

YURA Newsletter

No. 10, September 2006

A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees Association

From the Co-Presidents

From time to time the subject of pensions can preoccupy a retiree organization, as the so-called *shadow pension* has done for YURA during the past several months. YURA has a responsibility to its members to provide liaison between pensioners and York University, and normally that role is filled by having a member of its Executive serve on each of the Pension Board of Trustees and the All University Committee on Pensions (our representative on AUCP makes a report with commentary elsewhere in this newsletter). But given the concerns voiced by large numbers of our members in the past several months about pension matters this year, members of the Executive (Nancy Accinelli, Janet Rowe, Ken Thomson and Albert Tucker) took additional steps this past spring, meeting on two occasions with the vice-president, finance and administration, Gary Brewer. The substance of discussion at these meetings centred on two themes – a degree of discontent in YURA at the lack of communication and explanation from the university on the issue of pension increases, and emphasis by the university administration on the difficulties of financing pension increments without the means provided by the *shadow pension*. No final resolution on pension increases came from these meetings (the university will come to terms only with YUFA), but retirees have certainly received additional information in the mail following this meeting. The lines of communication continue to be open.

On a less material and happier note, two representatives from YURA attended the fourth annual conference of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) in May at the University of Guelph. A prominent theme at the conference was the positive contributing relationship between Canadian universities and their retiree organizations. YURA was represented by Cynthia Dent and Albert Tucker; ARF by Alex Murray. Cynthia took a very articulate part in the discussion of benefits, and Albert gave a talk on the pivotal role of the Retirement Planning Centre at York in creating and maintaining a truly effective relationship between the university and the whole process of retirement. It became evident in the discussion that the York experience is unique: Few if any universities in Canada have taken the initiative that York and YUFA did some twenty years ago in forming such an office as the RPC, which continues to be financed largely by the University, with a substantial annual subsidy from YUFA and smaller sums from other unions and YURA. In addition to its primary goal of preparing employees for retirement, it gives continuous material and moral encouragement to the variety of functions in which YURA is involved for the benefit of retirees. And YURA continues to be grateful for that partnership.

We look forward to seeing you on October 13!

Albert Tucker and Nancy Accinelli

Annual General Meeting and Lunch

YURA members are encouraged to turn out for the Annual General Meeting and buffet lunch on Friday, October 13. Both events will be held in the Underground Restaurant, located in the Student Centre at the west end of York Lanes.

The lunch will begin at 12:00 noon and will feature a hot and cold buffet, desserts, coffee and tea, and a cash bar. Advance reservations are required. Reservations forms have been mailed to all members, and the registration deadline is September 22.

The Annual General Meeting will begin at 1:15. The agenda will include reports on YURA's activities during the year, leading with remarks from co-presidents Nancy Accinelli and Albert Tucker. Parking will be free, and parking passes can be picked up on the day of the event, at the Registration Desk in the luncheon area.

Showcase and Sale set for November 9

The annual Showcase and Sale is a great opportunity to have a good time on campus. On Thursday, November 9, come find Canadiana Country Furniture, home-made pies, cakes, cookies, arts and crafts, handmade clothing and decorative items, watercolour art, Christmas gifts – and lots more.

If you want to take a table for the Sale, contact Noel Corbett (ncorbett@yorku.ca, 905-833-6714). And if you want to bake - hooray - we love your favourite recipes! For additional information or to volunteer, please contact Deanna Jubas, Showcase Coordinator, djubas@yorku.ca, or call the office, 416-736-2100, ext. 70664.

Enjoy the opportunity to see what retirees are up to and visit with friends and colleagues. If you bring a lunch or buy one on campus, you can join us in the hospitality room for coffee and a visit with other YURA members. Please look for future announcements with more details about this annual event. We look forward to seeing you there.

All-University Committee on Pensions

There was a meeting of the All-University Committee on Pensions on August 14. Here are some of the items of interest to retirees from that meeting.

Vice-President Gary Brewer attended and made a presentation on the pension fund. The main point of interest to retirees is that the administration has been granted an extension until September 29 to reply to the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) regarding the reactivated complaint on the “shadow pension.” They wanted this extra time to submit the latest financial information on the plan (though the relevance of this information to the complaint is not clear to me). This means that FSCO will not consider the complaint until some time after this date.

For anyone on a Minimum Guarantee Pension, you should be aware that there has been a systematic error in the calculation of the Final Average Earnings. The calculations have been done on the basis of the earnings for the last five years instead of the “best” five years as specified in the plan. Thus if your salary in one or more of the last five years before retirement was lower than in some years previous to that (because of leaves or reduced load, for example) you should have received a letter from the pension administrators informing you of an increase to your pension – *but only if you are on a Minimum Guarantee Pension.*

I have an electronic copy of the latest actuarial valuation of the pension fund, which has to be filed with the FSCO every three years. It gives details of the state of the pension fund and projections for the future. I will send it to YURA members on request (it is not for those afraid of numbers).

Further information on the financial state of the pension fund as well as copies of presentations to the annual pension meetings can

be found at
www.yorku.ca/hr/compensation/pensionbenefits/fundinvestmentretirns.html.

