

WLU RETIREES' NEWS

A Publication of the Wilfrid Laurier University Retirees' Association

To contact the executive: retirees@wlu.ca WLURA website: www.wlura.ca

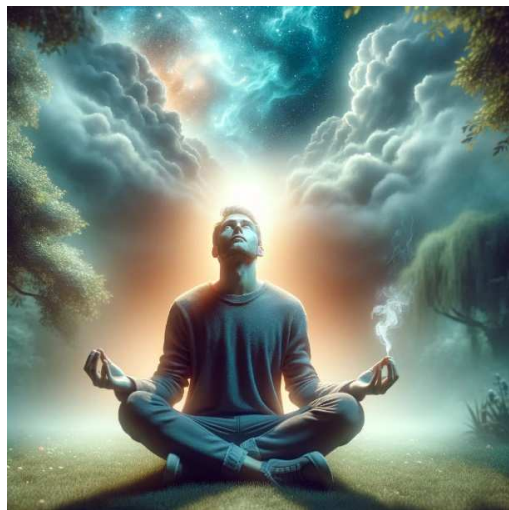
Spring 2024

Generative Artificial Intelligence

by Gerry Schaus

In introducing our latest speaker at the Association's annual series of guest presentations, I happened to comment that to me, "artificial intelligence" might be encapsulated by the image of a cigarette smoker gazing contemplatively up into the heavens while drawing the deadly smoke into his lungs. To me, that would be the fake appearance of smarts, i.e. "artificial intelligence."

Tim Didier, the Associate Director, Information and Communication Technologies at WLU, quickly dispelled that image for the thirty-four of us listening this past April 26th on Zoom or in the Regina St. lounge. Tim clarified that the artificial intelligence he was talking about was "generative," able to create knowledge from very wide-ranging sources that it had accumulated digitally through web sources, and somehow to "digest." As a quick illustration of this, he asked his free basic version of ChatGPT to generate an image of a cigarette smoker gazing up into the heavens as if seeking inspiration. After 10 or 15 seconds of "thinking," it came up with this depiction:



Okay. Not bad. But not exactly what I had in mind.

The software program, ChatGPT, one of several on the market now, has made available to the wider public the ability to "create" text, images, music and video and to answer requests for information in a way that demon-

Annual General Meeting and New Retirees Welcoming

WLU Retirees' Association

Friday, May 31, 2024

2:00 p.m.

202 Regina St. and by Zoom

strates impressive "intelligence." It appears to have amazing potential in many different applications. We should expect a new revolution ahead of us in a similar way as the introduction of the Web changed modern life so greatly just in the past two decades.

Tim gave us a taste of what generative AI can do. And we were impressed. Besides the cigarette smoker, we asked him to create an image of the Toronto Maple Leafs actually hoisting the Stanley Cup, something that looks impossible in our lifetimes. (The Leafs happened to be down 3 games to 1 to Boston at the time of our meeting with Tim, so, yes, impossible.) But in less than half a minute, there was not one, but two images of a team that looked a lot like the Leafs, but for trademark/copyright purposes had to be disguised slightly, raising the Cup. Here's the better of the two. Enjoy it; you may never see anything like it again:



After that impossible task, the retirees were pretty well convinced that Generative AI had something to offer. Imagine a whole video showing a game-seven Stanley Cup victory for the Buds!

Another audience member asked for an image of the Laurier Golden Hawk logo. Here's what ChatGPT gave us, in an art deco style. Notice how large WLU letters seem to be woven into the background:



Cool. Right? Although probably too fussy for commercial use.

Anyway, by then it was time to consider some of the ethical issues surrounding AI. Since it can be used to imitate voices, create false images, doctor existing material, easily fooling even careful observers, clearly there is an eager market for this technology among perpetrators of nefarious designs. Apparently, there are already guidelines in place by owners of this Generative AI software to try to anticipate and prevent such misuses of the technology. Tim mentioned that Toronto Maple Leaf logos are copyrighted and can't be used without permission. But ChatGPT depends on copyrighted information of all kinds, obviously in the public domain, to generate its responses to requests from users. Where is the line in the sand and who is enforcing the breaking of rules? This is a very large quandary, it seems. Criminals will find ways to circumvent protections. That's a given. Clearly, despite the wonderful benefits that Generative AI may produce, it is certainly going to be accompanied by dreadful new abuses that will dampen everyone's enthusiasm for its use. Stay tuned and be aware. You want to be a beneficiary of the coming revolution, not a victim. It's going to cost society to some extent but imagine what it can do in the field of health, for example, if it's able to diagnose illnesses for medical teams and quickly produce the best possible solutions to its problems using the most scientifically proven methods, and do it in seconds. Or consider the legal profession with its myriad of laws and untold precedents to consider in complex cases that can be cited and judged with intelligent options for resolution. Wouldn't we like to see Trump-like cases settled in a matter of hours rather than years? But, of course, with a human touch.

