

# ComMUNACAtions

**MUNACA'S NEWSLETTER** 

Special Issue Dec.18, 2020

### INTRODUCTION

Dear members,

So much has happened in this past year, with the inclusion of the new Ms, negotiations and the pandemic, that we have barely had time to catch our breath before launching this Special holiday edition.

We thank all the members who sent in their experiences of 2020 via stories and photos. We received so many wonderful submissions. We wish you health and happiness over the break and here's looking to 2021!

# Results from the certification request

During the unionization campaign that started back in Aug. 2018, hundreds of our M colleagues signed membership cards and paid \$2 in membership dues to PSAC.

As a result, some of the Ms were added to our bargaining unit in Aug. 2019, their inclusion in our Collective Agreement is currently being negotiated as is our own. Due to the inclusion of the Ms. the negotiations are considered first negotiations.

#### What's Inside?

Certification applications

**Negotiation update** 

Winners of the Raffle

Stories and photos of 2020



# Negotiation update











Our last negotiations session with the Employer, before the holiday break, took place Dec.14th.

We had some discussions and made some minor changes on Article 9 - Union Activities, Article 17 - Temporary Lay Off, and Article - 20 Hours of Work. Our primary discussions were centered around Article 10 - Grievance and Disagreement Procedure. There was some satisfactory movement on the part of the employer. However, as we said in our last bulletin, this article is a very important article in our collective agreement as it provides the crucial mechanism to defend our members rights.

As a result of the discussions, we feel that there is still a long way to go before we will reach an agreement. This is why we will set these discussions aside and move on to other articles when we meet again in the new year.

The Executive Committee and the Union Council would like to invite you to stop by a virtual 5 a 7 on Monday December 21st, so that we can wish you a happy and safe holiday and to share some cheer.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81709665270

Be safe and well.

Enjoy your weekend!

In solidarity,

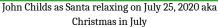
Your MUNACA Negotiations Committee.

- Mathieu Brulé, PSAC Representative
- Thomas Chalmers, President (on leave from the Faculty of Law)
- Nancy Crowe, VPLR (on leave from the Libraries)
- Simon Deverson, Chair Solidarity Committee IT Support Technician, Faculty of Medicine
- Patrick Ritchie, VP M Affairs Student Advising Consultant, Desautels Faculty of Management
- Richard Rossi, Chief Steward Electronic Supervisor, Department of Chemistry

### **WINNERS OF THE HOLIDAY RAFFLE**













This is my desk during the pandemic! It is in my kitchen because this is the room that gives me the most light, and I cannot work without light. The only problem is that I am very close to the fridge and food!!

Well, it has been quite a ride working from home since March. With the occasional days in the office on a rotating shift. There are pros and cons to working from home. We realize how much time we spend, getting up, getting ready to go to work, making lunches and then the travel time. That is all extra time we now have to ourselves which is a positive thing. The downside though is that I live alone and have no real communication other than zoom meetings. As my mother has advanced Alzheimer's and is in a CHLSD, (I visit her every weekend) my friends avoid me like the plague...hmm I guess we will have a new expression in the future avoid me like corona he he he.

I guess we just have to make the best of it! I am looking forward to going back to work and seeing all the students and my amazing colleagues at Kinesiology and Physical Education.

Regards, Josee Di Sano









Je n ai pas cessez de travailler pendant la pandemie...alors une montagne fermee amene son lots d'histoires...les chiens se promenent avec leur maitres... les jeunes viennent se baigner dans le lac,... les vtt se sont meme essayer dans quelque sentiers.. meme qu'il y a eu des gens qui se promenaient avec une de nos chaloupe.....et que dire des velos qui ont pris d'assaut la montagne.... c'est le free for all..... tout ce qui est interdit ne l'ai plus..... les gens se trouvent des endroits de partout pour entree sur la montagne et ensuite... des l'ouverture il ni a pas de toilette ...la montagne devient de plus en plus une toilette a ciel ouvert......au moins maintenant tout est revenu a la normale ou presque avec tout cet engrais humain ...on verra bien quel plante en aura beneficie

Un peu d humour sur la montagne Sonya Tetreault



The one silver lining is that I have been blessed with another grand-child right when the 1st wave was peaking in April. That has brought us a great deal of joy in these very unusual times. I have not been able to bond like I did with my first grand-child but that is something I will work on when things get better.

