

YURA Newsletter

No. 7, May 2005

A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees Association

A Word from the President

This is an interesting time of year for those among us who still feel some kind of attachment to the university – exam time, recording of grades and approaching end of the academic year for those who still teach or administer. For those who are completely retired, it may simply be spring, the warming of the land, the emergence of buds and leaves and the flow of water into the soil. For members of YURA, this is Newsletter No. 7, edited by Barbara Tryfos, a former member of CPM who has volunteered to take on the task in succession to John Becker. John is now busy with other activities, most of which have little to do with retirement. We thank him for having initiated the Newsletter, for having continued to edit it, and for his past efforts to clarify the structure of the pension plan.

Other changes on the YURA Executive are also in place. Al Stauffer now represents YURA on the All University Committee on Pensions, which he chaired before his retirement; and Morton Abramson has replaced John Heddle as our representative on the Pension Board of Trustees. Both will have commentary, if not in this issue of the Newsletter, then in the next. Your Executive has also established a committee to study the issue of benefits at York for non-academic retirees, in light of the comprehensive survey of Ontario universities completed last year by Cynthia Dent. The committee is being chaired by Ken Thomson, with Susan Lanoue and Frances Bukovek as members.

This subject of non-academic retirees comes up also in relation to representation of retirees on collective bargaining units. YUFA is the only such organization that welcomes a retiree; others are reluctant to have even observers from YURA for fear that retiree concerns could disturb or deflect issues that are considered to be front and centre by *active* members of the pension plan. The subject is one of continuing

interest in the YURA Executive.

On the lighter, social side, trips are once again planned for the Shaw and the Stratford theatres – *You Never Can Tell* for Shaw on May 25; and *As You Like It* for Stratford on September 8. Readers should already be informed, but please don't hesitate to phone Extension 70664 or 66228, if you need more information.

Albert Tucker, President

Pension News

By Morton Abramson

From the recent York Pension Newsletter we learn that the net return of the York Pension Fund for 2004 was 9.7569%. Although this is a good return that will benefit active members, for retirees on the York Pension Fund, this means that there will be no increase in their pension for 2005 – the third year in a row there has not been an increase.

This 0% increase would occur regardless of whether or not a “shadow pension” is in effect.

Further, I do not anticipate an increase in pension payments for 2006.

According to my calculations, if the fund was to have a 12% return in 2005 then pension payments in 2006 would increase by 0% using a “shadow pension” and increase by 1.5809% if a shadow pension is not assumed.

A fund return of 20% in 2005 would result in a 0% increase using a “shadow pension” and a 3.3482% increase without a shadow pension.

Even an unrealistic 27% return in 2005 would result in only a 1.0493% increase in 2006 using a “shadow pension” and a 4.8235% return if a shadow pension is not assumed.

The University is assuming that a “shadow pension” is in effect according to the York Pension Plan while YUFA claims that the

concept of a shadow pension is not contained in the Plan. This contentious issue is now before The Financial Services Commission of Ontario for a decision.

Recently the Board of Trustees of the York Pension Fund approved the following recommendations, which were made by the Sub-Committee on Investment Performance after extensive study and analysis by the members of the Sub-Committee:

Recommendation 1: Asset Mix

That the foreign equity allocation for the York University Pension Fund be changed to 15% U.S. equity and 15% International equity, from 12% U.S. equity and 18% International equity respectively.

Recommendation 2: Manager Structure

That the Manager Structure for the York University Pension Fund be modified to:

- separate the U.S. equity allocation into a passively managed U.S. equity Large Cap portfolio (10% of the total fund), and an actively managed U.S. Mid Cap portfolio (5% of the total fund);
- change the allocation of the International Equity Growth mandate to 5% of the total fund from 9%;
- change the allocation of the International equity Value mandate to 10% of the total fund from 9%, and separate this allocation into 2 mandates (each 5% of the total fund).

Recommendation 3: Foreign Equity Managers

That the following investment manager changes be made:

- terminate the current International equity value manager, Franklin Templeton;
- terminate the current International equity growth manager, TT International;
- appoint Wedge Capital Management for the U.S. Mid Cap portfolio;
- appoint Alliance Bernstein Institutional Investment Management

- for one of the two International equity Value mandates;
- appoint LSV Asset Management for the second of the two International equity Value mandates;
 - appoint Gryphon International Investment Corporation for the International equity Growth mandate.

