

ARFL NEWSLETTER

Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians of York University



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Important Notice

2011 Annual General Meeting

**2011 November 25
12 noon to 3 pm**

**Harry Crowe Room, Atkinson
College**

Food and beverages catered.

*(Some constitutional amendments will
be presented at the meeting. See item 6.)*

1. President's Report *Al Stauffer*

YUFA is preparing for the next round of collective bargaining that will take place in early 2012. ARFL has been involved in preparing the bargaining position for Article 14 of the Collective Agreement that deals with Retirement including the conditions that relate to retired faculty and librarians. This bargaining position is going through the various approvals process and will be discussed at an upcoming YUFA Membership meeting. **As Associate Members of YUFA, ARFL members have the right to attend these meetings and speak to the issues.** If you are engaged in post-retirement teaching and pay dues you also have the right to vote on the package. We will inform you by email when the meeting takes place. **It is important to ensure we have a voice at these meetings to support our position and convince other members of YUFA to vote in favour.** Remember that current members of YUFA will also be retired some day.

We would like some feedback on what you consider to be high priority items particularly in the area of benefits. What benefits would you most like to see improved? What new benefits would you most like to have? We plan to discuss this at our upcoming AGM but you can also send your comments to our email address:

yuarfl@web.net

If you attended our Membership Meeting last Spring, you will know that we had a discussion with the Provost, Patrick Monahan, about possible roles retirees might play in the Engaged University. A delegation from ARFL: Joy Cohnstaedt, Nick Lary

and myself) and YURA (Gwyn Buck, Janet Rowe (co-chair of YURA) and Albert Tucker) met with the Provost and Barry Miller on Oct. 6 to discuss the how to proceed on this important issue. It was agreed to formalize ourselves as a coordinating committee and meet three times a year. Patrick agreed to prepare a draft of a Partnership Agreement similar to the one established at Queen's (www.queensu.ca/us/retirees/Projects.html) and bring this initiative to the attention of the senior administrators at York. The meeting was characterized by a very positive tone and a willingness to provide opportunities for retirees to participate in the life of the university.

We have been discussing the possibility of holding an ARFL seminar that would combine a social gathering with the chance to hear presentations on a topic of interest. This could be a talk or a panel discussion; it could be of an academic nature or a discussion of something of interest to the lifestyle of retirees. If you have some ideas on topics of interest and/or speakers you'd like to hear, let us know by coming to the AGM or sending us an email at the address above.

Al Stauffer
President, ARFL



2. New Newsletter Editor *A. (Tony) Wallis*

Your newsletter has a new editor. Some may already know me too well enough, but let me introduce myself anyway. I first arrived on the York campus in 1965, fresh off the boat (literally) from the UK as a graduate student in chemistry. But my real interests were computers, mathematics, physics, and all manner of other matters wherein clarity of thought has precedence over sentiment, including applying philosophy to religion. Much of my life has been spent, productively in retrospect from the perspective of my pension (I retired in 2007), or misspent from another viewpoint less materialistic, teaching computer science to young people, many of whom did not seem to hold to that

precedence, of clarity of thought over sentiment, as strongly as I do.

I fell into this position of newsletter editor by volunteering to help Roger Heeler, your previous editor, with proof reading and similar apprentice tasks. We fought an amicable and on-going battle over my title, my preference being Assistant to the Editor, his being Assistant Editor. Long story short, and regardless of whatever is in a name, Roger won regarding the issue of a successor when he retired from the job. My first duty is to thank him for his contribution over the years. I will strive to maintain his high standards, and to moderate my natural inclination to bootleg, occasionally, my personal views into this publication - the temptation of all editors.

In that latter regard, a healthy stream of submissions from the laity (as opposed to just from the executive) of ARFL, i.e. yourselves, would help. You are hereby solicited. My e-mail is

wallis@cse.yorku.ca

You will notice, in the CURAC conference report in this issue, the presence of the matter of maintaining health, in the senses of both physical and mental acuity by continuing activity, for we retirees. At my department's retirement bash for me, my thank-you address took the form of a mini-lecture on the newer thinking about neuroplasticity applied to seniors. Sudoku and learning Italian, for example.

I would like to make senior's health and continuing challenging mental activity a frequent topic in this newsletter. Included in this issue is a contribution on weight reduction and weight control from my own recent experience.

We, ARFL, recently had redirected our way a request for a speaker to go to a seniors home to talk about continuing education and keeping mentally active. This is something worth pursuing in my view. Let me know if you are interested, would consider being on record for a speakers bureau for seniors, or anything similar.



3 CURAC 2011 Conference, at U. of Regina

[Editor's Note: There were two submissions on this conference. I decided to include both rather than merge them, the redundancies being quite minor.]

