

ARF Newsletter

Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians of York University

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

1. Report on the AGM	1
2. YUFA-ARF Trust and Revenue Canada	1
3. Concern over a Recent Letter on Pensions	1
4. The Parking Lot Issue is Parked	2
5. York's Changed Look	2
6. PER Grant Forms & Chair's Signature	3
7. More than One Insurance Plan?	4
8. CURAC Presentation on Benefits	4

1. Report on the AGM *based on Fred Morgan's minutes*

AT ARF's Annual General Meeting on October 20, 2004, Alex Murray chaired (in the absence of Peter Harries-Jones). On benefits there were several reports including the fact that the Benefits Booklet is now in the hands of Great West Life rather than York's Human Resources, so a revision might well be a long time coming. Alex Murray reported on Parking (see elsewhere in the *Newsletter*) and Ian Sowton reported on the financial state of ARF. George Eaton reported on the ARF-YUFA Trust (see another news item in the *Newsletter*). The nominations and elections produced a new slate (as in the Masthead below). Other reports were given by Barry Loughton (on the recent survey on what Retirees do all day, already reported on) and by Arthur Haberman, Chester Sadowski, and Fred Morgan (on how York's benefits compare with other Ontario Universities—and on negotiating positions, on out-of-province travel insurance, where our plan is weak, and on dental benefits. All of these reports are available on York's YUFA/ARF-retirees website). William Whitla reported that the *Newsletter* is currently mailed three times a year, with a circulation of over 500 copies per issue. As usual, the meeting was prefaced with a hearty lunch that was speedily dispatched. □



2. YUFA /ARF Trust and Revenue Canada

GEORGE Eaton reported to the AGM that good news had finally come from Canada Customs and Revenue which had referred our appeal to the federal Justice Department. Although we feared that the Trust Fund would be taxed, and were so advised by some lawyers, the Directors of the Trust decided to make an appeal. They pointed out that the Fund was not the result of a direct payment by the Administration (and so a taxable benefit) but was the result of our association as a fraternal organization, pooling resources for mutual benefit. The government finally agreed that the Trust's tax-exempt status would be approved. Accordingly, since the moneys set aside by the Directors for possible disbursement as taxes can now be used for benefits, the AGM approved a motion of Roy Merrens and Alex Murray that the Executive of ARF should put a high priority on dispersing appropriate funds to appropriate areas. □



3. Concern over a Recent Letter from Human Resources on Pensions *from the Executive*

IN the Fall a letter was sent to Retirees from Human Resources asking that all recipients confirm addresses and the amount of monthly payments into a designated bank account. The request for information seemed quite legitimate to ensure that HR had correct addresses, and that an outside consultant could verify whether York's calculation of pension payments is correct or not. However, the letter proposed retaliatory action if a reply were not received by Nov. 5—the retiree would risk a disruption to pension payments. Of course, any such disruption would be illegal and could result in a law suit. Further enquiries by the Executive determined that HR was anxious to get as complete a reply as possible, and so inserted the sentence as an encouragement rather than a threat. While this response



New Maps and Signs at York

did little to mollify members of ARF, we have been assured that requests for such information in the future will be worded more carefully. □



4. The Parking Issue is Parked at Last *by Alex Murray*

THE Parking Issue is finally laid to rest, or at least has achieved a kind of closure. At the AGM Alex Murray reported that members of YURA will, as usual, be issued with a limit of 12 “free” parking passes, obtainable then they pay their fees which in part covers this expense. YURA’s study of the usage of parking passes shows that very few people need more than that number of passes. The Administration had rejected YURA’s proposal, developed by the joint YURA/ARF/STAFF parking committee, that parking in excess of \$100.00 should be a taxable benefit for retired users. Of course, retirees still teaching must continue to pay for parking. □



5. York’s Changed Look *by William Whitla*

WITH the announcement last Fall that York would be home to a new Stadium for Toronto’s professional football and soccer franchises, the campus at Jane and Steeles will never look the same. On October 18, 2004, the University joined in a deal with the Toronto Argonauts and the Canadian Soccer Association, along with the Ontario and federal governments to build a 25,000-seat \$70-million stadium, to open in 2007.

The whole campus at York is being transformed. Retirees returning after several years away will be amazed at the changes. In a huge building boom, York’s floor space will have increased by an enormous 43% since 1998, much with Ontario SuperBuild support. Anyone driving up Keele Street towards the campus cannot help but notice the three or four giant cranes that tower over the building site, mostly to the south of the Student Commons.

