

President's Report Membership Meeting - May 27, 2011

There are a number of important items on our agenda for this meeting.

Foremost is the appearance of the Provost, Patrick Monahan, who will discuss ways in which faculty and librarians can become more engaged in the life of the university after retirement. I have sent him a summary of the responses we received from our members suggesting how this could happen. I hope we can have a lively exchange of views and look forward to a more formal framework for our future participation.

Members might be interested in looking at the volunteer program for retirees at McMaster University. See their website at www.mcmaster.ca/ua/alumni/networking_volunteer.html
Click on the link at the bottom of the page to see the list of specific volunteer opportunities.

The YUFA Benefits Trust was set up to provide health and dental benefits to retirees of the YUFA bargaining unit. It currently has asset of approximately \$1.6M and funds a \$300 increase in the annual limit on our dental benefits. One of the two ARFL trustees, Arthur Haberman, has resigned and has been replaced by Roger Heeler from the ARFL Executive. Our other trustee, Ken Davey, is coming to the end of his term shortly and we are seeking a replacement for him. Let us know if you are interested in serving in this position. We would like to thank Arthur and Ken for their years of service on our behalf.

This might also be an opportune time to think about the best use of the Trust's funds in support of retirees. Bring your thoughts to the meeting.

ARFL and YURA are discussing a closer and more formal relationship. The two organizations represent different but overlapping constituencies and interests. Both are concerned with serving their members who are former employees of York University. One of the means being discussed would be to have an ex-officio member from the other organization on our executive committees. This would require a constitutional amendment. We would like to discuss this in advance of bringing such an amendment to our AGM in the fall.

Roger Heeler has been our Newsletter Editor for the past few years. He has resigned his position after the latest Newsletter was completed. Tony Wallis, who has been assisting Roger and who played a major role in the production of the latest Newsletter, will be taking over as Editor. We would like to thank Roger for important work of producing our Newsletters and welcome Tony as the new Editor.

I have recently returned from the annual conference of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) along with Joy Cohnstaedt who also represented ARFL. The co-chairs of YURA, Sandra Pyke and Janet Rowe, were delegates as well. The theme of the conference was 'Keeping Up', maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle

after retirement. One of the more interesting presentations was from Max Cynader, a leading brain researcher from UBC. He pointed out several results ways to improve our brain functioning as we age:

- 1) Sleep is vital to long term memory and lateral thinking. So it's important to get a good night's sleep;
- 2) Physical exercise increases the production of new brain cells. It's the only way to accomplish this.
- 3) Stress kills brain cells. Avoid negative stress as opposed to positive stimulation which helps to keep us engaged.

Another presentation was on 'Saving Medicare'. It was pointed out that the costs of Medicare have not increased in real terms. The reason that they take up an ever increasing share of government budgets is that these budgets have decreased proportionally because of tax cuts. We need to counteract the perception that we can't afford the present level of expenditure if we want to preserve Medicare in its current form. CURAC is looking at ways we can achieve this.

One of our sessions was held at the First Nations University which is situated on the campus of the University of Regina. It is a spectacular building and the presentations on First Nations Education was very interesting.

VP's Report for ARFL Membership Meeting May 27 2011

ARFL's constitution states "The Vice-President shall exercise the powers and duties of the President in the absence of the President and may undertake such other responsibilities as are assigned by the Executive Committee."

The current VP has not had to act in lieu of our president as the President has attended all relevant meetings dealing with ARFL business. He has, however, prepared two reports for the association (i) an updated version of Retiree Health Benefits and (ii) a comparison of the health coverage benefits as provided by our former administrator, Great West Life and the current administrator, Sun Life. These will appear on the ARFL website. He attended a recent membership meeting of YUFA and reported back to the ARFL executive meeting on issues of relevance to the ARFL membership.

He has also served on a sub-committee charged with revamping the ARFL website. Other members are M. Muldoon and A. Wallis. Some work has been initiated on the project. It is envisaged that the revamped web site will also be accompanied by a blog dedicated to ARFL business.