CURAC Conference - "Keeping Up"

Thus year's annual conference of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada was held at the University of Regina in May. ARFL was represented by Joy Cohnstaedt and Al Stauffer. YURA also sent two delegates, the co-chairs Sandra Pyke and Janet Rowe. The First Nations University of Canada is also located in an impressive building on the campus and one of the sessions was held there where we heard a presentation from the President of that institution.

The theme of the conference was Keeping Up - staying active and health both mentally and physically after we retire. One of the best presentations was a talk by Max Cynader of UBC who is a Canadian Research Chair in Brain Development. His recommendations on how to keep mentally active were based on solid research. Here are some of the points he made:

1) Laying down long term memory occurs during deep sleep while lateral thinking occurs during REM sleep. It is important to get a good night's sleep to preserve memory of recent events including things we just learned.

2) Physical exercise builds new brain cells. It is the only way to build new brain cells. Thus it is important to stay physically active.

3) Negative stress kills brain cells. Try to reduce this type of stress.

4) Focus on important thought or concepts to keep the brain functioning at a high level.

Another important talk was on Saving Medicare. It was presented by Ryan Meili, a family physician and chair of the Social Accountability Committee at

the University of Saskatchewan. He dispelled a number of myths surrounding health care for the elderly. There is no reason why we can't continue to provide the same level of health care that we have is the past even if the population is aging. Our costs are in line with other OECD countries and the reason that health care is taking up a bigger share of the budgets of governments is that the budgets have been shrinking due to tax cuts. CURAC intends to make Medicare one of its points of focus in the future.

There were the usual sessions on pensions that are of major concerns at all the institutions. There was also a session on Sharing Best Practices with presentations from various retiree associations including York. The next conference will be held in the spring at the University of Victoria with help from UBC and Simon Fraser.

More "Keeping Up" Highlights

A bright blue sky welcomed CURAC delegates to 2011's "Keeping Up" annual conference hosted by the University of Regina. The enthusiasm with which our hosts carried out the task of organizing university and college faculty and staff was matched by the province's attribute of year around sunshine and optimism. Highlights included the opening session on lifelong learning by the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Regina, sketching the history of its community programming and ended the day with their banquet and presentation of their Distinguished Canadian Award to Senator Pamela Wallin. Next, listeners to the informative Aging Brain session were left wanting to learn more about this important subject – please see UBC's website

www.brain.ubc.ca.

The following morning continued with a lively and timely exchange about the Threats to Democracy by Shadia Drury (Ph.D. Political Science, York University 1978) an interdisciplinary scholar who spoke on the linkage between the work of Leo Strauss and right-leaning public policy and John Whyte a former dean of law, and constitutional and public policy scholar, who framed this

consideration of Straussians in the context of western liberal democracy.

No one can visit to the University of Regina without admiring the spectacular First Nations University of Canada designed by Canadian architect Douglas Cardinal. Interim President Shauneen Pete inspired hope that the recent controversies swirling around FNUniv have been put to rest and their future partnerships will continue to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities.

The theme of one of the last day's afternoon sessions "Saving Medicare" was fitting for an event held in Saskatchewan. Moderated by Jack Boan, Professor Emeritus with a scholarly interest in Health Economics; he led the session to conclude with an agreement that CURAC develop a position paper for distribution to the appropriate officials. The conference finished with timely discussions of concerns we all share: the Pension Squeeze and Brain Gymnastics.

Until the end CURAC delegates experienced a sunny sky, good conversation and friendly hosts. Who could ask for more?

Joy Cohnstaedt



4. On being a Loser *A. (Tony) Wallis*

Of excess weight that was becoming a health threat, that is. For a long time I thought, as one catchphrase used in promoting a men-only "boot camp" approach puts it negatively, that I could "do it on my own". With my full cooperation and compliance, my GP physician referred me to a registered dietitian. I went to her with a positive attitude, but with my typical hubris, born of a lifetime of auto-didacticism, I could not but wonder what on earth she could tell me that I did not already know, i.e.

that it's calories in and calories out, stupid !

essentially the First Law of Thermodynamics, and, as Homer Simpson yelled at Lisa upon her presenting him with a working model of a perpetual motion machine,

in this house we obey the laws of thermodynamics !

Eat more calories than you burn off and the body stores the surplus as fat. To lose accumulated fat you have to put yourself into a calorie-flow deficit. The cost of that benefit is typically feeling hungry most of the time. Eat less, move more. If you cannot move more, or perhaps because moving more makes you even more hungry, then at least eat less. Simple but hard. But then most worthwhile things in life are simple but hard. As a corollary, people tend to complicate their lives at a cost of striving for the ersatz benefit of making things easier. (And that is an instance of "editors being tempted to bootleg their ideologies into their publications" ☺)

So, I knew that already, hence what did this registered dietitian tell me that I did not already know ?

[Disclaimer: This is only a report of a personal experience and is not intended to constitute medical advice in anyway whatsoever.]