President's Message

by Jim Butler



Jim Butler

Spring is here and we are now approaching the final in-person meeting (May 31st Annual General Meeting) prior to the summer recess; however, during the late spring and summer the Retirees' Association will continue to work on a number of key issues of concern to members:

Given that the current pension plan is a hybrid design, we have a strong interest in its management and investment performance. Unfunded Pension Plan deficits relating to the Defined Benefit portion are covered by Laurier. If Laurier is financially unable to meet this obligation, the statutory insurance will only cover about \$12,000 per year. This represents a substantial decrease for most of the membership. Therefore, it is in our interest that Laurier maintain financial prudence in its affairs.

The new pension plan design, known as a Jointly Sponsored Pension, finances any deficits by way of increasing member contributions, decreasing pensions, or both. This will affect new retirees in the near future when the Plan change is approved.

Laurier's financial condition also directly affects its ability to meet its obligations under the Supplemental Pension Arrangement (SPA). Default on this program is not protected by pension legislation and would place pensioners in an untenable position of having to pursue other legal avenues.

Laurier's financial position must be such that it can fulfill its Post Retirement Benefits obligations.

Given the foregoing, it is imperative that Laurier's retirees maintain its membership on the Pension Committee as well as monitor the financial health of both the Pension Plan and that of the institution.

The Retirees Association has asked to make a presentation to the Board of Governors in order to acquaint them with our interests and the mutual benefit that is derived from our continuing relationship. For example, many of our retired Faculty members continue to publish and conduct research attributed to the University. Unfortunately, our request for a Board presentation was declined with a counter offer to meet with the President. It is felt that the President already has a good appreciation for the Retirees' interests, so we have asked that the Board Chair attend the meeting. We are awaiting a reply from the Secretariat at the time of writing.

Pension Update

by Alastair Robertson

“University Pension Plan” (UPP)

Laurier Human Resources recently provided WLU retirees or spouses or beneficiaries currently receiving a Laurier pension with a brief status update on the University's possible move to join the University Pension Plan (UPP), the jointly sponsored pension plan for the Ontario university sector. The two-page update (dated March 20, 2024) was mailed with the 2024 Pension Indexation Letter. It contains information about the current status of this initiative, with an estimated timeline of future steps in the process of conversion to the UPP. It also explains how those currently in receipt of a Laurier pension would be affected by such a transition and what input they would have on whether such a change should occur.

In July 2023 an important milestone was achieved when the University reached agreements with WLUFA under which WLUFA will provide consent to joining the UPP on behalf of all Laurier faculty members and professional librarians who are members of the pension plan. The University is now pursuing similar agreements with other employee unions and associations at Laurier.

Once the University has determined that there is sufficient support from employee groups for conversion of the Laurier Pension Plan to the UPP, they will seek to provide more information to retirees. Specifically, the University is “aiming to host an information session for retirees in the late spring, with individual consent packages to be sent via mail to all retirees by mid-summer.” The Ontario Pension Benefits Act prescribes the types of information to be provided in such a consent package for retirees. In the case of conversion of the Laurier Pension Plan (LPP) to the UPP, these would include, information about the LPP and your current pension benefits under that plan, and information about the UPP and your pension benefits payable under that plan (which would be the same as under the LPP). The consent package must also contain an “objection form” which retirees can use if they wish to object to pension conversion.

Under Pension Benefit Act rules, at least two-thirds of active (employed) plan members must consent to conversion of a single-employer pension plan (i.e., the LPP) to a jointly sponsored plan (i.e., the UPP) and no more than one-third of retirees and deferred pension plan members can object to such conversion. Assuming that the required consent by Laurier plan members and other approvals are achieved, the University's current target date for conversion to the UPP is January 1, 2026.