My New Year resolution is to work on my relationship with my New Grandson. He was born right at the peak of the first wave. I saw him for the first time through the patio door glass. Held him for the first time on a nice warm spring day in my son's backyard. I visited him in the backyard, weather permitting. He was too young to recognize me and just when he would register who we were the second wave happened. Now he cries when he sees us or when we try to carry him. So, my resolution is to work on this very special relationship when the situation gets better and in the meantime I will present myself at their door (just outside) for a few minutes just so he gets familiar with my face and voice, driving from the West Island to Brossard!!!!

Happy holidays. Abida Subhan





From Jayne Sevigny-Watson

MY constant Work in Progress.....that I started back in the Spring of 2020 (it's what keeps me going.....because we cannot forget that not everything Covid is bad - although we do know that the bad is REALLY really bad.....). I try to see things as the glass half full, it's my way of dealing with this and looking for the good (as hard as that may seem), in all of this. That is why I had composed this list entitled Covid-19 - Pros and Cons..... I did it primarily for myself, but people have been asking to see my list of the Pros and Cons of this pandemic. It's helpful, it's therapeutic, I hope you don't mind me sharing it with you. My idea was to make (start) this list and add things as they came up, but now that I have shared it with some people they are adding to it - It's therapeutic. Enjoy.....have a great day!!! Here is my list thus far (because it is never complete....):

Covid-19 Pros\*:

More time with immediate family

Pets are happy

More time to read

Making do with what we have Skies are bluer, lakes/rivers are cleaner

Working from home (no commuting)

Spending more time outside

Cleaner stores, buses, restaurants, metros, cinemas etc.

Baking more

Quicker delivery for on-line orders

Learning to be more organized and less last minute (stores close early...no getting back in line)

Less traffic

More birds/wildlifeLess pollution

Spending less money

Buying local (supporting local businesses etc.)

Becoming self-sufficientLearning a new skill

Travelling locally

Creativity in how to celebrate birthdays, concerts, events

Resetting of priorities Uncrowded stores

Appreciating what you have

Biking, running and walking more

Appreciating those who never stopped working for us (health care workers, police, store clerks, bus drivers, teachers,

truck drivers etc.)

Taking on-line courses

Reconnecting with your inner-self

Covid-19 Cons\*:

Loved ones are dying

Businesses are closing or closed

Loss of jobs

Depression

Lack of Sleep

Working from home (a million distractions)

Financial loss

Wearing masks, gloves and having to disinfect all the time

How this affects YOU personally

Overthinking everything

Grandparents and parents not being able to see/hold grandchildren/childrenSleeping problems

Empty shelves in stores

Not knowing when it will end

Line-ups everywhere

Receiving mixed messages in the media

Not being able to go away (on a plane) for vacation

Slow real estate sales

Concerts, shows etc. cancelled

Weight gain

Missing family that's far away

Being alert all the time (did I wash my hands, did I touch something....)







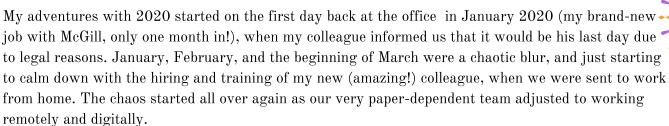
\*N.B. All items are in random

order and by no means inclusive

Hello MUNACA team!

Wow, it definitely has been quite the year, hasn't it...!





I have been consistently grateful to have the ability to work safely from my home, and to have the freedom to do so without too many complications or sacrifices – I am fortunate to not have had to juggle child or elder care throughout this time (like many people I know), and to live in my own apartment without roommates or needing to negotiate the use of space.

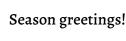
With that said, it doesn't mean it hasn't come with challenges — I live in a relatively small studio apartment, so adjusting to make room to comfortably and efficiently work from home has been a struggle, and I've never been very good at focusing at home (I learned this the hard way when I first began university several years ago). I am also a VERY people-oriented person, so not seeing my friends or colleagues (or any other humans, for that matter!) for days and weeks and months on end has been hard, especially the first few months. It continues to be a challenge to not interact with my teammates in person, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't lonely most of the time. However, I'm eternally grateful for my floofy little "Meow-nager", Stella, who keeps me company and helped to keep my spirits up (even if she did challenge my productivity sometimes ③). I've always had an abundance of photos of her in my phone, but this year she is overwhelmingly the star! We've shared many good moments snuggling, and she's "listened" to all of my stories and rants etc. patiently ③ At least once a day she comes to lie across my keyboard for a cuddly nap, while I awkwardly continue to work using the laptop keyboard — I cherish those moments (no matter how uncomfortable they are) knowing that one day I won't be able to multitask working and snuggling with her.

