

# ARF NEWSLETTER

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED  
FACULTY AND LIBRARIANS  
OF YORK UNIVERSITY



Vol. 8: No. 4 (Issue 23:Oct,2002)

*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.*



At the Annual General Meeting of October 2001, the following slate of officers was returned, including those subsequently nominated to the Executive to extend its base and representation, as the meeting agreed. The Executive will normally be printed in each edition of the *Newsletter*.



## EXECUTIVE

### *President*

Margaret Knittl [knittl@yorku.ca](mailto:knittl@yorku.ca)

### *Vice-President*

Sydney Eisen [seisen@yorku.ca](mailto:seisen@yorku.ca)

### *Past-President*

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### *Secretary*

Elizabeth Lander

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### *Treasurer and Newsletter Editor*

William Whitla

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### *Researcher*

Duncan Cameron

### *Members-at-Large*

Michael Creal

Ruth Grogan

Barry Loughton

Alex Murray

Mary Williams on

Hugh Parry (alternate)

Mavis Waters (alternate)

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### 1. From the President

Another year. Another Annual General Meeting. The matter which concerned us so keenly a year ago—the Administration's proposal to reduce any increment to our pensions by .25% annually—has

faded into the background. It's clearly off the table, though perhaps not interred as definitively as we could wish. Health and Dental Benefits have come to the fore this year. The promise of a new Benefits Booklet raised high hopes of a fresh start there. You now have the new Booklet in hand and probably would agree that it is an improvement over the old one in a number of ways. However, as you will read below, the booklet has given us a new set of problems as well. If only the powers that be would give up doing *for* us and instead work *with* us!

The current YUFA contract runs out in May, so a fresh set of negotiations lies just ahead. Your executive has begun to shape up the wish list it will present to the Contract Review Committee and needs to hear from you what you value most and what ways you see of achieving a substantial improvement in our benefit plan. In this regard, we are taking notice of an initiative of the Toronto faculty retiree group (RALUT). They have secured, at very considerable expense, a formal legal opinion on what their legal rights are vis-à-vis the Faculty Association on the one hand, and the Administration on the other. It seems their rights are surprisingly large. One short term result is that the University of Toronto Faculty Association's bargaining team will, this year, include two retirees. The situations at Toronto and York are very different structurally, but we are asking ourselves whether it might not be worth our while to do as they have done and secure a legal opinion on where we stand.

Some successes and some frustrations. DHR agreed to send out a flyer and letter from ARF to faculty retiring this year. We provided them but can't confirm that they ever did go out!

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY, OCT. 24

### FOUNDERS SENIOR COMMON ROOM

(third floor, Founders College)  
12:00–2:30

☛ **ON THE AGENDA** will be the Annual Reports from the President and the Treasurer, the election of Officers for ARF, and new information on Pensions and Benefits.

### AS USUAL, THERE WILL BE A GOOD LUNCH

Parking for the Annual General Meeting will be tight, as it is for all of the parking on campus this year. ARF members are urged to come by TTC, or to pool with others and park in the lot in York Lanes.

Other important matters are pending—join us on the 24<sup>th</sup> and hear about it all and help us focus on what it is most important we do in the coming year. □

—Margaret Knittl



## 2. ARF's Reservations Concerning the New Benefits Booklet

*The following comments have been prepared by the Executive of ARF and have been sent to the Department of Human Resources and YUFA:*

The new Benefits Booklet that has recently been mailed out by the Department of Human Resources is a great improvement over the past leaflet and the scattered bits of information that retirees have received hitherto. It attempts to gather all of the information, or most of it, into one place. However, ARF regrets that we did not have more say in how it was finally put together. Some of our present concerns might then have been resolved.

### 1. *It contains an error.*

“Active medical treatment for the acute phase of illness or disability” is listed as a non-eligible hospital expense. See page 7. That is precisely what our plan does cover.

### 2. *There are three significant omissions.*

A. The previous booklet provided for appropriate use of any surplus accruing in the plan fund. This one does not.

B. No information is given to let members know that if they have been (expensively) ill but are now in good health they can apply to have their \$25,000 lifetime medical allowance restored. See last sentence in the official base

document. By not including this information, this benefit is rendered inaccessible to those few retirees who could use it.

C. In both the last brochure and the basic document it is very plainly stated that the “refreshment” of capped benefits by up to \$1,000 a year applies to all three capped items: medical benefits, nursing services, and out of country expenses. This booklet reads (page 4) as if the refund provision applies to medical benefits only.

### 3. *One benefit has been glossed to our serious detriment.*

By the addition of two sentences on page 4 (which do not appear in the basic document or the previous brochure), the nursing services we are entitled to are drastically reduced. The two sentences read: “The services required must be such that they cannot be provided by someone with lesser qualifications than a registered nurse. An example of such services is a request to administer intravenous drugs.” The basic document speaks only of “nursing services.” Under this gloss, even a service provided by an RN would not be an eligible expense if it could have been provided by a Registered Nursing Assistant. That is, some necessary services for sick retirees which could be provided by a medical worker other than an RN would be denied under the present wording, although they are covered under the basic document.

### 4. *Parochialism*

There is minimal help for members resident outside the country, even outside Ontario. Could there not be a much fuller section of the booklet than the brief treatment about travelling out of Canada and the two sentences on

permanent residency out of Canada spelling out entitlements and procedures? At the very least, that information should be mailed as a supplement to the many retirees now living outside Ontario. The diaspora is sure to grow as York becomes more international, and our survey shows that many outside Ontario are unclear about their entitlements and how to claim them.

