

# DCRA Newsletter

Durham College Retiree Association

## Mission Statement

The Durham College Retirees' Association is an organization whose function is to provide members with companionship, pertinent information, opportunities for service, and response to their concerns.

## Inside this issue:

President's and Executive Message	2
Oshawa Residents 65 and Over	2
Parking	2
Carolyne Willoughby and Craig Thomas	2
John and Maureen Green	2
New DCRA Web Site	2
Photo ID	2
Winter Texans—Donna Crawford	3
In Praise of the Flex Centre	4
David Chesterton	5
Keep Us Up-To-Date	5
Mr Decameron—Clive Lilwall	6
Survey Results	7
Upcoming Events	7
Contact Us	7
Dave Helmer's Travels 2008-2009	8
Dennis Campbell	8

## President's and Executive Message

Spring is here at last and I feel invigorated again. It has been a long winter with many things happening. I hope winter has been kind to all of you and that this message finds you in good health. Your executive has been busy with various tasks and is excited about the results of their endeavors. We were honoured to be asked to participate in the instillation of our new president, Don Lovisa. The Association expressed our congratulations and conveyed our gratitude for the continued support of the College for our Association. We also sent out the message of a willingness to assist the College in anyway that we could, as Durham prepares to meet the needs of a challenging future.

We are excited to welcome a possible 20 more retirees into our fold. The executive held a "Meet and Greet" social in April, for the new retirees, where we discussed the role and mandate of DCRA and invited them to become members. This was the first time the executive held this get-together and were pleased with the outcome. In addition, we circulated a survey to the membership asking for their thoughts and interests. The compilation will as-

sist us in our future planning to meet the needs and interests of our membership. We had excellent results and will discuss the outcome and our suggestions at the AGM in June. We will be looking for volunteers to assist us in the implementation of these events so I hope you can help us out.

It was decided by the executive that the Association would like to be perceived as "keeping up our end" by changing the AGM venue to Durham College. As we continue to grow in numbers, the cost is more in keeping with our budget. Besides we are all used to the BBQ at the college and it will feel more like "old home week". An appropriate room will be set aside for our AGM and the BBQ will follow so keep an eye out for the invitation as it will be sent soon to all members. A bus tour of the campus is planned after the BBQ.

Hope to see you at the AGM in June and in case you are unable to make it have a wonderful summer.

Dianne Aru  
Dianne.aru@sympatico.ca

## Condolences to Families & Friends of

Gordon England and his family on the loss of Gord's Mother at age 101.

Catherine Trolley

## 2008 Summary New Members

Several friends and colleagues will be joining us. You will see them at upcoming functions.



## Oshawa Residents 65 and Over

Free use of Oshawa's Recreation Facilities walking tracks, swimming pools and ice rinks.

Oshawa residents 65 and over can obtain a Senior Adult card at any Oshawa Recreation facility allowing use of these facilities. \$5.00 lifetime fees apply. Proof of residence is required. Does not apply to fitness rooms.

### Durham Region Activities

Looking for things to do in Durham Region, check out [www.durhamtourism.ca](http://www.durhamtourism.ca)

### Senior Citizen Discount Days

The following stores offer senior discount on the days listed.

Algoma Orchard	every Wednesday
Shoppers Drug	last Thursday in the month
The Bay	first Tuesday of the month
M & M	every Tuesday
Lovell drugs	every day
Sunoco Car wash	every Tuesday
Bulk Barn	every Wednesday

**Campus Corners** is located on the south-east corner of Simcoe Street North and Conlin Road. The **Human Resources** offices are located in that building. Enter the parking lot from either Conlin Road or Simcoe Street North.

### Jim Anderson

## Parking

Did you know that you can park on campus in one of the lots for free?

Yes you can.

Show the parking attendant your retiree photo ID card or tell the person you are a college retiree, and you'll be given access.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Bailey. Thank You.

## Craig Thomas and Carolyn Willoughby

Craig Thomas and Carolyn Willoughby were married on March 21, 2009.