If Laurier were to join the UPP, how would current retirees be affected? The Human Resources office has offered the following reassurance, “Those who are already

retired and collecting a pension under the terms of the Laurier Plan before converting to the UPP will continue to be entitled to their same pension after conversion to the UPP. They also continue to be eligible for the same cost-of-living and indexing adjustments as outlined in the Laurier Pension Plan Text. The only change is that the payments will be issued from the UPP rather than from the Laurier Plan.” In other words, if Laurier were to join the UPP, you would continue to be paid a pension equal to the higher of your Money Purchase Pension (MPP) and your Minimum Guarantee Pension (MGP) in each year. Your MPP pension would continue to be adjusted, either positively or negatively, based on the average rate of interest earned by pension fund assets during the most recent four-year period, less the MPP conversion interest rate used to calculate the initial pension benefit. Likewise, your MGP would continue to be adjusted based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous year (100% of CPI for service up to January 1, 2013, and 50% of CPI for service on or after January 1, 2013), up to a maximum of 4%.

If you have any questions about the information provided in their UPP status update, Human Resources asks that you contact them at:

retirement@wlu.ca or 548-889-3385.

Pension Fund Rate of Return

The latest data show that from January 1 to March 31, 2024, the Laurier pension fund earned a year-to-date rate of return of 5.06%. The fund's healthy performance over the first three months of the year was consistent with the strong gains in equity markets over the quarter, a continuation of a pattern seen in the latter part of 2023.

Gaspé Scavenger Hunt

by David Peirson



David Peirson

At the regular meeting of WLU retirees this past February 23rd, the present writer took the audience on a scavenger hunt around Quebec's Gaspé peninsula. This hunt was inspired by a beautiful book of sketches entitled “La Gaspésie de Métis a Miguasha” by Quebec artist, Jacques Martineau. The book, published by Les éditions du Septentrion (2012), contains some 90 pages with over 100 sketches of gardens, beaches, light houses, rocks, stones, and even monsters (the book is still in print) within its covers.



The Gaspé

This was the third circuit of the Gaspé that Wilma and I have made over the past 30 years and this time the sole purpose was to find as many of the curiosities illustrated by Martineau as possible on our 10-day excursion. It was, however, also our 60th wedding anniversary trip which we celebrated on June 24 with a couple of ice cream bars on sticks at Mont Saint Louis.



Gascons Candle, Bay Chaleur: Martineau sketch and Peirson photo

Our typical travel plans involve as many hours as possible walking on ocean beaches. The Gaspé is perfect for that. The highway travels around the peninsula always within a kilometer or so of the coast. The Gaspé borders Bay Chaleur, the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and of course the St. Lawrence River. Jacques Martineau's book was a perfect guide for the trip.

The original plan was to travel in July with a few days in Montreal, then the Gaspé adventure and later a side trip to Lac Saint-Jean. On attempting to find accommodation for July (in February), it became apparent that the Gaspé was already booked solid, so the plan changed to turn the trip around and head for Gaspé in early June. It turns out that while the tourist industry there was not quite ready for visitors (some restaurants and B&Bs were still closed), the traffic was light and the people were friendly. We speak no French and yet had no problem communicating anywhere.

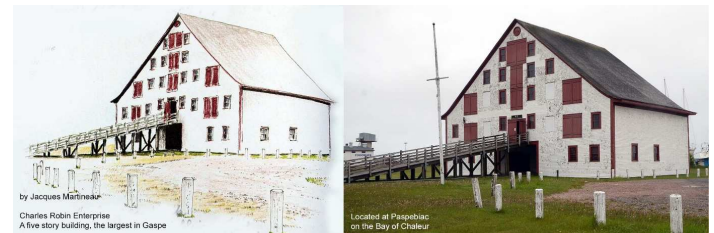
We found accommodation in a beautiful boutique hotel in Carleton-sur-Mer, a repurposed Presbytery House in Port Daniel with spectacular breakfasts, a very comfort-

able little do-it-yourself cabin on the edge of Forillon National Park (near the town of Gaspé which, by the way, has a fantastic poissonnier), a routine motel in Ste-Anne-de-Monts and a slightly better than average Comfort Inn in Mont Joli. With so many items to find, these five locations allowed easy travel back and forth along Highway 132 while searching for the "Scavenger Items List". On this excursion, Wilma and I travelled counterclockwise, which means that we were on the lane next to the sea. A physics teacher we encountered on the beach in Mont-Saint-Pierre pointed out that travelling the outside lane means that you drive a bigger circle than the inside lane and cover an extra five kilometres as a result!



