

ARF NEWS LETTER

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY

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ARF NEWS LETTER

Contents:

- Editorial
- (1) New Executive Committee
- (2) Member Suggestions
- (3) Status of YUFA Negotiations
- (4) Pension Fund & Its Administration
- (5) Retired Faculty's Relationship w/YUFA
- (6) ARF's Relationship with YUFA
- (7) Changes to the O.D.B.
- (8) Auto Insurance - A Helpful Hint!

NOTICE OF ARF GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5,
1996 - 12 NOON - 2:00 PM
SYLVESTER'S LOUNGE
STONG COLLEGE

THERE WILL BE FREE
PARKING AVAILABLE IN
LOT DD ON
PRESENTATION OF THIS
NEWSLETTER

PLEASE JOIN US FOR
LIVELY DISCUSSION.

Editorial:

Representational Rights for Arf

In the past few months a leading concern of the ARF executive has been to gain a representative voice in key areas of concern, including the Pension Board of Trustees, the All-University Pension Committee, as well as at the negotiating table. In our view, the AUPC has supported positions and decisions relating to the use of pension surpluses and pension holidays which we consider to be unwise. The Pension Board Trustees so far have refused us separate representation, and we have had difficulty even in learning the agenda of its meetings. Moreover after two years we still have to be pressing to get lists of retirees from the Administration.

None of this is surprising; it has the dreary predictability of many other things which have happened recently. But one need not attribute to it an entirely sinister intent; much of it may be merely the overhang of York's position as a new University. For a long time we had so few retired faculty that their affairs could be handled in a back-of-an-envelope manner. What is now abundantly clear, however, is that they now constitute a clearly definable and sizable group and constituency, and are significantly affected by what happens on the Pension Committee, on the Pension Board and in bargaining.

Similarly, in the field of health benefits, when money first began to grow tight, cheese-paring economics were agreed in collective bargaining without much consideration being given to the new and swollen number of retirees. Inexperience and convenience together gave rise to the unpleasant reality of inadequate dental care ceilings intended to cover a year but cracking by the summer under the pressure of the modest but predictable claims made by the rising number of retirees, responding to the early retirement plans. Proportions or formulae would have been a better strategy, but it's easier to prepare budgets with dollar figures than with formalised contingencies.

DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING

The complacent faith that yesterday's measures for dealing with retirees are adequate for the present and future has to be shaken. We have had a spectacular start in terms of membership and articulation of the pressing concerns of retired faculty and we shall continue to grow large. It will not be possible to avoid giving formal recognition to ARF; we will be represented.....and by ourselves.

A university's reputation and its ability to attract good faculty and through them good students depends upon their continuing attachment and contribution; to alienate this would be detrimental to York as an institution. It is the irony and the ultimate futility of the Administration's position that its policy is to increase the numbers of retirees but then to pretend that we need not be listened to, when we speak directly for ourselves.

1) **NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

At the AGM tribute was paid to Roy Merrens, whose two-year leadership was directly responsible for the group's expansion to gain a substantial and stable membership broadly representative of retired faculty. He continues to serve on the Executive as past president.

Other officers were re-

elected. And we continue to seek a retired librarian to serve on the Executive.

Virginia Rock and Gene Simpson have resigned from the Executive Committee. We thank them also for their contributions.

Your new officers and others on the Executive are:

George Eaton - President
Cynthia Dandy - Vice-Pres.
Theodore Olson - Secretary
Lillian Lerman - Treasurer
Roy Merrens - Past Pres.
Mavis Waters
Ian Sowton

2) **MEMBER SUGGESTIONS:**

Without neglecting larger strategic issues, members expressed concern with a number of specific irritants at the General Meeting in April 1996. Worth recording are:

- (1) The very low cap on dental expenses (made effectively even lower by inducing more people to retire) that almost forbids procedures like dental implants. It would be helpful to have one-page summaries of your experience with the cap on dental expenses.
- (2) The varying ways that retired faculty are treated in their home units. This affects both the full-retired who wish to retain mail/office/research anchors at the University and even those who still teach one course within the home unit. But, since there was no all-University practice on these

matters when we were all working full-time, a common policy on name displays, office space, mail slots, normal perks, and so on, would be desirable. Is there a generic formula we can draft that refers to the historic practice of each unit as the standard to be maintained as much as possible? Should we devise a desiderata sheet that is a mixture of common factors and local options? It would be helpful for you to jot down your views or your relevant experience.

In each case, send your comments to Theodore Olson, York Centre for International and Strategic Studies, York Lanes, or 244 Harrygan Crescent, Richmond Hill, L4C 4J1.

3) **STATUS OF YUFA NEGOTIATIONS:**

After several months of negotiations which began in February 1996 and saw the intervention of a Ministry of Labour Conciliator, the University Administration and YUFA failed to achieve a settlement. Taking advantage of the fact that the 1992-96 Collective Agreement had expired, the Administration proceeded, unilaterally, to amend Article 14 of the Collective Agreement governing Retirement. With effect from August 6, 1996, the normal retirement date became July 1 - coincidental with or next following an employee's 65th birthday. Employees who

DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING

had reached their normal retirement date (i.e., the mandatory age of 65) on or before July 1996 would be permitted to continue until July 1, 1997.

The Administration's rationale, set out in a letter dated August 7, 1996 to members of the bargaining unit, was that this course of action was necessary to provide the resources to increase the base salary of members of the bargaining unit by an average of 2.65% (one progress-through-the-ranks increase) worth about \$1,844. This payment was made retroactive to July 1, 1996 and not to May, as would normally have been the case.