Wishing you all a warm & merry holiday season, and a happy & healthy new year!

Kind regards, Caitlin Bishop









While 2020 has been in lack of better words "an adjustment" it has no doubt had some perks.

Working from home has definitely allowed me to work on my tan this summer, as many of those warm summer days, were spent worked from outside with my SPF30 by my side.



The morning commute has now been reduced to the frustrating traffic jam at the coffee pot as we all try to cut in so that we are the first to get our cup.

It allowed me to get creative and forced me to think outside the box when it came to my outfits. Trying to match joggers and pj pants with things can become quite tricky after a while.

My one big complaint from working from home during 2020. Having to deal with how needy my new coworkers were (see attachement).

Wishing you all the best during this holiday season with continued health.

Craig





























## Working on campus













Let me first of all thank everyone at MUNACA for all of your hard work over the last several months. Your continuing efforts with the ongoing collective agreement negotiations are appreciated by all of us, and I wish all of you Happy Holidays. In these uncertain times, we can at least be sure that you are working tirelessly to represent and defend our rights.

One of the memorable experiences this year has to be the early silence and accompanying uncertainty in first few weeks, starting on Triday March 13th. For the few days I worked on-campus during those first few weeks, there certainly was an other worldly feeling, mostly because of just how empty the campus and city were, but also because we just didn't know what was going to happen. In this age of constant and instant information, I can say that, for myself, it was a humbling experience.

Sincerely, Peter Johnston Good afternoon,

I was blessed with the ability to "work" from home up until July 18th, when the Student and Staff Dental Clinic of McGill reopened its doors once again and we started seeing patients again. From that point forward it has been guite a roller coaster of adapting to new protocols and constantly changing our ways, to meet the new standards. The biggest challenge for me was having to reschedule nearly 5 months worth of appointments and try my best to accommodate everyone. I have felt extremely grateful to be able to stay on a fixed income during these uncertain times, and not have to worry about making ends meet like so many people are right out.

> Thank you McGill. Olivia Patenaude





Depuis le début de la pandémie, surtout au début, j'ai totalement arrêté de sortir de mon chez moi. Évidamment, j'ai commencé à manquer des denrées usuelles. Je me suis donc mise à la fabrication du pain maison et évidamment, la levure a manquée. J'ai donc préparé du levain que je nourri avec amour depuis. Les premiers essais de pains au levain n'étaient pas un gros succès mais avec de la persévérance j'ai finalement laissé tomber totalement la recette écrite pour ne me fier qu'à mon instinct. Voici donc une de mes réalisations. Mon prochain défi sera de faire un pain sucré aux fruits séchés pour le temps des Fêtes.

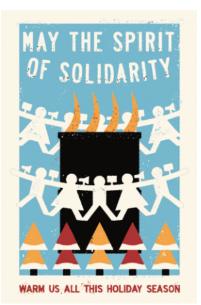
Joyenses Fêtes toutes en santé et sécurité 7 sabelle Harvey



A unique thing about beginning work remotely is that you truly have nothing to compare to I started working few months ago right in the middle of the pandemic. Every single step beginning from the interviews to the onboarding for my role happened remotely. It been a pleasant experience working from home so far. I am also lucky to have an amazing team and supportive manager. I still have a lot to learn and master, however, I would like to commit to exercising more and keeping fit for the mean time.

Warm regards, Raphael Ajima







Here is my unique 2020 experience:

2020 sure was a crazy year, it's almost over, yet it feels like it never really began. Before the pandemic, I never thought that my job was one that could be done solely from home, and yet here we are almost 9 months in and working from home has been a good experience overall. My most unique moment of 2020 was that I moved into my first home which is considerably farther from where I used to live, so it has been lovely not having to commute to work. When I lived at my old place, I worked from the dining room table, but now I have my own "office" complete with a desk, 2 monitors and office chair. Between lockdowns, moving, and getting used to a very different kind of normal, this year sure was unique but I am very much looking forward to the New Year, and hopefully, being able to gather with family, friends and colleagues again soon as that was the toughest thing to give up.