The February 2005 *Pension at York Newsletter* informed plan members of the 3rd Annual Pension Meeting on Friday, April 22, 2005. All active and retired plan members were invited to attend and to suggest pension-related topics that they would like to see presented. *Morton Abramson is the representative of YURA on the Pension Board of Trustees.*

Proposal to Increase YURA Membership Fee

At the meeting in October 2004, the Annual General Meeting was told that the Executive is seriously contemplating a fee increase from \$15 to \$20. A formal motion to this effect will be introduced at the next AGM on September 30, 2005, to become effective on October 1, 2005.

YURA and ARF Representatives Attend Annual CURAC Conference

The annual conference of CURAC – the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada – is being held this year at the University of British Columbia from May 11 to 13.

John Warkentin, professor emeritus of Geography, will be attending on behalf of YURA. Alex Murray, retired professor of Environmental Studies, will go to speak and listen as a representative of ARF (the Association of Retired Faculty), though he sits also on the Executive of YURA.

The theme of this year's conference has to do with structures and how retiree organizations are (or are not) represented on university bodies. Whether the interests of retirees are asserted can depend very

much on these structures, and it will be relevant for YURA to know more about how representation is arranged at universities and colleges across the country.

Brian Bixley Invites Retirees to Lilactree Farm Garden

Since retiring from the Economics Department at Glendon College, Brian Bixley has developed Lilactree Farm Garden – a large, professional, very attractive garden located just north of Shelburne, off Highway 89. Lilactree will be open on four Sundays in 2005 – on May 22, June 26, July 24, and September 25 – from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Brian wants all our readers to know that, on those days, it would give him real pleasure to see and greet any visitors, be they retired or not, who may want a day out in a beautiful rural garden. Unusual plants will be for sale, and there are good places for lunch nearby. For information, telephone 519-925-5577, or email lilactree@sympatico.ca.

YURA Supports Graduate Scholarships

Albert Tucker, the president of YURA, was among the guests invited to a special luncheon that was hosted on April 7 by Dean John Lennox of Graduate Studies, to honour both Doris Anderson and graduate students in receipt of Ontario government scholarships awarded under the OGS and OGSST programs. Ms Anderson, the former very dynamic editor of *Chatelaine* magazine, spoke of her upbringing in Alberta, and of her pleasure in having a scholarship raised and administered in her name at York University.

Dean Lennox graciously introduced the graduate students in attendance, many of whom had received an OGS that was initiated by YURA. Six graduate students received YURA OGS awards for 2004-05. This achievement by YURA is all the more remarkable because it has come from retired members whose pensions have been fixed for the third year in a row.

*Scholarship recipients express appreciation
for support from YURA*

Ian Mosby, a YURA scholarship recipient in York's graduate program in History, wrote to Albert Tucker in February this year:

Dear Dr. Tucker,

I'm extremely honoured to have received the York University Retirees Association Ontario Graduate Scholarship, and I would like to thank you as the Association's president. This scholarship has meant a great deal to me as it has, in conjunction with the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, helped make my studies at York possible. My debt load following my undergraduate studies was quite substantial and I was concerned that, despite working for a year after graduation, I would need to further delay my studies in order to pay down my student loans. With these two generous scholarships, however, I was able to follow my true passion for studying history without having to put financial concerns ahead of my larger academic and career goals. So far, my studies have been very rewarding and I am pleased that I chose to pursue my MA in History at York, as it is an excellent program. I've recently applied for PhD programs, as well, and am hoping to continue my studies at York if my application here is successful.

Once again, I would like to thank the York University Retirees Association for their generous scholarship.

Yours truly,
Ian Mosby

Another recipient of a YURA graduate scholarship is Pandora Syperek, who is pursuing both her MA in Art History and a graduate diploma in Curatorial Studies in Visual Culture. Dean Lennox forwarded Ms. Syperek's statement of what the YURA award is making possible for her:

My primary focus in art history is in modern Canadian art. For my master's research I am focusing on Canadian figure painting of the interwar period, examining paintings by Prudence Heward, Edwin Holgate, Dorothy Stevens, and others, in an interdisciplinary context. I am interested in both social implications, such as those regarding sexuality, as well as issues of cross-cultural exchange.