Cap-d'Espoir: Martineau sketch and Peirson photo

Significant historic sites included Miguasha where a treasure trove of primitive fish fossils from 380 million years ago has been uncovered. At that time on Earth, there were no animals with bones living on land although there were meter-long scorpions! There was only one other car in the parking lot, but the attendants were keen to show off the museum's collections. At Paspébiac, Wilma and I found the remains of the Charles Robin Enterprise which caught and dried fish and shipped it to mainland Europe starting in the late 1700s. The site, which includes well-preserved buildings, is in excellent condition. Through the 1800s, it was one of the major industries in Gaspé, but as a business, it closed in the early 1940s. Today, about the middle of June, the restaurant opens, offering, among other things, a crab club sandwich that is out of this world!



Charles Robin Enterprise: Martineau sketch and Peirson photo

The Acadian Museum in Bonaventure revealed that many Acadians escaping from British cruelty in Nova Scotia found a home in the Gaspé. It was good to learn that

they didn't all end up in Louisiana and, in fact, the Acadian descendants are a major group in modern-day Quebec (Maurice, the Rocket, Richard would undoubtedly be a descendant).

At Percé, of course, the town is dominated by the magnificent Percé Rock. It took a whole day to track down all the Scavenger Hunt items in this area. Forillon Peninsula, located to the east of the town of Gaspé is a gorgeous National Park with a World Heritage designation. Martineau again kept us moving to find the lighthouses and beaches, capes and stones.



Forillon National Park: Peirson photo and Martineau sketch

Travelling west along the St Lawrence yielded a steady series of items to be found. These included lighthouses, a Marconi receiver station museum, several beautiful small towns, and saltwater beaches where unusual and grotesque stones were seen and (after the fact) connected to the many disasters that befell travellers from Europe coming to Canada in hopes of a better life.



Petite Tourelle rock: Martineau sketch and Peirson photo

For example, we are aware of a large family with the surname Peirson who are buried in St Stephen Anglican Church cemetery in Lachine. They died in an explosion which occurred on the steamboat Shamrock on July 9, 1842, while it was travelling from England. They were likely from the same part of Yorkshire as my ancestors of the same name who came the same way in 1832.

At Grose Morne, the cliffs push right up to the edge of the river and the road seems barely attached. Waterfalls drop over the edge of these cliffs and splash next to the highway. While tourists, of course, love sunny weather, a rainy day can make these cascades spectacular.

The final diversion is the side road through Métis-sur-Mer and Grand-Métis where travellers can spend a relaxing day at Les jardins de Métis. This whole adventure,



La Martre looking east toward Gros Morne



Martineau sketch of Le Martre, Peirson photo of same

in fact, got its start at Les jardins de Métis eight years ago when I found the Martineau book while visiting the local "gift shop" there. I have been pulling it out, looking at it, showing it to visitors, translating Martineau's notes (using Google translate) and hoping I would live long enough to take this trip. My brief description of the Scavenger Hunt really may not do the book justice nor the Gaspé as a whole, but I hope that some of you will be enticed someday to take one of the most fun trips I've ever been on.

Idyllic River Cruise from Amsterdam to Budapest

by Gerry Schaus

Put nine old Nova Scotians and an Ontarioan together for two weeks on two Viking cruise boats, travelling up the Rhine and down the Danube, and you are going to have a good time – guaranteed, period, full stop, no matter who the Ontarioan is! Why two cruise boats, you might ask.



185-passenger Viking Tir river cruise ship

Apparently, the weak-kneed insurers of the first boat were nervous about scraping a little paint off the bottom of their brand-new cruiser while passing through the canal linking the Main River with the Danube. I give our swash-buckling captain credit. I think he was willing to take the



A Late Medieval castle along the Middle Rhine

risk despite low water levels; however, his Viking bosses had a spare boat, the twin of the first, sitting and waiting on the upper Danube and so opted to bus us all seamlessly the 130 km to the second one making sure we got the very same state rooms and throwing in some extra wine to make the trip more palatable.

The glue that bound our intrepid group together was my brother and sister-in-law from Dartmouth, N.S. who persuaded a couple of their siblings, together with two old friends and of course their spouses, to experience the Old-World charms of great beetling castles, towering inspirational cathedrals and mouth-watering local delicacies, while drifting past thousands of years of European culture.

I love good food, but I'm also a history buff so let me mention a few historical highlights of the trip and leave the food to your most vivid imaginations.