## John and Maureen Green

John and Maureen Green are appearing in Whitby Courthouse Theatre's production of *The Curious Savage*. It opens April 23 and runs to May 9...a family comedy. The Peterborough Theatre Guild begins their season Aug 13 with a three-week run of my play *You Can't Dance to Mozart*. The play recently had a three-week sold out run at the Second Street Theatre in Grande Prairie, Alberta and another three week run at the Battlefords Community Theatre Festival in Saskatchewan. Once the Peterborough run closes, the play will go for publication. I have a new comedy in the works -- *Is There Anybody Out There?* -- due for completion early this summer.

## New OCRA Web Site

There appears to be some confusion about OCRA's new web address. The correct address is: <http://www.ocraretirees.ca/>

## Photo ID

The Campus ID office will be open for any retirees who want to have their ID card prepared. This card will give you access to free parking and the Fitness Centre.

More details will be provided in the upcoming announcement for the Annual General Meeting, and at the meeting on June 9, 2009.

Location: G1004 - across from the new triple gym in the CRWC

Campus Identification Services - (905) 721-3111 Ext 2116  
[photoid@dc-uoit.ca](mailto:photoid@dc-uoit.ca) <<mailto:photoid@dc-uoit.ca>>

Coordinator - Judy Kellar  
(905) 721-3111 Ext 2110  
[judy.kellar@dc-uoit.ca](mailto:judy.kellar@dc-uoit.ca) <<mailto:judy.kellar@dc-uoit.ca>>

## Winter Texans—Donna Crawford

In 2004 Gary and I spent about six weeks looking for a spot to spend our winters. We looked from Texas to Florida to South Carolina. We picked Harlingen, Texas. The people there are the friendliest. The weather from December to April is 75-85 degrees F, with a cool breeze blowing daily off the Gulf of Mexico. We are called Winter Texans, vs. Snowbirds in Florida. Our condo is located in the middle of Tony Butler Golf Course. My golfer husband, Gary, is ecstatic. It's in the middle of the town of Harlingen. The famous Colorado Arroyo runs through Harlingen, and borders our condo complex as well.

The Arroyo makes our four month visit south exciting -- waking to roosters crowing and, in the evening, listening to the coyotes howling. Many times it seems like we are in the middle of a desert instead of a Texas town with the mall 10 minutes away. I take pictures from our balcony of both the 10th fairway and green and of armadillos and bobcats that come up from the Arroyo. My pictures below are taken from our balcony.



Beige-Breasted Hummer



Green Jay



Armadillo



Bobcat

Birdfeeders in our backyard attract all sorts of different birds from chachalacas to whistling ducks. The sounds the chachalacas make is loud and clucking -- a sound you never forget. I feed them

the recommended sliced bananas and now they know me and call me out at dinnertime. This year I have a hummingbird feeder on the balcony with various hummingbirds feeding from it. How we love that!

Besides the rodeos and the nature reserves, the history of Texas is astounding. Hico, a mid-Texas town, celebrates Billy the Kid -- his place of retirement till he passed away. Other western and military heroes are everywhere, making history alive for the tourists. I found out many western TV programs and movies that I watched as a child were actually true not fiction. In Rio Grande City, the Banditos had a tunnel leading from a bordello (now a Bed & Breakfast) under the Rio Grande River back into Mexico allowing quick escapes from the Texas Rangers. You can still see the tunnel entranceway.



The Alamo

San Antonio, close by, has the Alamo (where Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie died) and the Riverwalk...a man-made canal that makes its way back and forth through a unique shopping and restaurant district. Twinkle lights in the evening make it a fairyland as the gondolas float up and down the canal -- dinner served in some -- gondoliers explaining the history as they float by various sculptures and buildings, etc.

South Padre Island is only 30 minutes south/east of Harlingen. It boasts the best beaches in the USA and for the whole month of March it is full of overflowing with American and Canadian teenagers celebrating Spring Break.

Continued over . . .