Thanks, Stefanie Maione

I have been lucky enough to have been working from home since March and it's been great. Although there's been more of a blending of work into personal time & vice versa, I've finally gotten into a bit more of a routine that I'm comfortable with. While I miss not being able to run up mount royal at lunch, I've finally found a route around the parc near my house and I've been enjoying my evening runs. I especially love not having to rush out the door to spend an hour commuting downtown just to sit in my tiny office all day. My cats were always so playful in the morning and it broke my heart a little to leave them as I rushed out to the bus, so it's a been a dream to be able to spend my day with them while getting all of my usual tasks done. I really have been loving my home time, despite the added pressure to be productive and really make the most of this time, and I'm not looking forward to going back to my hectic pre-covid routine. Thanks

Paulina Zacchia





In the beginning I wasn't sure what working from home would be like - I'm blessed to have amazing coworkers and I knew I would miss seeing them. It turns out the transition wasn't so bad thanks to my amazing new set of coworkers. They have boundary issues and often sleep on the job but I can't say I feel inclined to report them to HR. We quickly fell into a new routine, each with their designated spot. When I eventually had the opportunity to bring my work screens home I was worried this might disrupt our setup, but it turns out that they're highly adaptable. Now I spend almost every work day with all of them in their designated stations. I can't say I have much to complain about these days © Juliet McArthur





Working from home, ended being ok.
What I miss the most is seeing my co-workers at the office.
McGill was very co-operative with setting me up at home, for work.
Who would have known?
Tele Travail
Working from home.
Carolle Brabant

For someone living far from campus and having to travel an hour and a half each way to and from work, working from home has been a blessing in a way.

Although there have been many challenges and changes to adjust to all of the restrictions the pandemic has brought, working from home has been wonderful for a work-life balance.

Having extra time during the day has allowed me to pursue other interests I would not otherwise have had time to do. I have signed up for yoga teacher training (something I was only planning to do after retirement) and am now taking an online needle felting course. I have been baking bread, trying new recipes, going for walks, all while still meeting all the work deadlines.

Of course I have had my share of "down" moments and a couple of mini-breakdowns, but what gets me through is knowing my family is safe, and just reminding myself and being grateful for all of the things I do have and how wonderful it will be once we are able to visit family and friends once again.

Kindest regards, Dannie Moronval

#### Grief, the Pandemic and Working from Home

W

I write this piece as a widower who lost her husband to leukemia a year ago after watching him undergo nine months of chemo treatments, pain and helplessness.

After his death, I prepared myself as best I could, to adapt to anew normal without my partner, knowing fully well that the road to recovery would be a hard and long one. I was, I thought, getting better in dealing with the loss and somehow adjusting. Never did I think I would be faced with a worldwide pandemic that would set me back further into my own isolation and a grief of a different kind.

Forces to work from home because of a lockdown, I set-up a makeshift office facing a window that overlooks my yard to give me encouragement when the working hours are long and tedious. I learnt how to zoom, archive documents and adjust to this new "normal" all in a little space at my kitchen table.

I created zoom sessions and chats with our students to check on them on a regular basis. Some students are here alone without family or friends, living in small apartments without the luxury of a yard or a balcony. It has been my dedication and duty to reach out to them and see how they are coping in these times and see if they need any kind of help. Although I lost my husband and my world was turned inside out, I still consider myself fortunate to have a roof over my head, food on the table and a family that cares.

I follow the rules given by my government, being vigilant, washing my hands, wearing masks, social distancing and refraining from visiting family and friends for fear of catching the virus or transmitting it. I have been down this road before I tell myself. I wore the masks, the gowns, the gloves, disinfected my hands so many times they became dry and chapped. I followed the rules in the ICU and again I follow the rules here.

There has been so much talk about mental illness, isolation and fear brought about with the re-opening of schools and our economy during this pandemic. The uncertainty of the world weighs heavy on many fronts as our economy is collapsing; families are frighten and many facing financial strains. I fear people have given up hope of returning to a life of "normal" and letting their guard down after so many months of lockdown.