The Middle Rhine is the area where my dad's family came from in the mid-1800s. You can't pass the forbidding castles overlooking the river and not wonder about the feudal barons protecting the rights they inherited to exact tolls from the traffic passing below. No castles in our family tree, you can be sure. We were "Bauernlauten", weavers and vineyard labourers, or so I believe. No big targets on our backs – just many many little ones. My second time down this stretch of the river, the first time as a young backpacker fifty-two years ago, gave me a far different perspective on acceptable social norms down through the ages. Castles may seem good, but they really are not.



Another Late Medieval castle along the Middle Rhine

Nuremberg is truly a sobering place. Germans today have left in place the great Nazi party rallying place seen in old photos with Hitler addressing 160,000 of his faithful. But there is also the courthouse and room where the Nazi war criminals were tried in November 1945, found guilty and condemned to pay for their terrible sins. The present is right there to witness the past.



Nuremberg Rally Grounds – "Never Again"

Würzburg, famous perhaps more for Martin Luther's presence once, for me was highlighted by having the Uni-

versity Museum opened just so I could wander alone through the show cases and admire the fabulous collection of Greek and Roman antiquities. Masters of Greek vase painting, brought out of Etruscan burial chambers in pristine condition, were on display to provide a feast for my hungry eyes.



Five excited satyrs making wine (Greek amphora, ca. 550 B.C., Würzburg)

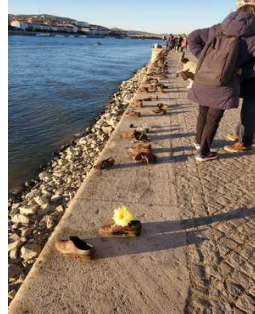
I'm sure everyone has heard of the famous Venus of Willendorf, that embodiment of Stone Age female beauty and fertility. My imagination was fired up when we silently passed the tiny village of Willendorf, announced on the back side of a shore building on the Danube. How was some local artist from this fragile little community 25,000 years ago inspired to carve such a shapely vision of divine womanhood? Boggling, just . . . boggling.



Willendorf Village and 25,000-year-old "Venus"

In magnificent Budapest, quite near the impressive parliament building on the Pest side of the Danube, there is a memorial to the 3,500 people, including 800 Jews of the city, who were killed in a single slaughter during the War. You would almost miss this memorial in passing ex-

cept for all the people paying their respects there. Sixty pairs of old worn shoes in many sizes and shapes cast now in iron, were strung along the edge of the embankment to remind the viewer of what happened on this very spot. The horrors of the Holocaust suddenly flooded to mind. I watched silently as one young father bent and explained to his little boy what these decrepit shoes at his feet meant for him. It was a moment well etched now in my memory.



Shoes memorial, Budapest (left); father-son moment.

When the trip was over, the ten of us scattered in pairs to the four winds but left all of us with a wealth of experiences and a wish to do it again.

Hospice Volunteering

by Phelim Boyle

There are many volunteering opportunities in Waterloo for retirees. One of the less well known is hospice volunteering. The mission of the hospice is to provide compassionate, high-quality care for individuals who are at the end of life. I have been a hospice volunteer for just over a year and have found the work to be rewarding, fulfilling and sometimes challenging. It may be of interest to share some of my experiences and reflections with you and help dispel some of the myths about the role.



The first step for me was to complete a volunteer application for the Hospice Waterloo Region. This applica-

tion called for three references. As a Client Support Volunteer, I was required to complete a 35-hour on-site training program. I found this to be very valuable. Among the topics covered were, introduction to hospice and palliative care, the volunteer's role, death and dying, respecting boundaries, and communication. We were shown how to provide companionship to the patients and their families and how we could best support the interdisciplinary team of medical professionals. Three items that stood out for me from this course were, (1) the importance of empathetic listening, (2) the need as volunteers not to try to fix things, and (3) to realize that platitudes such as "It will all be okay" are not helpful.

Volunteers can select from a range of different roles such as greeting visitors at the hospice reception desk, visiting clients in the community or, in the hospice, bedside vigils and bereavement walking. I chose to work three hours per week as a reception volunteer. My main task has been to greet family members and visitors as they enter the hospice and make them feel welcome. We also provide information to make their visits more comfortable.



Gies Family Centre, Region of Waterloo Hospice Building

On the front desk, I regularly meet a wide variety of visitors. Often they are coping with very personal grief and sadness in their own way. Some of them are very quiet; a few pause for a brief chat and others are eager to have longer conversations. From time to time, one of the more mobile residents who is out for a short walk, drops by for a chat. I treasure all these interactions and connections. I have met some amazing people and I have been privileged to hear some wonderful stories.