## Winter Texans continued



South Padre Island

Southwest of us (40 minutes) is Progreso, Mexico, where we go to buy silver, turquoise and various items for our family and friends. The Mexicans are friendly and very helpful. Despite what you hear in the newspaper, there have never, to my knowledge, been shootings or drug problems in Progreso. The Federales (Mexican police) are posted at the border but they too are friendly and always say 'Hola' (oh-la) (Hello) as you walk past. You can see the famous Mexican/American fence being constructed at various locations along the border right from the Roadway.

We have the best of both worlds --the historical Texas and the modern beaches (to say nothing of the golf my Gary loves--\$15/18holes. I could go on forever. Every year here we visit new places and learn more and more about our Winter Haven in Texas.

Next year we leave in November and will spend 5-6 months in Harlingen. We miss our family and Canadian friends. (But we don't miss that white stuff -- **SNOW**.) See you soon. We are back in Canada end of April.

**Donna Crawford**

## In Praise of the Flex Centre

We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful fitness (Flex Centre) centre at the college. It provides a great work out environment for everyone. Working out is not my favourite past time but I keep going back as there is just something about it that makes me feel good about myself. I am convinced that the time spent there helped my early recovery from recent major abdominal surgery. You never know what's around that corner, and because good health is key to a good retirement I guess I will continue to sweat it out at the gym. Working out with the college varsity students isn't bad on the eyes, either.

The new flex centre is very inviting and quite different from the old fitness centre. With windows all around, you can look out onto the various new residences, a green belt and UOIT. The equipment is great and there is never a wait to use your favourite machine. I slap on my earphones, turn on my favourite TV program and time just flies. Yes, TV on all the treadmills. Students from the various sports programs are there to give you friendly advice and show you the equipment. Just book an orientation time with the desk. The change area is for employees and retirees only. The privacy is a god send and I really enjoy the sauna after a workout.

The price is right -- free! Your spouse can join for a very reasonable rate. Parking at the rear of the health and fitness centre is free, but make sure you have your retiree's card with you. The desk will then issue you an access card to the change area and flex centre. You renew this card each year. Invest in some good, comfortable workout equipment and get down there and boogie. Even a couple of times a week will make you feel good and improve your health. Enjoy it as a time just for yourself.

If you like, we can consider a weekly get-together at the centre. Choose one day (I like the mornings) and everyone try to make it on that day. We can be very flexible and come out only when our busy schedules allow. Afterwards, we could go for a healthy herbal tea or not so healthy Timmy's. If you are interested let me know and we will pick a day. If the weather permits we can take a walk as an alternative plan. You can reach me at [dianne.aru@sympatico.ca](mailto:dianne.aru@sympatico.ca)

Wishing you good health and happiness.  
Dianne Aru

## David Chesterton

My biography of Dr. Earle Kirby, Veterinarian and Archeologist for St. Vincent, has taken a step closer to final publication and distribution.

Two years ago, when I was on the island re-searching 'Doc's' school years with a few of his former classmates, Clare Keizer (editor of one of the island's weekly newspapers) told me, "We Vincentians are not very active in helping with a work that is in process, but show us a finished book and we'll be only too happy to point out the mistakes."