Al Stauffer
YURA representative on AUCP

New members

Thirty-one new retirees have joined YURA since March 2006, bringing the membership as of mid-September to 549. The new members are:

Marilyn Abram, Keith Aldridge, Rima Anani, Frances Beer, Pat Cates, Mary Clark, Wesley Cragg, Helmar Drost, Carolyn Ewoldt, Fred Fletcher, Barbara Gold, Betty Hagopian, Michael Herren, A.S. Kanya-Forstner, Roger Heeler, Christine Klein-Lataud, David Lidov, Leonarda Mina, Sherma Mitchell, Bilkish Mullick, Henry Vivian Nelles, Iryna Ostapchuk, Joyce Pereira, Maro Tarumian, John Unrau, Hank Verkamman, Neil Wiener, Barrie Wilson, Albert Wolkenstein, Cho Yong, and Michael Ziegler.

Barbara's Bits & Bytes

Have you ever worked in the UK?

If so, perhaps you are not aware that you are eligible for the state pension that you funded.

Do you know how and when to claim your pension?

Are you aware that you can pay back into the pension?

Are you living in Canada and receiving a "frozen" pension? What is happening to change that situation?

Do you know that ex-pats visiting the UK may claim their temporary pension uprate by phoning the Pension Service in

Newcastle within 30 days of arrival?

Do you know that questions on the above, or similar queries, may be answered by the Newcastle pension office – *or* by joining the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners, telephone 416-253-6402; e-mail pension2@bellnet.ca.

Barbara Rowe

In Memoriam

Notice has been received of recent deaths among retirees of the university:

Margaret Adair, January 25, 2006
James Allan, April 2, 2006
Dorothy Allison, December 22, 2005
Ethel Fenwick, June 28, 2006
Janet A. Hazelden, September 28, 2005
Jadduroy (James) Hera, March 24, 2006
Phyllis Honickman, April 8, 2006
Irving Layton, January 4, 2006
John A. Livingston, January 17, 2006
Mary Mills (date not available)
Patrick Nowell-Smith, February 16, 2006
Peter Oliver, May 14, 2006
Gertrude Pegler, February 25, 2006
Antonio Rismondo, April 17, 2006
Rocco Schiavone, October 2, 2005
Glendon Schubert, January 15, 2006
Michele Serra, February 7, 2006
John A. Stammers, March 26, 2006
Margaret Stockton, July 1, 2006
Sol Tanenzapf, March 18, 2006
James Tenney, August 24, 2006
Shirley N. Tingey, May 25, 2006

Vincent Vaitiekunas, February 22, 2006
Janet A. Warner, May 6, 2006

We thank YURA members and the Department of Human Resources for assistance in providing this information.

About the “In Memoriam” listings:

“In Memoriam” generates more questions than anything else in the YURA newsletter. Why do we sometimes fail to report a recent death? Why is there sometimes a delay of many months in receiving news that someone has died?

There is no automatic way for YURA or the university to learn of the death of a retiree. If the retiree was drawing a York pension, and if the relatives or the executor notifies the bank, then the bank informs the university. Even so, the date of death may remain unknown to us. If the bank is not informed until a cheque is returned, this may involve a considerable delay. For retirees who withdraw their pensions upon retirement, there is no procedure for informing the university of their death.

If you know of the death of a fellow retiree, please pass along the information, either to the YURA office or to York’s Pension and Benefits Office.

Benefits Update

The Department of Human Resources and Employee Relations has recently announced changes in benefits for retired CPM and YUSA staff. Retirees from these two groups are now eligible for Vision Care benefits in the amount of \$100 per calendar year per family. Also, for both groups, the Lifetime Maximum Extended Health Care amount has been increased to \$35,000. CPM changes came into effect on May 1, 2005, while YUSA changes came into

effect on August 1, 2005. A memorandum about these changes went out to YUSA and CPM retirees in August.

For all retiree groups with benefits coverage, booklets outlining benefits are now posted on Human Resources and Employee Relations' Web site, with links from YURA's Web site. To access them, log on to the York site and follow the links to Pension and Benefits, or log on directly to www.yorku.ca/hr/compensation/pensionbenefits. Or, log on to YURA's Web site, www.yorku.ca/yura/pensionplan.htm.

Coverage of extended health benefits under the plans for YUSA, CPM, YUFA, CUPE 1356, CUPE 1356-1, and IUOE is complex, and even the benefits booklets do not have all the answers. While they provide a summary, more detailed information is available from the Pension and Benefits Counsellors. If you have consulted your benefits booklet and still have questions, contact either the Benefits Office or Great-West Life for further information.

The Benefits staff have been busy over the summer preparing for expansion and reorganization. Enquiries about your pension or benefits may be made by telephone to the Pension and Benefits Office at 416-736-2100 and then the appropriate extension or you may e-mail your Counsellor. Counsellors are assigned according to the first letter of your last name:

A - E: Margaret Crowe, ext. 20377,
crowem@yorku.ca

F - L: Andreea Madaras, ext. 20702,
amadaras@yorku.ca

M - R: Yvonne Rego, ext. 33912,
yrego@yorku.ca

S - Z: Justin Gunraj, ext. 20617,
jgunraj@yorku.ca

Enquiries may also be made directly to Great-West Life at 1-800-263-5742; remember to have your employee number and policy number at hand when telephoning Great-West Life.

In other news about benefits, if you have signed up with Great-West Life for online services, you can now arrange for direct deposit of claim payments into your bank account. For more information about signing up for direct deposit, or to register for online services, see the Great-West Web site at www.greatwestlife.com.

YURA Executive

For information about YURA, contact any of the members of the Executive Committee, or the YURA office.

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