Eat more frequently.

That is, reduce the total daily calorie intact - of course ! - but distribute it over 5 or 6 meals daily, eating every 3 or 4 of the awake hours. Forget even your scaled-down-but-otherwise-standard-sized breakfast, lunch, and supper: even smaller versions are about twice as big as they should be; split the downsized standard meal into two of the 5/6-a-day meals. . Restaurant meals are too big by a factor of about four in this frequent-eating scheme. I have ordered a burger – no fries ! – and had it cut into quarters for (components of) four meals.

That's it. It worked. From 218 lbs at the beginning of May to 178 lbs at the beginning of October.

I also developed the habit of walking 8 kilometers early every morning. But that was to improve cardio-vascular fitness. If you do the math about calories-in/calories-out, it contributes not much. The dominant part of calories-out is what is known as your basal metabolic rate (BMR), what you would burn if you lay in bed all day, which for me is around 1600 kcals/day. Adding ordinary mainly sedentary-lifestyle activity increases the calorie in/out surplus/deficit breakpoint to about 2000 kcals/day. My walking 8 kms every morning may have added only about 800 extra kcals/day. You cannot eat a doughnut and walk it off realistically.



5. Clams and Snails *Saber M. Saleuddin*

[*Editor's Note: This was received as a New Book Release, the book covering the author's "personal and professional life experiences from the time I was 15 to 45 years old". I have edited it to a personal account of likely interest to the readers of this newsletter, and added the promotion of the book to a footnote.]*

I grew up in a family of 12 children in the Bangladeshi culture and sought a university education in Bangladesh and at Reading, England in order to become a university Professor, then pursued my academic career in North America.

[I have written a book recounting] my personal experiences with issues such as culture, language, race, religion as I grew from a teenager to a university student, to a doctoral candidate in England, post-doctoral fellow at the University of Alberta, then instructor at Duke University and finally a Full Professor at York University. The time frame of my book covers the years when East Pakistan struggled to become the independent country of Bangladesh and I describe the personal impact the struggle had on my family.

As a scientist, I was lucky enough to travel and do research work on clams and snails in many countries including Venezuela and sabbatical years in England and France. My student years yielded

many amusing incidents on the road to adulthood. Romance, sport, cuisine, music, medical issues, teaching and supervision of graduate students are featured in the [book]. I eventually married and had a family and consequently the book follows our travels around the world, our successes and failures, and our experience whether joyful or sorrowful.

I am a Professor Emeritus of Biology at York University where I taught for 37 years before my retirement in 2002. I learned to be a successful communicator, accomplished researcher and engaged administrator. I have published more than 125 scientific papers in international journals and co-edited 3 books. I held positions such as chair of the biology department, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and acting Dean of Research. I was Chair of Senate and a member of the Board of Governors. As recognition of my contributions to the university I received the designation of University Professor. For the past 18 years I have been the editor of the Canadian Journal of Zoology. I was president of the Canadian Society of Zoologists and the Bangladesh Association of Canada, Toronto.

[Saber Saleuddin's book, *Clams and Snails: A Memoir*, will be available in the York University Bookstore in mid-October.]



6. Constitutional Amendments. *Al Stauffer*

[*Editor's Note: The following proposed amendments to the Constitution have been discussed at Executive meetings. The below is the formal text of the amendments to be considered at the AGM on Nov 25. The current Constitution is available at*

<http://www.web.net/~yuarfl/Constitution.pdf>

Note that a number of amendments are listed at the end of that document. The proposed amendments below incorporate some of those additional amendments. Besides adding a representative from YUFA in 5(i) and making

*5(ii) consistent with the current number,
the quorum is being .increased from three to six.]*

Proposed Constitutional Amendments for AGM

Amend Article 5 (i) to read

The Association shall be managed by an Executive Committee of eleven (11) voting members, including a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and a representative of the Pre-Retirees plus five members at large, including the immediate Past President, if such is available. The Executive Committee will also include an ex officio, non-voting representative of the York University Retirees Association chosen by that Association.

Amend Article 5 (ii) to read:

The eleven ARFL members of the Executive shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of members, except that the Executive Committee shall have authority to co-opt alternative non-voting members to the Executive at need and shall report such action to the membership in a timely manner.

Amend Article 5 (iv) to read:

A minimum of six (6) voting members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

2011/12 EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

President: Al Stauffer stauffer@yorku.ca
Past President: Alex Murray amurray@yorku.ca
Vice President: Stan Jeffers stanj@yorku.ca
Treasurer: Barry Loughton loughton@yorku.ca
Secretary: Fred Morgan fmorgan@yorku.ca

Newsletter Editor: A. (Tony) Wallis
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[Emeritus Newsletter Editor: Roger Heeler
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Pre-Retiree Member: Pat McDermot
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Members-at-Large:

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