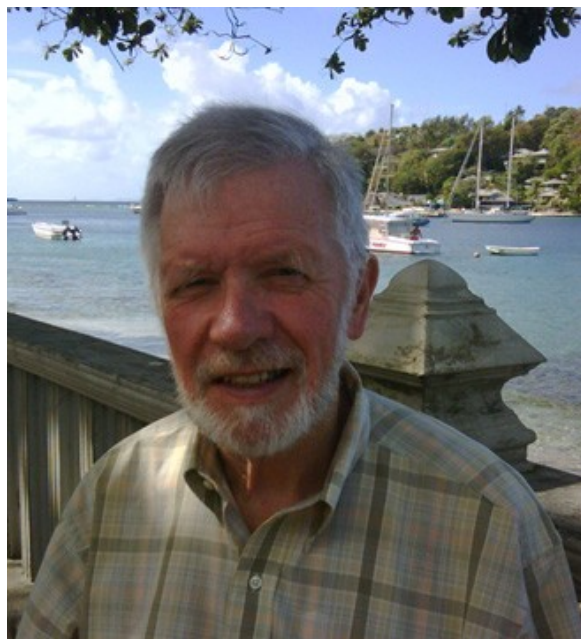
When the manuscript was finished, I got a local self-publisher to run off a small number of the books and flew down to the islands (what could be better in March?) where I handed the books out to various friends and acquaintances down there. Clare was absolutely right. I arrived home two weeks later with all the mistakes identified, with answers to questions I'd been asking via e-mail for about five years and a few new anecdotes to add to the book. While there seemed a lot of errors, they were simple ones - I achieved a reasonable accuracy in the majority of my facts and anecdotes. I also met with the two largest bookstores on the islands of St. Vincent and Bequia and have orders from both of them.

I'm now transcribing the revisions to the PDF file for the printer, getting Doc's relatives here in Canada to make a final check, and should have the first run of books by the end of May. The title for the book came from Earle when I first told him I was going to write his biography. He said, "That means you'll have two problems. First of all you come from one of the largest nations in the world and I've spent most of my years on this tiny island -- 18 miles by 11 miles. Secondly I'm black and you're white. Can you write a story that recognizes my islanders' view of the world and my view of the world through pigmented spectacles?" Earle died in 2005, but I think he would appreciate the way my book reflects the fact that I like the way Vincentians see the world and their wonderful laid-back 'island time.' The book's title is 'Pigmented Spectacles.'

The next book will be a fantasy, written for my eldest grand- daughter about seven years ago. But that work has a problem. Despite the

fact that I cut over 75,000 words from the manuscript, it's still 1,254 pages long. So it now has to be re-written as a trilogy. I'm happy with the final ending of the work, but have to create plausible endings to the first two books. Should keep me real busy for at least the rest of this year.

For those of my former colleagues who wonder what has happened to my drawing and painting, there is a connection. I like to create interesting traits that provide each character with a specific appearance and personality. It's much easier to do that if I paint a portrait of each character and, in the process, get inside the mind of that individual.



### KEEP US UP-TO-DATE

We want to maintain accurate records on your e-mail address and location.

Please let us know if you have a new e-mail or if you have moved.

You can contact Kelly Bailey with any information. Thank you.

## Mr. Decameron—Clive Lilwall

"Colombia! That's a dangerous country! It's a narco-state! It has the highest murder rate in the world! Why should we want to go there?"

My wife patiently explained the situation. "Well, it's very cheap, and that's important because there will be seven of us. The resort is all-inclusive all you can eat and drink. There's lots of diving to keep me happy and the total fare with taxes, airfare and everything, is only about \$1,000 each. You can't beat that!"

I wasn't convinced. "But it's where foreigners get kidnapped all the time! How much would you pay the kidnappers to send me home?"

"I'm not sure. But they only kidnap rich people, and we aren't rich."

"How would they know that? It would be a pity if I got kidnapped because someone couldn't tell the difference between a real and a fake Rolex. And I'm going to be very careful about my luggage. I don't want to be one of those unwitting drug mules."

I may have been wrong. One set of statistics ranked Colombia as having the highest murder rate in the world. But in another set of statistics Swaziland's homicide rate was listed as even higher than that of Colombia's 83 per 100,000 people. That's compared to about 2 per 100,000 for Canada. Throwing caution to the winds, I decided to live dangerously, at least for a week, in the all inclusive resort of the Decameron Aquarium, on the island of San Andres in the Caribbean.

San Andres belongs to Colombia, but it's hundreds of miles away from the big bad mainland area of Colombia, where all the criminals live. The island once belonged to England, and was the headquarters of a man from Bristol, the famous Captain Henry Morgan, pirate chief and rum drinker. Later the island was handed over to Spain, before being given to the Colombians. Now it is a fun-in-the-sun holiday resort where drug smugglers and kidnappers are not invited.

