

perspectives



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Features

You Look Really Great! - Life After McMaster

By Marlene Monster

"You look really great!" As a retiree I hear these words often from former co-workers. In fact, I am now 3 years into retirement and that means 3 years older. So why might I look better? It could be retirement.

The pay is good, and deduction free, except for Income Tax. McMaster's pension arrives from CIBC Mellon on the 1st of the month. If you are 65 your OAS (Old Age Security) pension is 502.31. The Federal Government sends this money, along with your CPP (Canada Pension Plan), on the 3rd last business day of the month.



Not surprisingly, Rexall gives a 20% discount to seniors on the last Tuesday, while the last Thursday is the Shoppers Drug Store 20% day. As a senior you can do well by discounts!

Upon your retirement from McMaster, you become a member of MURA (McMaster University Retirees Association) alongside some 1800 fellow retirees, both staff and faculty. Established in 1983, MURA is an active group organizing day trips, cruises, luncheons and more. The Christmas Lunch 2007 was held at East Side Marios in Dundas. It was so popular that MURA has booked the entire restaurant for the 2008 event. The Spring Annual General Meeting is held in Convocation Hall. During the catered lunch, Mac retirees exchange news. The noise level is high and everyone "looks great". But if there is one topic more popular than others, it is health. McMaster has a "Cadillac" plan of medical/dental benefits, compared to other universities in Canada. As a retiree and a senior, it is reassuring to know that we can still submit health claims to Sun Life!

When someone is debating retirement from Mac, I say go for it while you are still healthy. You have your "pay"; you have great benefits. There is an old

MURA

Newsletters and e-mail updates from MURA (www.macra.ca) keep you informed about activities or breaking news relevant to retirees.

There are additional perks too:

- Alumni Trips
- Athletics & Recreation discounts – including Sports Medicine & Rehabilitation Services
- CAW Local 555 event discounts
- Computer Anti-virus/AntiSypware Software
- E-mail account (UTS)
- McMaster Employee ID card
- Library privileges
- Mac Connect Wireless
- McMaster Employee Spirit Society (MESS)
- Parking
- Tuition/Bursary Assistance
- University Club

Summer on a Budget

Do a Little for Yourself and a Little for the Earth

By Rebecca Clifford

With the price of gas there'll be less travelling this summer. To keep the kids entertained and keep your sanity intact through the steamy summer months to come, I've got a few suggestions so you can pass on the petrol and contribute to a greener society...

1. Walk. Yes, walk. The Bruce Trail cuts right through our area and there are more than enough conservation areas that hook right into it. This is a good opportunity to introduce the kids to the flora and fauna. If you don't remember the last time you walked anywhere, at least remember to wear supportive footwear and start out easy. Take the time to smell the roses or whatever happens to be blooming. Check out a new neighbourhood and see what everyone else's place looks like. This is supposed to be fun, right?



Take an OZ Day. There are many economical and gas-wise activities within easy reach of Hamilton.

2. Cycle. Apart from being one of the best things you can do for your heart and legs, this is an activity in which the whole family can participate. The annual commuter challenge that took place in early June was a great excuse for you and yours to get into a new physical pattern for the summer. Hamilton has bike lanes on all the major roads. Please make sure your bike is roadworthy and that you obey the traffic laws. On the road, a bike is a vehicle.

3. Have a block party or BBQ. Pot luck it with the whole neighbourhood. Take turns supervising the kids by using one family's yard as a daycare. Eat in shifts and sit with someone you don't usually see. You'd be surprised what you might learn just by sharing a meal. If you lack green space, take the crew to the local park and run a good ol' three legged race.

4. Gardening. There's not much that's more cathartic than getting your hands into the cool soil and starting little plants growing. The kids will get a kick out of growing their own veggies or runner beans (remember the seed in the styrofoam cup?) And there's no need to set aside a separate plot for these things - herbs and myriad varieties of lettuce are just as happy nestled among your nasturtiums. They fill a spot, keep back the weeds, provide greenery, and are edible too. How satisfying it is to build a salad from your own garden? If you're a flower person, try to stick with species that are native to the area. They accustomed to the climate, require less watering and weeding. If you don't have a garden of your own, do a friend a favour. Turn a casual visit into a "garden party" and help her out with her flower beds. Bring a 4-pack of colourful wave petunias that tolerate the heat and bloom all summer long. Every day she sees them, she'll be reminded of you. If you've lost a loved one in the past year, this is the perfect time to plant a tree or dedicate a rock garden in his or her name.