Our government's mixed messages each day leave me more confused to the point where I no longer know what is right or what is wrong. They are treating me like a puppet on a string, pulling in complete disorder. Their information is so garbled and confusing giving me more anxiety on top of what I am already experiencing.

With the change in season as the tree leaves begin to unfurl, and people begin to think about gathering for the holidays, I can only hope that our city will regain its composure before it is too late. I pray that the healthcare workers stay strong and patient with an unruly society that is fighting them every step of the way trying to control a pandemic, which has no boundaries; not caring about your status, your religion or your creed. May the healthcare workers be given all the resources they need, the teachers earn the respect and compassion deserved as they teach our children, and our essential workers be praised for their unrelenting hours of service. I ask that our government protect the vulnerable.

We must all take responsibility for our actions, adhering to what must be done in the line of duty to each other, no matter how uncomfortable or inconvenient it may be. In doing so, I would hope that all of us who have mourned a loved one before or during this crisis could get back to a normal grieving without the worry of a pandemic upon our shoulders.

Thank you Maria dos Santos Balanca





"After going through a long and painful separation, then an ugly custody battle, followed by a heavy financial burden that left me putting my house up for sale, COVID has allowed me to focus on one aspect of my life, I was told for 26 years that is not possible due to my poor vision. I would never be able to drive! Surgery or any eye wear was not for me. I was left with bitterness and hatred towards the world.

In June 2020, I was told that with new technology, I was able to achieve better vision, enough for driving! A true miracle. In less than 3 months, I got my license to drive! It brought me to my knees having been told that I had an irreparable disability, I showed the world, I am not dead in the mud! I will rise like a phoenix!"

-Anonymous Pros and Cons



Well 9 have to say 9 don't miss my four hour round trip daily commute!

Working from home has been a positive experience for me: 9 had good support from my office right from the beginning, and it is a huge plus for me not to be spending a minimum of four hours a day in my car, worvying about traffic and weather conditions.

Even when we were rotated into the office for parts of August and September, the management staff did everything they could to make the transition as painless and safe as possible, they listened to our concerns and looked for solutions.

While 9 am in a student-facing position, 9 sincerely hope that when we do go back full time there will be some accommodation for working from home that continues.

Wishing everyone a safe holiday season! Kathryn Weaver



From the beginning of the lock down, working from home, I started to walk every day during lunch time. I discovered new parks in my home area. I also saw many neighbours do the same! Anxiety was at a higher level at some point, and the best way I found to decrease distress was to limit intake of too much information from the news. I set up my office to be quiet and comfortable. I was able to do my work in the comfort of my own home. Every morning and afternoon I cherished the moments I did not have to take the train. I was saving so much time!

Working from home is a different lifestyle and with good organization and discipline, it's a path to promote wellbeing. I hope after this pandemic I can adopt a hybrid return to work.

Joyeux Noël et bonne année à tous! Johanne Bourdon The benefits of working from home definitely outweigh the challenges. At first, I was trying to adapt, set up my workspace, stay connected and physically active. It was challenging at first, but rewarding, sometimes I ended up reading my emails later on, it's hard not to, when you constantly hear the beep beep noice! I particularly enjoyed online training webinars, where more than 20 people attend and interact thanks to zoom breakout rooms. In addition, I enjoyed our department and faculty trivia nights. Overall, my team has been supportive and understanding.

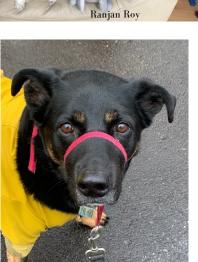
Some of the challenges have been technical in nature, VPM access has been a nightmare, but IT has been very helpful. 300m meetings have been challenging. When we have smaller group meetings, sometimes I mute myself due to background noise, yes I have a dog and I may forget to unmute. That moment when you are talking and talking and after 2 minutes a colleague reminds that you were muted all that time, it's priceless! Take my advice don't mute yourself, specifically in 2021:)
Geralda Bacaj