We arrived at the Decameron Aquarium Hotel in the middle of the afternoon. It was like something from the start of an Al Gore nightmare. The resort was deceptively beautiful. The hotel rooms, located in fourteen circular torres, or towers, had been built on foundations sunk into the ocean bed. Tropical fish swam in the shallow waters, the water lapping up against the sand. Happy holidaymakers sauntered along the

wooden walkways between the picturesque buildings.



**Decameron Aquarium Hotel**

The architects had obviously not seen *An Inconvenient Truth*. If Al were really telling the truth, within a while the waves, already up against the foundations, would rise and cover the first floor. And yes, we were on the first floor. We looked out of our window and it seemed like we were already at sea. Time for food and few drinks to stop the anxiety.

10 PM. Party time down by the pool. In the holiday spirit no mention was made of murder rates, drug issues or even global warming. Party Time could only mean one thing – the crowning of Mr. Decameron himself.

Some potential Mr Decamérons offered themselves up willingly. Others were persuaded to volunteer. The end result was six males up on the stage. And to the country's credit, half were Canadian. It was enough to make any Canadian's chest swell with pride. And as we were about to discover, Canadians perform well when it comes down to what the audience loves – activities with a touch, or more, of sexual innuendo.

Now it must not be thought that these activities are sleazy. They are part of any Caribbean hotel package, from the Bahamas to Mexico to Jamaica. They are as all-inclusive as the food and drinks. They are watched by the hotel guests, young and old. Even the most prudish cannot help but smile occasionally, while revelers high on rum and coke laugh like crazy comedians.

The first activity was the ping-pong ball maneuver. The Mr Decameron wannabee stands still while his female partner moves a ping-pong ball up his left trouser leg, and down his right trouser leg. If you've never done this, don't bother. But it can be fun watching others.

Another requirement, the singing of a romantic ballad, was less fun to watch. Listening to bad singers is a humbling reminder of one's own lack of talent.

## Mr. Decameron continued

The highlight, when Canadians really excelled, was the bursting of the balloons. While Colombians may have the edge over Canadians in soccer, Canadians shine at couples balloon bursting. In the first position, the woman lies on the stage, while the man places a balloon on top of her, and then lies on top of the balloon. You get the idea. With sufficient pressure, the balloon bursts. As in any competition, it is the speed of the activity that is important. As can be imagined, there are various other positions in which the balloons are burst. Of course, couples with weight issues tended to have the edge in this activity. Age doesn't seem to be a factor. Jules from Montreal, about 30 years old, was no match for a younger but bulkier Colombian, whose name I can't remember, who burst the balloons with such force that he nearly ricocheted into the pool.

The games ended with the crowning of Mr Decameron himself – a grey haired senior citizen from Ontario, and former civil servant who worked with the Attorney General. I can't remember his name, either, and he would probably wish it that way. A great cheer erupted from the Canadians present. Once again, Canada had excelled on the international scene. The Colombians, on their home ground, were defeated. The Americans were literally nowhere. The US government has issued a travel advisory, recommending that Americans not visit Colombia. A pity, considering the opportunities for international camaraderie.

San Andres is a tropical paradise for divers, snorkellers and those wishing to visit an island where people smile. At least at our hotel, the drugs of choice were alcohol and coffee, the kidnapping rate was zero, and the only violence was American shows on TV. And although the sea level may have risen slightly, we flew back to Canada just in time for a great big snowstorm. On the global warming issue, that's great news.



**Johnny Cay's stingray**



**Johnny Cay,  
San Andres**

## Survey Results

The Durham College Retiree Executive want to thank all members who participated in the recent survey conducted. Your input and suggestions have been invaluable to our planning.

We've received an excellent response from our retirees. Fifty nine retirees responded, giving us a well rounded view of hindrances to participation and those events you most value. In addition, many new ideas have been suggested. Thank you.