5. Find a new friend. Have you been too busy to meet that new neighbour who moved in across the way in March? It's never too late to welcome someone to the area. Drop into the seniors' home and strike up a conversation with someone who looks like they could use an ear. Our seniors are living history and there is much to be learned from them.

6. Volunteer. Food banks, recreation centres, community gardens and blood banks all need help in the summer months. Even if you don't formally volunteer, take an empty grocery bag to your kid's soccer game and pick up any nearby litter you see. You'll make your world a better place and you'll feel good to. <http://www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca/>

7. Go marketing. Shop for local fruits and veg. You'll support the local agricultural community and get the best tasting stuff. Pick enough strawberries or peas and freeze them now for the winter to come. Although it is nice to have fruits fresh in December, think of all the resources that are expended to bring it from Costa Rica or Mexico when we're knee deep in snow. Buying local produce keeps our farmers in business. And reusing your bags or cloth totes means there's less for the landfill.

These suggestions are cheap and easy. By leaving the car behind you get to see things you miss when you whiz by in a car. Enjoy the scents and colours of your neighbourhood gardens as you go on your way. Did you know that there are over forty waterfalls in the Hamilton area alone? And, there's always the world famous Royal Botanical Gardens which, like all local attractions, needs our support now more than ever. Many of the villages within the city have festivals and open houses through the summer months - check out Hess Village, James Street North (for the burgeoning art scene), Concession Street on the mountain, and the surrounding towns of Dundas, Ancaster, Stoney Creek... I could go on.

For days when the weather is inclement, here are a few ideas...

8. Stretch your legs and your mind. We have a host of museums from Dundurn Castle to the Marine Centre at Pier 4. A number of these places have summer programs for a wide range of interests. Visit the [City of Hamilton Museums Web Site](#).

9. Read and/or Learn. There's heaps of mind candy available from thrillers to Sci-fi to bodice rippers (ooh, Fabio), but if it's not a classic or something you'll read time and again, don't buy yet - try your library first. It's eco-friendly and supports a local community service. Start with the new Popular Reading Collection available at Mills Library: <http://library.mcmaster.ca/catalog/coll/popularreading.htm>.

10. Dance in the rain. Yes, you heard me. Get the kids into their swimsuits and let them go wild. It's Mother Nature's slip n' slide. Keep a stash of old towels by the back door and a box of baby wipes to handle their dirty toes once they've had enough.

If you simply must get out of the city...



11. Take an OZ day. Day tripping is a mini vacation. My folks would hear about some little hamlet, country market, antique fair or small town festival and run away for the day. When we asked where they were going, the answer was "Off to see the Wizard!" hence, an OZ day. Port Dover, Elora, Stratford, St. Jacob's, Niagara-on-the-Lake are all within easy reach. Why not invite a neighbour or friend who doesn't drive and make a real outing of it? By taking the back roads instead of the highways, you keep your speed under 90k (more economical gas-wise) and can enjoy the sights - purple flocks and orange daylilies in country ditches, the architecture of old homesteads, the unexpected delights of these days are coming across an old fashioned ice cream parlour or catching a noon hour concert in a park. Little ones are often entranced by a roadside stop to check out the cows in Farmer Brown's meadow. Yeah, they ARE bigger than on TV.

Editorial

So This is Summer

It's summer time. Well, at least I think it is. One day I wake up and the morning news informs me the weather today will be a high of 30 °C with a humidex of 36 °C. The next day I leave the house with a jacket because it's only 12 °C outside. Then there are the days where we get a taste of two or three seasons all in one day. The temperature makes a drastic jump of 15 degrees or more between the morning and the afternoon. I feel like some sort of idiot on those days leaving work carrying my jacket. I'm sure the students in shorts and T-shirts and looking at me wondering, "Why is she carrying a jacket? It's way to hot for that today." I really shouldn't complain about the weather. It's something I can't control and it's much better than that four letter 'S' word. Snow!