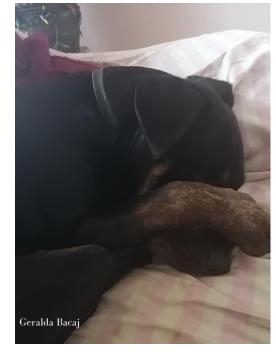
I feel lucky in the fact that I work for McGill as I still have my job and I have adapted to working from home. The four months home with my three kids was stressful and hard as I was watching them throughout the day while my wife worked in the office throughout the day. I would help with bedtime and work at right into the late hours. Mentally I was strained and was struggling towards the end of The four month lockdown, with the added anxiety of fearing catching The virus. Outside gatherings throughout the summer in my father in law's backyard was a relief from the pandemic as my father in law was on his balcony, and my parents would visit but we had to instruct The kids to keep six feet away. I was asked to come in to work in the fall and was hesitant at first but was relieved when management talked about the safety measures. I would be the only one in my shared office on the specific day and I would only come in once every two weeks. Our building is safer than going to Wal Mart or the grocery store so I felt totally at ease, and it felt good being back at my workstation. All in all I believe 2021 will be amazing, with the vaccine rollout soon underway and we could be soon hugging our loved ones. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and happy holiday To whatever you celebrate.

> We are all in this together Darren O'Connor

## **Domestic co-workers**

















I know most people cannot wait to see the end of this year but, for me, this is a blessed year that I will never forget!

Carol Elelland





## How we have been coping

















When you cannot go out for a pastry - you make them yourself. First eclairs I ever made I did so on April 5, 2020 during lockdown.

However, I only made them the once, as they are far too dangerously delicious. - Rebecca Sharratt













#### What I did during my pandemic

In my off hours, I am an amateur potter. For the last four years, I've been slowly honing my skills by taking classes and now by renting studio space to pursue my own ideas.

I find making pottery very relaxing, but at the start of the pandemic, I was too scared to go to the studio. However, after a few months, I needed to get back to my creative outlet (and just get out of the house!), and the small studio I belong to had enacted clear safety rules.

So, over the summer and fall, I've been working at improving my technique. I've been hand-building mug after mug (did I mention mugs?).

Assembling, carving, attaching handles, glazing, removing from the kiln... each mug requires several hours of work. When I am working with clay, I think of nothing else but the project before me. It's my meditation. It takes me out of my problems for a while, and I'm always so relaxed afterwards!

I've made over 25 mugs so far, so I guess I really needed that! It's been satisfying to see how my work has improved over the months.

Lysanne Larose



**6**00

Working from home has been a pretty much a smooth transition.

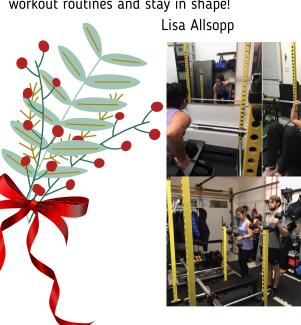
I had the fortune of having a new personal laptop making it easy to set up the VPN and remote desktop with the help of McGill's amazing IT team.

For the first few months I worked from the kitchen table and then was able to move to the basement where we set up an office space.

The online web platforms for meetings and such spiraled me into a new learning curve adventure, but once I realized we were all in the same boat, just with different paddling experience, I relaxed and enjoyed and still enjoy the new skill I'm acquiring.

Working from home is very pleasant for me as the only distraction I have during the day is a fur baby, who only demands a walk, which makes me move, so all positive.

Happy holidays! Kathy Bowman Working from home has been an adjustment, so staying positive and working out daily has given me the energy boost I need! I am lucky enough to have a husband and 3 kids who enjoy working out daily, one of which is a personal trainer and made me a routine that I could challenge myself with. Daily walks and the McGill On-Line ZOOM classes have kept me healthy both physically and mentally. Due to the Gyms being closed last spring, we decided to transform our garage into a home gym. Now with the colder weather, we are all ready for the winter to help us keep up with our workout routines and stay in shape!









## Reconnecting with nature

















I started photographing birds in my backyard this summer. I was able to get enough pictures to make a calendar for next year. Here are some:











One of the small joys of being able to work from home this year was to spend much more time with our cat, Pippin.

This does mean that I must share my desk space with him as it is also his favorite spot the perch! But I don't mind accommodating to his office needs.

Best, Elena Bernier



I think my story is well illustrated, Santa made his holiday delivery and happy to return back to the chimney.

Have a great holidays, stay safe and healthy.

All the best.





Stewards
are all over
McGill
campus,
find your
nearest!

Click here. http://www.munaca.com/index.php/contact-us/stewards/