Sometimes, a family member will bring the resident's favorite dog to the hospice. As a dog owner myself, I find it very easy to start a conversation with fellow dog lovers. You can safely ask "How old is your dog?" or "What breed is your dog?". These are not questions that you can ask easily about people. We also have a box of treats available if the owner grants permission. Pets and children add sparkle to a visit.

Although I find the work really uplifting, there have been a few challenges. When I started, I had no experience with hospice work. I was afraid I would mess it up and do or say the wrong thing. Hospice training helped give me confidence and before I started on my own, I did a shadow shift with a very experienced volunteer. I was also worried that I would not be able to find the right words to say to a person who was suffering extreme emotional pain. I eventually realized that sometimes it is okay to say nothing and just be there for the other person.

My biggest challenge stems from the fact that as we get to know and connect with the families, we experience loss ourselves when their loved one dies. As a way of dealing with this loss, the hospice offers debriefing sessions to enable staff and volunteers to manage their stress and grief in a safe setting. I found that another helpful activity was to read books on death and grief. My favourite ones are by Rachel Clarke, Kathryn Mannix and Harvey Max Chochinov.

I find that my weekly hospice engagement ranks among the most meaningful work I have done in my life. It is inspiring to work in this positive space with dedicated staff who place steadfast emphasis on patient care and patient dignity. I am awestruck by the dedication and devotion of the families of our residents. In one case, a family member arrived at the hospice every day before dawn and stayed until after dark to spend time with their spouse. What an undying expression of true love! Tough times can reveal the best of the human spirit.

If anyone is interested in hospice volunteering, you can visit the website www.hospicewaterloo.ca or fill out an application to help assess what position best matches your skills, interests, and availability: <https://www.hospicewaterloo.ca/support-hospice/volunteer>. If anyone has questions, you may contact Diana Cooke, Volunteer Coordinator at Hospice Waterloo Region at: dcooke@hospicewaterloo.ca. There is a real need for people with caring personalities.

March Pub Night

by Gerry Schaus

The Intrepid 16 came out to WLURA's Pub Night at Beertown in downtown Waterloo on March 22. It wasn't cold. It wasn't snowy. It wasn't wintry in any way. There was plenty of parking around Waterloo Town Square. There were no hockey games to draw people away. In fact, it was a very good start to Spring. The space they gave us at Beertown was perfect – close to the kitchen and bar, separated from the larger drinking spaces, just the right size for 20 to 25 people around tables, not too noisy. So, we

had a great time, chatting with fellow WLU retirees and spouses, catching up on winter activities and in general having fun. The only let-down was that there weren't more of us. Check out some of the Intrepid 16 with these photos. Cheers to all!



Ed Linder and Steve Izma



Jim Butler, with Ed Linder, Sheila McKee-Protopappas, and Daniel Licht



Joan Kilgour and Company

The Art of Lied – A Dream Takes Shape

by Daniel Licht

It is now more than 55 years since I heard my first recitals of Lieder (German Art Song) as a student in summer workshops at WLU. Hearing my predecessors, Victor Martens, tenor, and David Falk, baritone, in concert with pianist, Theodor Lindenbaum, who later became my teacher and mentor in Germany, instantly captured my imagination and inspired my own life-long quest to explore that world of artistic expression. My exposure to this art form dovetailed roughly with my experience of Shakespeare at The Stratford Festival and the legendary actors whose craft left life-long impressions and gave me models for the powerful delivery of text and emotion with minimal histrionics.

Ever since, I have found inspiration and artistic adventure with many collaborating partner pianists (all of whom brought out the best in me) in the exploration of the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, Mahler and others, whose settings of the poetry of Goethe, Müller, Heine, Uhland, Rellstab, etc. have provided an immense body of literature for our enrichment – as artists, and as listeners.

Knowing how fundamental the world of Lieder was to my own development as an artist, my belief in its importance for all aspiring singer/artists has turned into a passion for kindling the imaginations of young singers and pianists and has inspired me to create a setting where singers and pianists, in pairs as equals, could explore this literature under expert guidance.

After 10 years or so of having been invited to work with young singers at summer music academies in Europe, I decided, in my 50th year of professional life, to create a singer/pianist Lieder workshop here, at home, that would allow for an intensive period of immersion from both perspectives (that of the pianist as well as the singer) over a 9-day period that would combine active participation and observation, and culminate in at least two public concerts.

