

ARF Newsletter

Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians of York University

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

1. The President's Column	1
2. Private Health Benefits Plan	2
3. New Parking Regulations	2
4. Glendon Hospitality	4
5. Membership and Second Call for Dues	4
6. York Logo Revisited	5
Dues and Membership Form	6

1. The President's Column *by Peter Harries Jones*

DEAR Colleagues in Retirement:
As I reported to you in the last *Newsletter*, the results of collective bargaining have been significant for retirees, especially in three main areas of our health plan. First, the lifetime medical cap has been raised from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Previously the lifetime cap was the lowest of all Ontario universities benefit plans.

Second, increased contributions by the York Administration to the level of monetary benefit of the health plan will ensure that funding per capita benefits for members of the plan will be kept on an even keel without an increase in monthly contributions. This is the strongest point of this collective agreement from the retirees' point of view, for it is a tacit acknowledgement by the Administration that its contribution must increase in step with inflation of costs and increase in the number of members in the plan, instead of continuing with ad hoc funding. Further, the overall fund for health benefits is now costed for at least the next three years at or near the Ontario University norm for health plans. While the new

Collective Agreement has not produced a guaranteed benefits plan, which was the outcome that ARF was pushing for, it comes close to it. It is a marked improvement on the confusions in Retiree Benefits that have prevailed since 1994 .

A happy prospect is that we might even have a benefits surplus at the end of three years. If so, then the next step would be to convert surplus into added benefits in future contract negotiations.

Third, the York Administration agreed that it would revise its booklet on Post-Retirement Benefits Programme to accord with "official plan documents," but since all attempts in the past to trace the "official plan documents" proved delusive, the Administration agreed in negotiations to provide an "official plan " within 90 days of signing of the collective agreement. That deadline, retrospective to May, has now passed, but I am pleased to say that ARF now has the requisite documents constituting an "official plan." The Executive is now in the process of checking the "official plan" for any inconsistencies, confusions, or missing information. We will be reporting back our findings to the Administration officials responsible for health and benefits in the very near future.

Meanwhile ARF members can expect circulars from the Department of Human Resources on two innovations stemming directly from negotiations with the Administration. One is an announcement of provision of new Great West Life identification cards, together with the official notice that your Lifetime Reimbursement Maximum (cap) under the Extended Health Care Plan has been raised to \$50,000 for your lifetime. Reimbursement includes hospital room costs, prescription drugs and other major medical services/supplies (with the exception of private duty nursing and emergency out-of-country charges). As you submit eligible expenses, this lifetime maximum is reduced dollar for dollar by any refund you receive from this plan.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 29
12-2 p.m

Founders Senior Common Room
305 Founders College

On the Agenda:

- Latest information about pensions and benefits in the new contract
- Reports and Election of Officers: presentation of slate and nominations from the floor

Lunch provided

The plan also allows for up to \$1,000 of the claims refunded in a particular year to be restored to your lifetime maximum when you file your first claim in the following calendar year.

Note that the plan is now operative from calendar year to calendar year, as ARF requested. The second circular will illustrate what this change in dates means to you with regard to submitting claims for benefits. In particular, the bulletin will deal with the issues of co-ordination of benefits and with “top ups.” Under the plan there has always been a provision that up to \$1,000 of depleted lifetime funds will be restored annually to your remaining maximum. The new arrangement is that this top-up will now occur when you file your first claim in the following calendar year. The bulletin will show how this will occur, that is the sequence to any claim for “top ups.” The remaining lifetime maximums for your partner and each of your covered dependants may also be similarly restored, based on their respective total refunds in a calendar year.

The ARF Executive hopes that the information you will receive is clear and welcome, for we have some responsibility in proposing these changes and in vetting the language of the bulletin.

While health benefits have been regularized, this does not exhaust the total list of concerns which ARF still has about retirement benefits and guarantees. There is still no outcome on the proposed ‘shadow pension’ which—if permitted—would severely offset prospects of annual pension increments. In addition, the Administration is attempting to erode benefits, such as free parking. In these, and other cases the Administration is penalizing those retirees who would like to continue to engage in unpaid academic activity. Increasingly the Administration seems to support the view that academic retirement is “good-bye” and not the flexible retirement that it says it is committed to. At the same time there are indications that the Administration views the possibility of an end to mandatory retirement, that is no ‘retirement’ at all, as a complete financial “horror show.” □



2. Private Health Benefits Plan

by Alex Murray

THROUGH ARF’s membership in College and University Retirees of Canada (CURAC), we have acquired some information about two health insurance plans that might be suitable for some members of ARF and their families.

1. The McLennan Group in association with CARP (Canadian Association of Retired Persons).
2. Johnson Inc. in association with the Retired Teachers Ontario.

In both cases, individual retirees would access benefit plans through membership in either CARP or RTO. However, both plans have various kinds of

relationships with local associations, and could possibly formalize these with the newly-formed CURAC. Both have the possibility of membership for former members of YUFA.