Whether you are retired, on vacation, working hard or hardly working we are waking up from our winter slumber and spending more time outside. However, we're not going very far. Who can with the price of gas these days? So what do you do? Rebecca Clifford solves our problems with her piece, "[Summer on a budget](#)"

If you're thinking about that permanent vacation, also known as retirement, Marlene Monster's article, "[You look really great! - Life after McMaster](#)", is something you might be interested in. I have to wait about 20 years to retire so I can "look really great" too.

From all of us at Perspectives, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer, (see [Summer Safety Tips](#) by Rebecca Clifford) and we'll greet you with our new issue in the fall.

Thanks for reading.

Fun Stuff

Contest: How do you Handle Stress in 50 Words or Less!

Some of our readers may remember that we posted this contest in our last issue. Our editorial board has come to the conclusion that everyone was too stressed and busy in the winter months to send in a submission! We have decided to run it again, not only because we are offering some [fantastic prizes](#), but also because we see this as an opportunity for you to share with your colleagues what "gets you through" the rough patches, and maybe help someone out with how they deal with stress...

It is evident. Stress is everywhere. No longer restricted to the workplace, the term "stress" is widespread and often the focus of workshops, top selling literature and water cooler discussions. We live in a world where it has become commonplace to openly discuss issues and communicate our problems, instead of bottling them up and putting on a brave face. There is no longer a stigma associated with people who suffer from stress, because everyone has to deal with it, in one way or another.

There are positive approaches to handling stress in your life. Some stress is good – it can motivate you to get things done, or allow you to tackle more than you would have thought possible. There has to be a release, however. Whether that be physical – through exercise, yoga, or standing at the end of your driveway and screaming your head off (some people prefer to do this at the cottage in the middle of the lake), mental – such as meditation, constructive visits with therapists, exercising your brain with puzzles like crosswords or Sudoku, or distancing yourself – travel is a big plus, as it can allow you time away to think objectively about your issues and develop a POA (plan of attack).

Whatever your methods, we want to hear about them! And we would like to reward you for sharing with us. **Remember to keep your entry to between 25 and 50 words.** Send your submissions to: bakerk3@mcmaster.ca by Thursday, July 17th. Note: You must provide contact information in order to be eligible for the prizes, for obvious reasons. However, if you would like the submission to be printed anonymously, please indicate this on your submission.

The following GRAND prizes will be awarded to the first 3 submissions received that are between 25 and 50 words:

- Pure NV Salon & Spa Pampered Gift Package: includes Customized Herbal Body Mask; Aveda Tourmaline Facial; Aroma Manicure & Pedicure; Shampoo & Dry; Makeup Touchup; Lunch.
- 4-month Facility Access membership to Athletics & Recreation, plus bonus 4-month membership to Pulse Fitness. Facility Access includes: access to open gym time, indoor track, squash courts, pool, outdoor track, saunas, member's rates for instructional programmes and use of day lockers. Pulse Fitness membership includes access to group Fitness classes, free weights, circuit, selectorized weight machines, cardio equipment, treadmill and spinning classes.
- A night out on us! \$100 Gift Certificate to SIR Corp Restaurants (including the following: Jack Astor's, Alice Fazooli's, Canyon Creek, Loose Moose, Four, Reds, Far Niente, Petit Four) + 2 General Admission tickets to Famous Players Theatres including concessions, to see a movie of your choice.

Thank you for your participation!

Original Literature & Poetry

Where the Lilies Grow

For my mother who told me the story of Euphemia and the daylilies

Today the sun is shining;
Clouds scud along the breeze.
A mourning dove is pining.
What are wonders more than these?

My heart is light as ether.
With wings my soul is lifted,
And as I hear each creature's voice
My spirit is uplifted.

The zimzim of the wasps and bees in happy disarray
Are tossed by the wind, while the lilies blow,
And I find peace today.

I take a draught of sweet, cool air
And step the hedgerow over.
A red tail hawk swoops down and stares,
Suspended o'er the clover.

The whisper of my legs and feet
Through grey-green grain is measured
By darting swallows, swift and fleet,
Whose company I treasure.

The troubles of my civil life disperse and fly away.
And near the fields where the lilies bloom,
Here find I peace today.

The sky's a shade of azure
More blue than eyes can bear.
The rustling leaves hush my thoughts
Of stress and strain and care.

Velvet cattails nod to me
And heed the bullfrogs' bass.
Nowhere on earth would I rather be.
No other time or place

Would settle my disquiet and take concern away,
And here by the pond where the lilies grow
Do I find peace today.