While the idea had been percolating in my imagination for some time, my relocation to downtown Kitchener residency helped me realize the potential that personal connections and proximity can have. I've been bowled over by the support given to me and my vision for the workshop by the ministerial and music leadership at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Just sharing my dream, timeline and outline of the workshop with Reverend Marty Molengraaf, Music Director Ann-Marie MacDairmid and Choir Director Gordon Burnett at a Fall 2023 meeting, quickly led to the solidification of many details and

an overall agreement that the workshop would happen at St. Andrew's. Furthermore, I was also encouraged to think of the Lieder workshop becoming an annual event!



Laetitia Bougnol, piano and Daniel Licht, bass-baritone, in recital at Hotel de Ville (City Hall) de Lyon, France

That gift of location and support from St. Andrew's inspired me to approach other downtown Kitchener churches to find additional rehearsal space for each pair of singer/pianists that would enroll as participants. I was delighted to find accommodation for that from St. Matthew's Lutheran, Historic St. Paul's and St. John the Evangelist, all within easy walking distance to St. Andrew's!

St. Andrew's provides an ideal setting for the workshop. The renovated Chapel and the Sanctuary provide space and pianos that allow for two separate master classes to happen at the same time. Over six days, in the course of the nine-day workshop, participants will perform each day in master classes, either with me in the Chapel, or with my colleague, Laetitia Bougnol, in the main Sanctuary. The master classes, both happening at the same time, will take place July 19–20 and 22–25 from 2–5 p.m. each day and are open to the public free of charge.

With a focus on Schubert's great song cycle "Winterreise" for part of the workshop, pianist Laetitia Bougnol and I will offer it in recital in the St. Andrew's Sanctuary at 7 p.m. on July 20. The recital will be preceded by an in-

troductory mini-lecture on "Winterreise" by my friend and esteemed colleague, Professor Emeritus, Leslie De'Ath.

For those who don't know, Leslie and I recorded this cycle on the Analekta label, and have performed it together, not only here in K-W, but also in Washington DC and Quebec City: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ6zf20t5eY>. The July 20 concert, as well as concerts by the participants on July 26 (a multi-singer/pianist Winterreise!) and July 27 (miscellaneous Lieder of Choice), also at 7 p.m., are open to the public, free of charge! Attendees will be invited to consider making donations to "The Douglas Haas Music Ministry Enhancement and Endowment Fund" at St. Andrew's.

And, now a few words about my colleague, pianist Laetitia Bougnol, Professor of Piano Accompaniment at the Conservatoire Régionale de Lyon, who will join me in July, fresh from teaching/performing responsibilities at l'Academie Internationale de Musique de Paris. Besides her teaching duties in Lyon, Laetitia is a sought-after collaborative pianist with orchestras and chamber musicians all over France.



Laetitia Bougnol, Professor of Piano Accompaniment at the Conservatoire de Lyon, France.

I first met Laetitia about 10 years ago at a summer music academy at the Conservatoire in Lyon, where I sang my first concert with her and became an instant admirer of her artistry. We have continued to work together almost annually (except for the two-year Covid break) and during a short residency at the Conservatoire while I was on sabbatical, we performed our first of three different concerts of Winterreise in Lyon. I also had the time and opportunity

to observe her work with students at the Conservatoire and recognized how inspiring and passionate she was for her students.

I have always been a promoter of international study experiences for serious music students, but also understand that for many North Americans, the cost of international travel is prohibitive to have that face-to-face contact with a teacher in a different cultural context who also represents a different culture of music-making. So, I decided to bring Laetitia here to K-W. It will be a pleasure for me to introduce her to this musical community and especially for the workshop participants to benefit from her teaching and passion for music-making. I predict that the impact of her teaching and performing will be transformative and inspiring!

I look forward to welcoming six singers and six pianists to The Art of Lied this July for what I hope will be an inspiring time of discovery and artistic development. I also look forward to welcoming audiences to the master classes and concerts throughout. You will witness the work and growth of twelve wonderful musicians and see and hear them present many masterpieces of song!

<https://theartoflied.com/>

Library Resources and Email

by Deborah Wills

Some of you may be wondering about uses for your new ret.wlu.ca email account. Here is how it is expected to work with Laurier Library's resources and services.