We are analyzing the results and will be discussing plans at the next executive meeting the end of May.

The results and suggestions will be presented to you at the Annual General Meeting on June 9, 2009 at Durham College.

It is not too late to make more suggestions. If you have more ideas, please email or call any member of the executive.

Again, thank you for taking time to answer the survey.

## Upcoming Events

**Announcements will be made  
after the Annual General Meeting  
on June 9, 2009.**

## Contact Us

**Please feel free to contact the  
Retiree Executive with any  
questions or concerns.**

## David Helmer's Travels 2008 - 2009

Once more this winter I traveled extensively. I spent January in the Philippines, in Cebu and Cagayan de Oro, working with two companies. One rebuilds engines, cars, trucks, marine and small aero engines, the other makes rice processing equipment, particularly dryers and polishers for changing brown to white rice. Once again it was a challenge working with some of the older technology. I flew to Manila and was at the Rolex Awards presentation for my friend Alexis (<http://rolexawards.com/en/index.jsp>) who received an award for developing a cooking stove which operates on rice husks which normally are burnt by the side of the field or road. We discussed my next input, which is to help in the mass production of these stoves in four countries in South East Asia, plus develop interest and manufacturing in China. We also discussed the next step, which is to run a generator set off the gases produced from the rice husks -- typically up to half a megawatt. During my stay in the dry season we had 400mm of rain in two weeks, the river rose five metres and the airport was closed for a week! There was extensive flooding and a lot of damage both to property and to the crops.

Three weeks after my return, I went on a cruise in the Caribbean for two weeks with my family and my future wife, who had the opportunity of meeting everybody. We are getting married in June! It went very well, was very enjoyable and the weather was great.

Finally in early April I went to Moscow for CESO to work for a fabrication company for two weeks, and was able to see my family in England on the return. Since then I have been busy trying to sell my house and get organised for trips to Europe in June and China/Philippines in October/November. Retirement is keeping me busy helping many of my friends, particularly in South East Asia.

My new address after June will be 284 Richmond St, Oshawa L1G 1E7

Email [djdhelmer@gmail.com](mailto:djdhelmer@gmail.com)

Phone 905-725-2242

## Dennis Campbell

Shirley and I recently completed a cruise to South America. We flew to Buenos Aires, Argentina, had an overnight stay and toured the city, including the tango nightclub scene. Then we boarded the Norwegian Sun for a two-week cruise around Cape Horn. The cruise terminated at Valparaiso, Chile and we flew home from Santiago. In route, we visited Montevideo, Uruguay, where I learned more about the sinking of the battleship Graf Spee in the Second World War. Our first stop heading south was the city of Puerto Madryn, first settled by Welsh people. There is still a very Welsh community in the area, and some of the ship's tour buses stopped for crumpets and tea and singing by a Welsh choir. Shirley and I visited a penguin rookery called Punta Tombe, where we wandered among literally thousands of penguins.

Our next stop was the Falkland Islands and its capital, Port Stanley. After an absolutely wild jeep ride over boulders and wild terrain, we stopped at another smaller penguin rookery and then had time left to walk around Stanley, a very English town. Cruising southwest from there, we were fortunate enough to round Cape Horn in relatively calm seas (fifteen foot swells and high wind) and then headed into the Beagle Channel, named after the Charles Darwin's ship when he travelled this region.) We visited Ushuaia, the southern-most city on the planet, and the Tierra del Fuego National Park. From this point we headed north, cruising various inland waterways in Chile. We were surrounded by the Andes Mountains, which gave us many spectacular glacier views. Eventually we travelled the Pacific Ocean, visiting a few other ports and arrived at Valparaiso and Santiago.

Our health has been relatively good and we have been very busy. I have been doing lots of woodcarving and winning the odd ribbons for my efforts. Shirley has been singing, and teaching art at two local seniors' centres. In June we head for Branson, where I will join about 150 carvers in a week-long carving course and Shirley will teach art to some of the spouses.