are going to have to help me with this one and use your imagination. I'll tell you when it's needed. And now to the story:

There are several locations around the island where the fishermen (yes, they are all, as far as I know, men) land with their catch. If you are there when they come in (between three and five in the PM), you can buy some fresh fish (very fresh fish). Saturday afternoon I went for a bike ride, not a long one — round trip maybe 12 km. I left the house around three when the sun was past its peak. My idea was that I would check for the fishermen on the way back.

Soon after I reached the end of the road and turned back I looked down towards the water and saw a group of men standing around a fish cleaning station. Turned, coasted down to the group and saw a spread of about 10 nicely cleaned (scaled and gutted) parrot fish. Even though they had been scaled they still had good colour, I could see the blues, reds, and yellows.

[Insert your imagined picture of the fish about here.]

I asked the young man who was cleaning them if they were for sale. He pointed me to the fisherman who thought about it and then asked me which fish I might be interested in. I pointed to the biggest one (which wasn't very big). He hefted it, guesstimated it at about two pounds and asked for \$10.

Couple of asides here: First, I am surprised that they use pounds, gallons, and miles here. Most of the other British West Indies (BWI) islands we have visited use kilograms, litres, and kilometers.

Second, the price: to haggle/bargain or not? — that was the question. I don't know if bargaining is or is not the custom here. I didn't bargain and here's my logic. If bargaining is not the custom, then my trying to bargain might be seen as insulting (rich north American, etc.). On the other hand, if bargaining is the custom, then the worst that would happen is that I might be seen as foolish for paying the asking price.

Anyway, paid the price, put the fish in the double plastic shopping bags I had brought just in case I actually got a fish, put it in my daypack and pedaled off to our house of the month with my "catch". Popped it in the fridge when I got back and next day at lunch time I fired up the barbeque. Lit the charcoal, waited until the briquettes had a nice even coat of white ash, oiled the fish and put it on to cook. BTW the fish barely fit on the barbeque; not because the fish was large, it was because the barbeque was small. I kept a close eye on the fish because of the neighbourhood cats.

[Insert your imagined picture of fish on barbeque with tail hanging over the edge.]

Other half of family (OHF) cooked up some curried rice to go with the fish. We enjoyed the meal and particularly appreciated the lack of small bones in the parrot fish.

[Insert your imagined picture of fish bones and skin left on serving plate.]

Later that afternoon OHF wondered aloud if fish, other than barracuda, were toxic. So, as my grandson has told me to do in the past, we googled it. Big mistake. Turns out that all reef fish in the Caribbean, Pacific, and Indian oceans can have ciguatera. According to the US Center for Disease Control (CDC)

* Ciguatera is caused by eating fish contaminated with toxins that are produced by microorganisms that live around coral reefs. Small fish eat the microorganisms, and large fish eat the small fish, which concentrates the toxins.

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* Ciguatera is most commonly caused by eating barracuda, grouper, moray eel, amberjack, sea bass, sturgeon, parrot fish, surgeonfish, and red snapper.

[I have edited this leaving out details and adding bold]

According to the CDC the symptoms normally appear in 1-3 hours. We looked at our watches and were relieved to see that we had passed the 3 hour mark. But then I came across another site which said:

*** Symptoms generally begin six to eight hours after eating the contaminated fish but can occur as early as two or as late as 24 hours after ingestion. Uh oh, time wasn't up yet. It then detailed the symptoms:**

*** Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain, numbness, tingling, abdominal pain, dizziness, and vertigo. The classic finding of hot and cold sensation reversal is actually a burning sensation on contact with cold (allodynia).**

*** Teeth may feel loose and itching may be intense.**

*** Severe cases of ciguatera poisoning may result in shortness of breath, salivation, tearing, chills, rashes, itching, and paralysis. Bradycardia, coma and hypotension can occur. Death due to poisoning is rare (less than 0.5 per cent).**

Don't know about OHF but for the next few hours I paid very close attention waiting to feel the slightest gurgle, twinge, loose tooth, vertigo, itch.

[You can insert any picture you can imagine here.]

It's too late to make a long story short but since it's Monday afternoon and I'm writing this, we survived. No more need to pay attention to gurgles and twinges.

Back to my regular old hypochondriasis.

Epilogue: we both agreed, no more reef fish for us.

Letters

From Condolences to Congratulations

Dear Steve

This was originally intended to be a letter of condolence, of sympathy for [your] having taken on the thankless position of editor of a newsletter. (Thankless except for those who persuaded you to take on the position.) In sympathy I was going to share with you my experiences as editor of a newsletter for the retired section of a professional association. The time spent seeking submissions; the hours spent learning desktop publishing. Then sending the newsletter out to the members and having it disappear into the ether. Only knowing that it had reached some readers because two of my friends took the time to respond to questions I asked in the newsletter. (The same two who had asked me to take on the job.) Aside from my friends, did anyone even read it? I never found out. I was going to include the story about the student organization that folded after no one showed up to hear their presentation *Overcoming Student Apathy*. I was going to ponder its relevance to editing a newsletter for retired folks.

But no, after the December/January newsletter this has to change from condolence to congratulations, from sympathy to envy. The newsletter was full of interesting information — not all of which was written by the editor himself to fill the pages. It had some great photographs by Gene Herzberg. And, it even had kudos from a reader who took the time to let you know that he enjoyed the website and the newsletter. There are readers out there for some newsletter editors! Keep up the good work. Like Vance Maxwell, I am far from St. John's. Like him, I too look forward to future issues of *Your Voice*.

Abe Ross