I am hoping to go on to a PhD in art history once I've completed my MA. My career plans involve work in a public institution, either cultural or education; hence I am primarily interested in curating, teaching, and

writing. These areas appeal to me due to my enthusiasm for working directly with art, sharing my knowledge, and continually learning myself.

This award has made a tremendous impact on my studies and my future possibilities. Since I come from a working class background, I depend on scholarships to continue my studies. Beyond this, the award bestows formidable prestige to my curriculum vitae, and thus makes further significant achievements possible. The OGS has helped open up many opportunities for my graduate studies.

Thank you,
Pandora Syperek

YURA Welcomes New Members

YURA extends a hearty welcome to new members who joined during the latter part of 2003-04 and in 2004-05. The new members are:

Morton Abramson, Robert Albritton, Patricia Allen, Christopher Armstrong, Jim Benson, Elizabeth Bentham, Julia Brown, Kenneth Carpenter, Saroj Chawla, Annie Cheng, Marlene Collins, Michael Copeland, Matthew Corrigan, Elma Culver, Jurij Darewych, Leo Davids, Zilpha Ellis, D.R. Ewen, Margarita Feliciano, Patricia Finch, Barry Fowler, Pio Fraccaro, Silviu Guiasu, Jean Handscombe, Margaret Hughes, Vito Ippolito, David M. Johnson, Tiit Kodar, James Laframboise, Stephen Levine, John Macintosh, George Martell, Bryan Massam, Mary Mathewson, Jack McCann, Harold Minden, Liisa North, Maureen Pereira, David Promislow, Inayat Siddique, Allan Stauffer, Noli Swatman, Donald Thompson, Giovanna Tullio, Robert Wallace, Ronald Webster, and Dianne Zecchino.

The new YURA members include 31 who were members of YUFA, 10 from YUSA, three from CUPE, 1 from CUPE 1356, and two from CPM.

With 47 new members in the past year and a half, the membership of YURA now stands at 466. About half the members were employed by York as faculty and about half were non-academic. Former affiliations include YUFA, YUSA, CPM, CUPE, CEYU, CUEW, CUPE 1356, CUPE 3903, IUOE, OHFA, RASOC, RAST, and RASST.

Of the retirees who have joined YURA, most continue to live in southern Ontario, from Toronto and the GTA to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Kingston, and Huntsville, among many other locations.

Fifteen YURA members report addresses outside Ontario. Of these, seven are in Canada – four in British Columbia, two in Alberta, and one in Quebec. Seven reside in the United States – two in California and one each in Florida, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. One member lives in Northern Ireland.

In Memoriam

David Bakan, October 18, 2004

Peter Carter, September 16, 2004

Hilda Couture, January 2, 2005

Hazel Edwards, January 12, 2005

David Froad, July 23, 2004

C. David Fowle, February 28, 2004

Ernest Griffin, February 17, 2005

Dorothy Gunning, February 5, 2005

Muriel Hicks, April 16, 2005

Sai-Ying Ho, April 9, 2004

Anna Kicinski, November 18, 2004

Dimitrios Konstantareas, September 30, 2004

Velta Lejins, November 28, 2004

Michael London, March 1, 2005

Shirley Mills, February 4, 2005

Pearl Mitchell, November 1, 2004

John Moore, October 22, 2004

Saverio M. Pagnelli, January 21, 2005

Elmer Phillips, December 31, 2004

Cyril Smetana, March 19, 2005

Joanne Tarnopolsky, February 6, 2005

Anne Tiveron, March 24, 2005

Campus Relations Welcomes Retirees

Silva Redigonda, campus relations officer in York's Security Services Department, extends an invitation to all women of the university – including retirees – to a drop-in program, scheduled every Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., in the Student Centre, Room 311B on the York Campus. Women are invited to come for information, for support, and to voice their opinions about making the university's campuses as safe as they can be. Ms. Redigonda is also interested in starting a program for men, if there is interest. Anyone with concerns about campus safety or interested in the programs of Campus Relations is invited to e-mail Silva Redigonda at sil@yorku.ca.

*Mark your calendar and watch for news of this year's Annual General meeting to
be held
Friday, September 30, 2005*

YURA Executive

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

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The Executive welcomes help in carrying on the work of the Association. To volunteer, phone or e-mail the office or any of the members listed above.

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