Tall petticoated hollyhocks
And whitest feverfew
Nudge aside the purple chives
To take the morning dew.

Catkins droop from willow trees;
A gentle shower commences
That washes down the trunks and leaves,
Footpaths, and broken fences.

The landscape now is cleanly rinsed and proudly on
display;
And soaked by the rain are the lily beds
And I find peace today.

Employee Health & Wellness

Summer Safety Reminders

1. Sun block - It's no good to you if it's sitting in the bathroom cabinet. You need to use it, and reapply it. Make it a habit like brushing your teeth. Just make sure the paste goes on the brush and the sun block goes on your skin. Tender parts most often missed in the application process are ears, back of the arms, and tops of the feet.

2. Bug Goo - West Nile is no joke. The effects of this disease are at the least frustrating and at the most life-threatening. Do yourself a favour and apply this to any exposed skin. Nothing ruins a nice summer like a stay in the hospital.



3. Wear your life jacket - I know it's not comfortable to kneel in the canoe and that most life jackets become seat cushions but it really is important to wear 'em, folks. Even if you're an excellent swimmer, you can't swim to safety if you've been bonked on the noggin and are face down unconscious in the water. If this is your situation, let me tell you - your mother was wrong; it's NOT critical that you're wearing clean underwear.

4. Know your route / Let people know where you're going - If you're hiking for the day, let someone know where you intend to go and when you expect to be back. It's better if the EMTs find your bug bitten body before you die of exposure.

5. Pool - There should be someone in charge, an adult to supervise kids, and a minimum of horseplay. Don't dive in the shallow end. Use the facilities before you swim and wash your hands before you enter the pool. If you are a guest at someone's pool, behave like a member of the human race. In this case, your mother could be right - maybe you were born in a barn.

6. Boating - Things have changed in the boating world. To keep your self up to speed on the rules and regulations check out this site: <http://freecourse.ca/fines.html>

7. Sporting injuries - The most sports injuries that are seen in emergency departments happen on the first good weather weekends of the season. The primary reasons are slips, falls, strains or sprains. Yup, these people didn't stretch, forgot to get new laces for their shoes (forgot they aren't 14 anymore!) and whump! - down you go and off you limp in search of your summer crutches. I know you're anxious to get out there and prove you've still got what it takes, but if you've been off the tennis court for months, it makes sense to warm up first, and take it easy!



Have a safe summer. Make sure there is an adult to supervise kids in and around pools.

8. On the road again - Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy; be a considerate driver. Please check out your route before you get on the highway. Nothing freaks me out more than someone who's on the cell phone, with a road map spread across the steering wheel, and in the process of merging into my back quarter panel at the same time. No tailgating, no biting, scratching or eye gouging. Play nice.

Have a safe summer. See you in the fall.

Discover Ontario

Summer Fun: Ontario Travel Guide

If you decide to take the advice of our editors and stick close to home this summer, these links to Ontario travel web sites are sure to be useful. Enjoy the summer! Ontario Tourism: <http://www.ontariotravel.net/>

A Short Drive...

Hamilton: <http://www.tourismhamilton.com/servlet/pagedetail/id/40>

Niagara: <http://www.infoniagara.com/>

Toronto: <http://www.torontotourism.com/visitor/HomePage.htm>

London: <http://www.londontourism.ca/main.aspx>

Stratford: <http://www.welcometostratford.com/>

The Pinery: <http://www.ontarioparks.com/ENGLISH/pine.html>

A Little Further...

Muskoka: <http://www.discovermuskoka.ca/>

Algonquin Park: <http://www.algonquinpark.on.ca/>

Tobermory: <http://www.tobermory.org/>

Collingwood: http://www.collingwood.ca/visiting_tourism.cfm

ONTARIO PARKS: <http://www.ontarioparks.com/ENGLISH/>

Worth the Trip!

Kingston: <http://www.kingstoncanada.com/>

Ottawa: <http://www.ottawatourism.ca/>

1000 Islands: <http://www.visit1000islands.com/>

Manitoulin Island: <http://www.manitoulintourism.com/>

Timmins: <http://www.timmins.worldweb.com/>

Sudbury: <http://www.mysudbury.ca/tourism/>