Nor has Glendon been neglected. Glendon Hall there has recently been renovated. Some of Toronto’s top designers, including three graduates of York, helped transform the 80-year-old Glendon Hall for free. The project was undertaken on behalf of the Junior League of Toronto which conducted public tours last May and June to raise money for the Pathways to Education Program at



From left, Toronto Argonauts owners Howard Sokolowski and David Cynamon, York President and Vice-Chancellor Lorna R. Marsden, Gary Brewer, York vice-president, finance & administration

Regent Park, providing financial assistance, tutoring, and mentoring to help students stay in school.

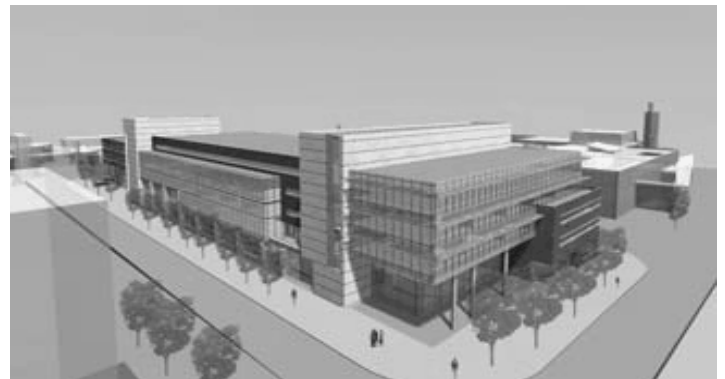
The new Computer Science and Engineering



Glendon Hall

building, between Steacie and Farquharson opened in 2002. Three buildings opened in 2003: the William Small Centre (housing Campus Services, Security, the Computing Commons and the Arboretum parking garage), the new Schulich School of Business) and the TEL building (Technology Enhanced Learning, a project of York and Seneca College).

The \$88 million TEL Building, designed by Toronto’s Moriyama & Teshima Architects, is located behind the Fine Arts buildings south of the University Commons. Adjacent to the new Seneca@York Building,



Artist’s drawing, TEL Building

it features wireless communications, multi-media lecture halls and computer laboratories that will be used by 4,000 York and Seneca students. The Ontario government infrastructure program paid for more than half of the cost.

The Schulich School of Business (Hariri Pontarini and Robbie/Young+Wright, architects) is the first building on the left as you drive into the campus from Keele St, curving around the nearby roads. It includes

such state-of-the-art accommodations as wireless Internet cafés, 60 executive residential suites with hotel facilities, 13



Seymour Schulich Building, artist's drawing

breakout conference rooms and 14 three-tiered lecture halls for 60-65 students. The lecture halls are equipped with plasma screens and the library study areas are fitted with network ports connected to online business databases. It also has a 200-seat dining room with executive chef, used by some as a replacement for the Faculty Club which has now closed. The glass and limestone exterior form a natural-looking veneer over a spacious, hi-tech facility built with the needs of its 2,750 students and 10,000 executive trainees in mind.

To the east of the TEL and Seneca buildings is the new Student Services Centre, gathering together offices from different places on campus, including the East Office Building. This building opened in 2004, along with

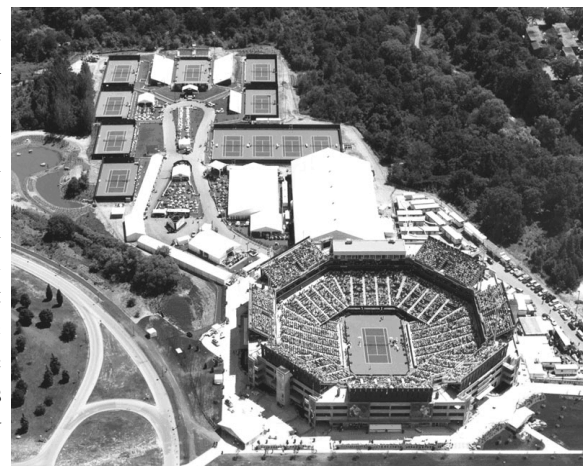


Architects' drawing of Accolade West Fine Arts Building

a new Pond Road student residence for 430 undergraduates, the Rexall National Tennis Centre at the extreme west of the Campus, adjacent to the offices of Pioneer Village and the Humber Authority, towards Jane Street. The Centre has a 12,500-seat stadium court and was first used for international tennis last summer, where

perhaps you saw it on TV.

Future buildings in 2005 include an expansion to Tait McKenzie to double the fitness activity space, and



Rexall National Tennis Centre: aerial view "Accolade"

Project, two large Fine Arts buildings for music and dance adjoining Burton Auditorium and the huge new Centre for Theatre and Film. The Accolade buildings will provide performance halls, a recital hall, proscenium theatre, a lecture hall/cinema (with multiple screening capabilities), and studios, as well as general classrooms.