Both plans offer wide-ranging coverage.

RTO offers health benefit plans: extended health, semi-private, Dental, etc. Specific benefits include a prescription drug card, vision care, travel insurance, auto and life insurance, and access to health professionals such as chiropractors and therapists.

CARP offers auto and home insurance, emergency travel health insurance, health and dental insurance, including prescription drugs (for those retired but not yet 65 in Ontario, or those in need of drugs not covered by

the province), vision care, hearing aids, semi-private hospital accommodation, ambulance services, home care, and even laser eye surgery. There is also a Legacy Plus coverage to ensure that there is money available to carry out all of your final wishes.

Both organizations are very active in public issues that affect the lives of “fifty-plusers” and retirees through publications, conferences, lobbying, and communication with like-minded organizations. Members can contact 50Plus/CARP at www.50Plus.com and RTO at www.rto-ero.otg. If Members are interested, we can arrange a presentation on either or both plans at a later meeting. □



3. New Parking Regulations

by William Whitla

MEMBERS of ARF who are also members of YURA will already have received Albert Tucker’s careful letter of explanation about the new parking regulations at both the York and Glendon campuses. Ostensibly the main reason given to YURA is that Canada Customs and Revue claims that free parking (for retirees, almost free—since it is covered in the annual membership to YURA) is a taxable benefit in any amount over \$100 annually. Accordingly, YURA and York’s Parking Services (an oxymoron?) have agreed that each member of YURA is entitled to only 12 free passes per annum (considering them to be worth about \$8 each. After these vouchers are used up, the member will have to pay, using the almost entirely automated systems. How, you ask? Ah, dear friend, read on.

Of course, that taxable benefit should be against earned income, which retirees do not receive, so the issue still seems confused. Who made our case to Canada Customs? And what about the people who are contributing to the university by continuing with the unpaid supervision of graduate students, serving on committees, continuing to maintain their laboratories, meeting with graduate students and colleagues for consultations, and pursuing their research that further’s

York’s good name? Some colleagues are frequently on campus to pursue these ends, but, we hear, are considering modifying or withdrawing their free services.

Since parking costs are so high already for pre-retirees, or retirees still teaching and being paid, the apparently preferential treatment given to retirees hitherto seemed to some to be unfair. But consider that their services to the university are donated, and their income is restricted, by and large, to their pension.

YURA also received other reasons for the change in policy. Because of the pressure of student numbers, parking is scarce, despite new parking facilities, and so retirees have to be denied their customary access. Again, it seems an implausible case to make that the few spaces taken by retirees greatly exacerbates the space problem, except on the principle that this last drop could cause a flood. Further, it has been argued to YURA that the pressure on parking is not transitory (is it ever?) but will continue, despite additional parking spaces. Well, if it is to continue, increase the spaces available. Hidden in this notion is another idea—that the lots will become automated. Aha, now we are coming to a major issue. Retirees’ vouchers are not so easily subject to automation, but hitherto have required human negotiation to exit. New proposals will require complex negotiations with the entry ticket, the retiree voucher, the retrieval of a ticket,

the dash in 15 minutes to the gate, and so on. Most of us are beyond the fifteen-minute dash. Anyone who has had to cope with some CITY lots that are automated will know that the incidence of malfunction is great, the reliability is poor, and the inconvenience when one is caught in such a problem is considerable. Expect more problems in this area in the months to come—and automated gates on parts of the campus were in use some years ago and were abandoned because of mechanical failures and destruction by angry travellers.

YURA has been very active in pursuing a rational and peaceable resolution to these difficulties, so far to no avail. Further information is being added to the YURA Website (www.yorku.ca/yura/parking.htm), and it is well worth reading. In sum, it boils down to the fact that the **old vouchers will not be valid after October 31, 2003.** No changes have yet been made to the parking for handicapped retirees. Those maintaining labs in science, psychology, and elsewhere have not yet had problems resolved. For the rest of us, we get 12 vouchers per year, though the use of them is a complicated affair, as those who read Ken Thompson’s lucid explanation on the YURA webpage will see. Otherwise we will have to pay cash into the automated machines as follows:

York Campus
Albany Road (lot 2V) \$1.00 per ½ hour to \$12.00 max.

The ARF Newsletter is published by the Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians of York University (ARF). ARF is an independent organization of retired faculty and librarians of York University, and of pre-retirees who pay membership fees. Members of ARF are Associate members of YUFA and YUFA has recognized ARF as “the representative organization for retired members” of YUFA. ARF is a member of CURAC (College and University Retirees Association of Canada).



At the Annual General Meeting of October 2002, the following slate of officers was returned, including those subsequently nominated to the Executive to extend its base and representation, as the meeting agreed.



EXECUTIVE

President
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The Editor of the Newsletter welcomes comment, letters, or items of interest to other ARF members, but reserves the right to edit any submissions. Please send them by e-mail (w Whitla@yorku.ca) or by post to ARF, c/o YUFA, 241 Schulich School of Business, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto ON M3J 1P3. Other members of the Executive may be reached by e-mail or by post at the same address.