If you like borrowing print books or other materials from the library building, you will need the new email address to access your library account. You can then check your account information, renew items, and place holds. Within a day of migrating to your new email, at which point you will no longer have access to wlu.ca, you should have access to your library account through ret.wlu.ca.

To access the library's electronic resources, it is possible to sign in using your bar code and last name rather than your email. However, the library may be moving away from this form of access, so using your ret.wlu.ca email is recommended.

If you would like messages about your library account sent to a non-wlu email address, you may request this. For questions and requests, you can contact the library through this page: <https://library.wlu.ca/help/askus>. Let them know you are a retiree.

CURAC Affinity Agreements

by Frank Millerd

Please mention that you are a member of the Wilfrid Laurier University Retirees' Association when applying for coverage under any of the CURAC affinity programs. Some programs provide rebates to our Association.

Registered Teachers of Ontario Plans

Members of WLURA may join the Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO) and participate in RTO's group plans. You must be a member of RTO (fee is \$76.50 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 that are recommended as medically necessary but are not normally covered by a government health insurance plan.
- ◆ Includes, with some limitations, prescription drugs, vision care, eldercare guidance, paramedical practitioners, aids and appliances, accidental dental, and guidance on treatment options.
- ◆ Comprehensive travel medical 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 is 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 RTO plan without a medical questionnaire.

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

Travel Planning

- ◆ **Collette Travel:** Inquiries and bookings can be made at [1-855-394-8687](tel:1-855-394-8687) or through a travel agent. CURAC members save \$100 per person on all tours, all dates. Mention your CURAC membership when calling. Use code CURACSAVE for seasonal offers up to \$500 off per person. www.gocollette.com
- ◆ **Trip Merchant:** At the website www.curac.tripmerchant.ca/ enter the CURAC password: CURACTM18. Mention your CURAC membership when inquiring.
- ◆ **Travel Insurance:** Johnson Inc. offers two Travel Insurance plans to CURAC 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 an annual premium to cover an individual, a couple, or a fami-

ly. 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.

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

Belair Insurance offers auto and home insurance at advantageous rates to CURAC-affiliated retirees. Details at www.curac.ca. Click on "Member Benefits, Insurance, Home and Auto."

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 for information.

For further information on all affinity agreements go to the CURAC web site www.curac.ca and click on Member Benefits.

Editor's (pro tem) Note

by Gerry Schaus

If you can identify a split infinitive; if you are bothered by bad grammar; if you like "word smithing"; if you care about your fellow retirees enough to help them out, consider volunteering for the WLU Retirees' Association role as Editor of its semi-annual (sometimes tri-annual) Newsletter. I've really enjoyed putting out two editions now and its not that I can't find the time (it's not that onerous), it's just that we need fresh "legs", so to speak – somebody who thinks the Newsletter might be better, who doesn't mind writing an article from time to time, or who sees opportunity here for a pleasant little challenge. Contact me: gschaus@wlu.ca! I'm waiting to answer your queries.

Keep in Touch

If your email address has changed or is about to change, please inform Frank Millerd fmillerd@wlu.ca to continue to receive messages from the Retirees' Association.

In Memoriam

Please see our [website](#) for linking directly to the on-line obituaries. Or go to the funeral home website as indicated.

- ◆ Sheryl Loeffler, January 12, 2024
<https://obituaries.therecord.com/obituary/sheryl-elizabeth-kandel-loeffler-1089352688>
- ◆ Pat Rogers, January 21, 2024
<https://www.affordableburialsandcremations.ca/obituaries/pat-rogers>
- ◆ Marcell Martin (Roth), April 4, 2024
<https://erbgood.com/tribute/details/17012/Marcella-Martin-Roth/obituary.html>

WLURA Executive 2022–2024

President

James Butler • James.Butler@ret.wlu.ca
Cell: 613-878-0358

Past President

Gerry Schaus • 519-886-4428

Secretary

David Peirson

Treasurer

Ed Linder

Membership

William Salatka

Mailing List Co-ordinator

Rob Arnold

Pensions

Alastair Robertson

CURAC Representative

Frank Millerd

Social Convener

Doreen Koenig

Newsletter, Editorial

Gerry Schaus

Newsletter, Design

Steve Izma

Newsletter, Photography

Vacant

Members-at-Large

Joan Kilgour

Carl Langford

Sheila McKee-Protopapas

Connie Palenik

Newsletter content © 2024 Wilfrid Laurier University Retirees' Association. All rights reserved.