With all of this new building, people are kept from getting lost by numerous new multi-directional signs, entrance displays, and campus maps, designed by Kramer Design Associates, that have already won several awards—as well as the thanks of thousands of students and faculty. Come and see York's changed look when you are at Keele and Steeles—it's well worth a visit. And some of the old buildings are still welcoming too. □

See more coloured illustrations of these buildings at the York YorkU Magazine webpages (October 2004 and Summer 2004) at www.yorku.ca/ycom/yorku_pastissues.htm! Thanks to Y-File and YorkU for information and photographs.



6. PER Grant Forms Require Chair's Signature

from the Executive

CLAIMS forms for Professional Expense Reimbursement (under Article 25.08 of the YUFA Contract) must now have the departmental chair's signature. This procedure is put in place to ensure, so far as Canada Customs and Revenue (that is new-speak for the old Revenue Canada) is concerned, against any irregularities concerning the fund's tax-exempt status. Retirees who have such grants, available on retirement through Senior Scholar status, are reminded of the information provided in Article 25.08: "The Employer shall reimburse employees, up to the maximum, through the mechanism of a minor research account, for eligible expenses submitted with appropriate documentation in accordance with guidelines to be circulated annually to all employees. All materials and equipment purchases shall be the property of the University." □



7. What Happens When You Have More than One Insurance Plan?

by the Editor

IF you have an aother insurance plan additional to your York plan, how do you submit claims? We have been advised by York’s Human Resources and by officers at RTIP (Ontario Retired Teachers Insurance Plan) that the best way to ensure timely payments of benefits is to first submit to Great West Life your claims for all items that you want to have reimbursed, including those items that are not covered under York’s plan (such as altemative medical practitioners) or for which your alternative plan provides more coverage than York (such as chiropractic care). Keep a photocopy of all of your receipts. In a letter ask that Great West Life return your original receipts to you. Then submit the receipts to your second plan, together with the statement that Great West sends telling you what Great West has paid and what it has not. Then the second plan should be able to look after your claims. Good luck, and keep ARF posted on any problems. □



8. CURAC Presentation on Retiree Health Benefits

AT the Winnipeg CURAC meeting last May, Michael Byrne, Director of the Warren Centre at the University of Manitoba addressed the conference on “General Consideration in respect to Retiree Health Benefits.” He talked about the need for different kinds of coverage. This discussion is of real importance to York Retirees as we consider the next round of negotiations

through YUFA and possible disbursements through the YUFA / ARF Trust. Byrne said that normal benefit plans include supplementary health items, like drugs, dental, vision, and so on, but pointed out that these items fall into “two broad categories: what were known in the industry as ‘dollar trading’ coverages and those which involved some true insurance elements. Vision care and most types of dental care are examples of the former involving as they do a large number of usually small claims [and] very few large ones which are paid for through the premiums paid by those covered. Dollar trading coverages involve almost no ‘insurance’ element and most members will end up paying the full cost of their own claims over time. What is involved is more a budgeting exercise than participation in a group insurance plan. In general it was Michael Byrne’s view that such coverage should be de-emphasized, not necessarily avoided altogether in devising a health benefits package, but not given a central place in it. Instead, the focus should be on providing insurance against large, costly claims, on drugs and on out-of-country medical. The principle involved was essentially summed up in the dictum, ‘Insure your house, not your bicycle.’ What is important is to be protected against catastrophic losses.” For a fuller account see <http://www.curac.ca/byrne.htm> □

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 2004, 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

Morton Abramson: abramson@mathstat.yorku.ca

Vice-President

Alex Murray amurray@yorku.ca

Past-President

Peter Harries-Jones peterhj@yorku.ca

Secretary

Fred Morgan fmorgan@yorku.ca

Treasurer

Barry Loughton loughton@yorku.ca

Editor of Newsletter

William Whitla wwhitla@yorku.ca

Pre-Retiree Member

Don Pelletier dhp@yorku.ca

Members-at-Large

Sylvie Arend sarend@glendon.yorku.ca

Ted Bieler tbieler@yorku.ca

Arthur Haberman arthurh@yorku.ca

Nicole Keating nkeating@glendon.yorku.ca

Chester Sadowski chesters@yorku.ca

Al Stauffer stauffer@yorku.ca

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 (wwhitla@yorku.ca) or by post to ARF, c/o YUFA, 261 Health, Nursing & Env. Studies, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto ON M3J 1P3. Other members of the Executive may be reached by post at the same address or by e-mail.