### 5. *Lack of clarity.*

The most important single fact about our plan is that it is capped. Earlier brochures made no bones about the matter so that if the plan began costing more than its assigned amount, benefits would be reduced as happened in 1994. See the first paragraph, page 1. Retirees have a right to know the whole picture before joining the plan—and afterwards too. In the sentence “It is important to note that these arrangements may change on the agreement of the York University Faculty Association and the University,” the word “change” hides more than it tells.

### 6. *Implications*

A gloss of the sort specified in item 3 raises large questions of how changes can be made to our plan, or how changes can simply be introduced by changes in wording. Is any reduction of benefits permissible if the plan is not running a deficit or in imminent danger of doing so? There is a contractual obligation to review the financial status of the plan yearly. This was not done for the past contract year. Crisis or no, the booklet itself specifies that changes require the assent of YUFA. Without that assent what validity can this gloss have? □



## 3. Retirees and Access to

## Research and Conference Grants

ARF's Executive has been working on the matter of access to research and conference grants, spurred on partly because some retirees have reported that their applications were rejected because they were retired, or that they did not qualify, or that they would be ranked lower than pre-retirees, or that they could not now be considered for such and such a grant because the awarding committee had no idea whether retirees qualified or not—as in one case reported to us when in fact there were no other applicants for the award, and no clarification could be gained before the deadline was passed—and so no award was made.

Important clauses in the YUFA Collective Agreement cover some of these issues. For instance, part of ¶ 14.04 reads: "Senior Scholars are eligible to apply for conference travel funds on the same basis as full-time faculty." And ¶ 14.11 reads "The parties agree that the Vice-President (Academic Affairs) and the Associate Vice-President (Research) will work in concert along with one YUFA representative to provide funding to promote the research and scholarly activities of Senior Scholars through the Office of Research Administration." While letters have gone out from the Administration asking Senior Scholars to give a paper on their research activities at a Forum they arrange, ARF knows nothing of any funding to support that research.

The Office of Research Administration has informed ARF that retirees should be eligible for grants, but *how* eligible is not

clear—perhaps not so eligible as others. While there seem to have been many complaints about this matter, it has not yet been dealt with. ARF agrees that some preference should be given to young faculty, but how?

We understand that SSHRC gives grants only to Senior Scholars who are still teaching, a matter that very likely will be questioned in the courts as a matter of equity and possible ageism. We do not know about NSRC grants. There is the further complication about access to the general research funds of departments and faculties. The University of Toronto has enabled faculty to compete for such grants, and has facilitated a survey of the ways in which retirees there are continuing to contribute to the U of T's reputation. ARF intends to undertake a survey of our membership on this matter as a step in moving towards some clarification. We need to know the experience of our members, and we think we should be involved in determining a fair policy, rather than having research funding decided in an ad-hoc way. □



## 4. From the Treasurer

While an up-to-date report of our membership and financial status will be made at the Annual General Meeting, it is clear now that we have 196 paid up members for the current year. With this present notice there is a final request for fees for 2002/03 (well, there might be another final one in a newsletter early in the new year).

Most regular members have paid up, and we have gained some new ones, but if you have not yet paid, please do so now. We cannot afford to send out individual reminders, and so resort to the

newsletter as a reminder. If you are uncertain whether you have paid up or not, please phone Bill Whitla at 416-766-6393, or send an e-mail to [w Whitla@yorku.ca](mailto:w Whitla@yorku.ca). □



## 5. Space and Mailing Help Found for Retirees' Association at the University of Toronto

The President of the Retired Academics and Librarians of the U of T (RALUT), Peter H. Russell, has written in their most recent newsletter about their efforts to find appropriate office space and help in locating and communicating with retirees:

*"We have also made some progress on the home front. The meeting Germaine Warkentin and I had on March 27 with President Birgeneau, Provost Sedra and Vice-President for Human Resources Hildyard, was productive. The University promised to provide some office and reception space for RALUT and to help us communicate with all of our retired colleagues. Following the meeting, Professor Hildyard began working on our space needs. At the time of writing it looks as if we will be able to move into a temporary location on College Street in September. We hope that RALUT's permanent headquarters will eventually be in a more convenient location on Bloor Street."*

*"Professor Hildyard's office has enabled us to send our survey of retirees' continuing university activities to all retired academics and librarians. Her office will also help us with a mailout of RALUT membership information to colleagues who are about to retire. We are extremely grateful for the University's co-operation and support in all of these matters."*

When will York follow suit? □

—Reprinted with permission from *Ralut Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 2, June, 2002.



**6. What Is Happening Elsewhere?**

For further information on developments of the Retirees' Association at the University of Toronto, visit their website at [www.ralut.ca](http://www.ralut.ca). While the Canadian Association of Emeriti and Retired Academics (CAERA) will soon be

changing its name to CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada), information about the national scene, and about local organizations across the country can still be read at <http://care.ca.us.ca/>. □



**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY  
AND LIBRARIANS OF  
YORK UNIVERSITY**

- I wish to join ARF, to receive its mailings and support its activities
- I wish to renew my membership in ARF
- I am willing to undertake occasional work for ARF
- I am not yet a retiree, but I want to become an Associate Member of ARF

Enclosed is my cheque for the period **1 July, 2002 to 30 June, 2003** (Fourth Reminder that Memberships are due)

- \$25 Regular Membership
- \$10 Associate Membership

Plus \$\_\_\_\_\_ as an additional contribution to help ARF continue its work on behalf of York's retired Faculty and Librarians.

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS

Street \_\_\_\_\_

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Please mail to: ARF c/o YUFA, 241 Schulich School of Business, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto ON M3J 1P3