Founders Road (Visitors' lot 3V) flat rate \$7.00
 North West Gate (Visitors' lot 5V) flat rate \$7.00
 Pond Road (Visitors' lot HH) \$1.00 per ½ hour to \$12.00.

York Lanes: variable, but 2 hrs is \$4.00, thereafter \$3.00 per ½ hour to a maximum of \$13.00

Arboretum (PS2) \$1.25 per ½ hour to \$13.00 maximum
 Glendon College: rates not yet specified.

Or we could take the TTC for two seniors' tickets. Or stay home.



4. Glendon Hospitality: A Communication from Michiel Horn

Dear Bill,

On Albert Tucker's suggestion, I'm writing with a piece of information that may be of interest to some of the retired faculty and staff of the university. The Glendon College Senior Common Room, thriving these days as it hasn't since the 1960s, offers membership to retired faculty and staff at half price. The annual membership fee for retired people is \$32.50; in return for this they can buy very reasonably-priced lunches, Monday through Friday, from the beginning of September to the end of June. A lunch

consisting of an entree, side salad, and regular coffee costs just over \$10, taxes and service included. Beer and wine are available at moderate cost. As well, members can rent the SCR or part of it for private functions at a lower rate than that offered to non-members. The lunches are very tasty (just ask Al), and the view over the valley, I probably don't need to add, is superb.

Several retired faculty members have joined in recent years, among them Al Tucker himself, Alan Sangster, and Clara Thomas. Others may be interested in doing so. Would you be willing to put a note in the *Newsletter*? Thanks for your help.

Best regards,

Michiel Horn

Treasurer, Glendon College SCR.



5. Membership and Second Call for Dues for 2003–2004

by Ian Sowton

MANY members of ARF have already paid up their dues for 2003–04, and many thanks to all of you.

Your dues keep us going, enable the *Newsletter* to be mailed out to almost 500 people, further our work in negotiating better benefits and pension arrangements, and help pay for our annual Associate Memberships in YUFA and the national organization of university retirees, CURAC. If you have not yet paid, please fill out the form in this *Newsletter* and mail it to ARF c/o the YUFA office.

If you have any questions about how current you are, you can phone Ian Sowton at 416-489-9120 or e-mail at isowton@yorku.ca



6. The York Logo Revisited

IN AN article on August 9, 2003 in the *Toronto Star*, “York U courts public opinion: TV ad linked to tennis tourney—School dusts off its old image,” Louise Brown writes, not without irony:

In the cutthroat world of brand marketing, York University is trying for a grand slam.

A breezy TV ad starting today—with one simple blinking logo set to the sounds of a tennis match—shows the world that York will host the women's tennis championship over the next nine days. But in the competitive world of higher learning, the 30-second spot also boots brand recognition for Canada's third-largest campus.

“Universities are a fiercely competitive market—we're in the market for students. We're in the market for faculty. We're in the market for research dollars,” university spokesperson Richard Fisher said. [He's York U's Chief Communication Officer. But the market?]

So the use of the logo ... carries York's “branding message,” he said.

What is that message?

That York is a cutting-edge campus, not some ivy-draped retreat, he said—and a new logo helps dust off York's image. The university scrapped its old logo—which featured the formal campus crest and Latin motto—last year for a new, simple, Latin-free graphic that says simply “York U.” ...

“We're not really an ivy-league institution,” Fisher said. “We need to put the Latin motto—*tentanda via*, which means ‘try a new way’—into the vernacular.”

But often it comes out in another strange tongue—market lingo.

“Our job as a brand is to connect York with the audience's love of tennis,” Fisher said. “The integrated ad campaign plays on the university's new logo, using high impact red animation to capture the excitement of being a spectator at a world-class event. As with all good advertising, it's both single-minded and effective.”

Single minded—well, yes. But effective? Says who?



**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY AND LIBRARIANS
OF YORK UNIVERSITY**

**DUES FOR 2003 /04 ARE NOW RECEIVABLE.
SECOND NOTICE
PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ARF WITH YOUR
MEMBERSHIP**

Please mail to:

Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians, c/o YUFA
241 Schulich School of Business,
York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3

- I wish to join ARF, to receive its mailings and support its activities
- I wish to renew my membership in ARF
- I am willing to undertake occasional work for ARF
- I am not yet a retiree, but I want to become an Associate Member of ARF

Enclosed is my cheque for the period 1 July, 2003 to 30 June, 2004.

- \$25 Regular Membership
- \$10 Associate Membership

Plus \$_____ as an additional contribution to help ARF in its continuing work on behalf of York's retired Faculty and Librarians.

NAME (please print)_____

HOME ADDRESS

Street _____

City _____ Province _____

Postal Code _____ Country _____

Home Phone _____ Campus Phone _____

E-Mail _____ Fax _____