The Administration's conduct of negotiations prompted YUFA to file an unfair labour practice/grievance claim, alleging a lack of bargaining in-good-faith. The Administration also advised members of the bargaining unit in a letter dated September 3, 1996 that it had not terminated negotiations with YUFA and was ready to continue discussions at any time. We understand that negotiations will be continuing and that everything is still on the bargaining table including ARF's concerns about post-retirement benefits, and the unilaterally abrogated and revised Article 14.

4) THE PENSION FUND AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

Ever since the formation of ARF, we have been impressing upon YUFA the need for an independent review of the state of the Pension Fund Surpluses. We understand that YUFA has made progress towards a review of the administration of the Pension Fund, including the possibilities of utilizing the pension fund surpluses to improve the guaranteed minimum pension fund for retirees. We now look forward to seeing the fruits of this long awaited review.

Pension Contribution Holiday (Moratorium)

In June 1996, the BOG approved an Administration proposal to take yet another pension contribution holiday for 1996/97. YUFA took the position that with the expiry of the Social Contract which provided for pension contribution holidays during its 3-year term, the Collective Agreement did not allow the Administration to claim yet another moratorium for 1996/97 without YUFA's agreement. YUFA has therefore filed a grievance. At the same time, however, YUFA has agreed in principle and, without prejudice, to enter into negotiations with the Administration, as to how the total pension holiday money may be shared or utilized as between the Administration and other stakeholders.

ARF has consistently made the point which we believe is

now being appreciated by YUFA Executive, that pension holidays are an option available to the Administration only because the pension fund surpluses are being allowed to run up against the Revenue Canada imposed taxable limit, and this allows the Administration to continue playing the pension holiday "trump card". If however, the pension fund surpluses, which must be considered "deferred wages" were being drawn down by virtue of being used to improve existing retirement and other benefits, and creatively so, the University would not be able to absolve itself of the obligation to make its annual contributions.

5) RETIRED FACULTY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH YUFA

In May 1996, YUFA's AGM passed a number of Amendments to Article IV of its Constitution dealing with membership. Of immediate interest are:

- a) the fact that YUFA members, upon retirement, may elect to continue as Associate Members.
- b) Associate Members, upon payment of the requisite annual dues, have the right to participate and attend General Meetings of YUFA, as well as open meetings of the Executive, as observers only; to receive, at campus addresses, the YUFA Newsletter and other mailings; to submit material

DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING

for publication in the YUFA Newsletter; to submit requests to the Contract and Grievance Committee for possible grievance proceedings and to make formal representation to the Negotiation Committee.

c) The YUFA Executive determined also that Associate Members do not have the right to vote in any YUFA Committee or in elections, or in any strike vote or ratification vote. Nor do Associate Members have the right to be elected or appointed as an officer of YUFA, or to be elected or appointed as a YUFA representative or as a YUFA member on any committee or body which has a designated representative from YUFA.

Fees For YUFA Associate Members

Associate Members are required to pay an annual fee in a range up to a ceiling of 15% of the current average annual YUFA dues. ARF and YUFA Executive have agreed to enter into discussions/negotiations as to the appropriate level of fees and from ARF's point of view, how the quantum and payment may best be structured or arranged. We will be able in the wake of these negotiations, to advise members and retirees of the implications of the new arrangement for both ARF and individual retirees. We will discuss this at the next membership meeting (December 5th, 12 noon -

2:00 pm.).

6) ARF's RELATIONSHIP WITH YUFA

Under revised Article 5 of the YUFA Constitution, ARF has been recognized as the spokesperson for Associate Members and given the right to elect one non-voting member of the YUFA Executive Committee. This development is also receiving the attention of the ARF Executive.

Ongoing Collaboration

The YUFA/ARF Liaison Committee, comprised of joint teams of officers of both associations, will have regular meetings for the purpose of strengthening collaboration and pursuing mutually beneficial interests. The first meeting of the incoming Executives for 1996/97 of both associations has taken place.

Other collaborative and institutional linkages are also under consideration and members will be kept informed as these matters unfold.

7) CHANGES TO THE ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT (ODB) PLAN

Effective July 15, 1996, the Ontario Government introduced modifications to the ODB Plan under which higher income seniors, i.e. single individuals earning more than \$16,000 annually and married couples jointly earning more than \$24,000 annually would be required

to pay a \$100 annual deductible for prescription drugs and thereafter, a dispensing fee of up to \$6.11 for each prescription. (All other seniors would escape the deductible and be required only to pay \$2.00 for each prescription.)

In July 1996 the University Administration indicated in a circular letter to those of us participating in the YUFA post-retirement benefits programme that in the light of ongoing negotiations, the University would assume coverage for these new costs from July through December 31, 1996. What this really means, however, is that you may submit the receipts for the \$100 and for each of the \$6.11 prescriptions along with other receipts for earlier prescriptions as well as for other approved treatments to LONLIFE - but they are all subject to the standard deductible for individuals or families, and if your total expenditures do not exceed the deductible - obviously - you will not get back the \$100 or the \$6.11 prescription fees. Big Deal, considering the huge increases in the deductibles for retired faculty.

8) AUTO INSURANCE....A HELPFUL HINT!

If you carry auto insurance through the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) you were warned about province-wide changes that went into effect

DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING

on 1 November 1996.
Those who acted on the
information stood to save as
much as several hundred
dollars. Even if you weren't
told about the change by
your own company, you can
still act, and may obtain, a
nice rebate! Check it out!

**HAVE YOU NOT YET PAID
YOUR DUES??**

Please complete the
attached form and return
with your annual dues
payment of **\$15.00**.

DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING.....DEC. 5th MEETING

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY

YORK UNIVERSITY

MEMBERSHIP DUES
1996-97

\$15.00

Please complete the form below and return with your membership dues to:

Lillian Lerman
11 York Downs Drive
North York, Ontario
M3H 1H7

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____
(include area code)