S. Jeffers May 20 2011

ARFL Financial Report May 19 ,2011.

ARFL continues to be financially sound. There is a core of approximately 200 members who contribute regularly and a group of others who are less reliable. In addition we usually receive \$600-1000 in gifts from our generous supporters. Thus we generate an annual income of approximately \$6000 + . In addition we received approximately \$2000 from surplus funds generated by the CURAC conference held at York last year.

Our yearly expenses for Newsletter, meeting catering, conference expenses, YUFA membership, CURAC membership and supplies are approximately \$ 5000+.

Our current account will have a balance of approximately \$6000 after paying for catering this event since last year I did not move funds into our term deposit because I did not know how much we would have to contribute to the CURAC conference.

In addition we have \$13138 in a term deposit with Alterna Savings and \$ 17900 in a savings account with ING Direct.

Our total assets are of the order of \$37000.

BGL

Report of Newsletter Editor

Newsletters are produced and distributed ahead of both of the two annual meetings of ARFL. This timing gives notice of each impending meeting and provides reminders about dues payments in addition to conveying articles on current topics of interest to members. The editors welcome contributions.

Roger Heeler

Report from the YUFA Retired Faculty and Librarians Benefits Trust

Walter Whiteley, past Chair, May 2011

In the last month, there have been important changes in the trustees of the Retirees' Benefits Trust. Walter Whiteley (now past Chair) completed his maximum six-year term and was replaced as a YUFA trustee by John Amanatides. Arthur Haberman resigned after over 4 years as an ARFL trustee and was replaced by Roger Heeler. On June 1, Don Pelletier will have completed his six-year term and will be replaced by Arthur Hilliker as a YUFA trustee. Marianne Rogers (YUFA named trustee – senior member – retires May 2012) and Ken Davey (ARFL named trustee – retires Oct. 2011) continue as trustees.

Let me give a brief report, in two parts: (A) looking back and (B) looking forward. More information on the Trust can be found on the YUFA web page:

<http://www.yufa.org/retirees/BenefitTrustFund.html>

(A) Looking back, the trustees spent some time working with the administration and the new benefits administrator (Sun Life) to ensure that the invoices we received were transparent and billed for a maximum benefit of \$300 beyond the initial \$950 covered by the Employers benefit plan for retirees. After a number of requests for more detailed invoices over several years, and some months of delay generating a correct invoice for 2009, the invoice for 2010 was found to be clear, well broken down by member and spouse, and by year (so a few late payments for 2009 were also invoiced). Our other task has been to continue to reinvest the assets of the fund – which are just about \$1650K. Throughout the period 2006-present, these have been conservative investments - GICs and some longer bonds purchased earlier. The investments continued to make positive income every year, and in 2010, the earned about \$70K (that is more than the invoice of \$53K). So the funds have continued to grow – though at much slower rate than in the past, when interest rates were higher. We note that the income of the fund is not taxable – following a ruling by the Canadian Revenue Agency (a ruling which followed intensive work by a previous set of trustees).

(B) Looking forward. As mentioned, this year, the invoice paid covered \$53K. The invoices have been increasing about \$4K per year over the last three years, under the current benefits plan as embedded in the current collective agreement. While we have not tracked the details (more members in the benefits plan? + some higher dental expenses for the same work?), a recent meeting of the trustees projected that these payments would continue to increase, assuming no change in the dental benefits in the next round of YUFA bargaining (Spring 2012). Whether there are changes is, of course, a decision of ARFL and YUFA, on which the trustees can only offer advice as requested. These projected expenses mean that the investments will need to have an average return of over 3.6% over the next few years, to pay the invoices out of income. With a major bond due on June 1, 2011, and the current interest rates, this may be hard to achieve over the next couple of years. This is the challenge for the new trustees, who have a meeting scheduled for June 2, to discuss this further.

What is now clear, is that the optimistic discussions from 6 years ago – about possibly covering some additional benefits - are not longer topics of discussion among trustees now!