

ARF Newsletter

Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians of York University

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1. The President's Column *by Peter Harries-Jones*

THIS is a brief communication from your President thanking the Acting President, Alex Murray, for all the fine work that he has done in chairing meetings and looking after ARF while I have been away. The main reason for my absence has been my wife's sabbatical project in various Latin American countries, one of which was Cuba. As you might imagine, your president thought that—since I was accompanying her—the location for a sabbatical project was especially well chosen! The project has resulted in a book, now in press, on Cuban poets in English translation.

I come back just in time for the momentous news putting an end to mandatory retirement in Ontario. As you already know, some 10,000 faculty are due to be replaced in Ontario from now until 2010. The ending of mandatory retirement will undoubtedly affect the rate of this retirement, though to what extent is uncertain. What is known at this stage is that the Liberal Government has announced this week that consultations on this question will

occur during the summer months, for a bill to be placed before Queens Park in the autumn.

In any event the initiative to end mandatory retirement is a human rights issue and it is on this ground that it is being put to the public by the present government. From an assertion of women's rights in the sixties and seventies, and gay rights in the eighties and nineties, society is moving on to the question of "ageism." The main political effect of an end to mandatory retirement will therefore be to increase awareness of "ageism," and to loosen some of the discriminatory measures applied to people because of their age—currently a widespread practice throughout society.

The consultations are likely to hear general opposition from the labour movement and, perhaps, a consensus of support from management. But in the case of faculty unions and university managements, the reverse is likely to be the case. The demographics of faculty unions with regard to ages of employment and conditions of retirement are very different from the average worker. As we know many faculty do not get full-time employment until they are almost 40, which leaves them only 25 years to earn benefits for retirement. In addition, some university administrations regard the cost of retaining faculty over the age of 65 as prohibitive, though ARF would argue that this administrative reaction should be looked at with great care. □

GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

12–2:00 p.m

Founders Senior Common Room
305 Founders

On the Agenda:

- Special presentation on additional benefits and travel insurance from OTIP (Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan)

- Other Pension and Benefits Info.
Lunch provided

2. From the Executive: Elections are Looming

ELECTIONS will be coming up at the Autumn Annual General Meeting of ARF, and this item is advance notice that there will be some vacancies on the Executive. While most members of the Executive will be continuing we will need some new assistance, including at least a new Treasurer (Ian Sowton will be stepping down after his second stint at looking

after our finances), and Arthur Haberman will be retired and so will no longer be able to serve as a Pre-Retiree member. Perhaps you would be willing to nominate an interested colleague, or to volunteer yourself. Send the names of any candidates to Peter Harries-Jones, or be prepared to make nominations at the AGM. □



3. A Time-Limit on Great West Benefit Payments

THE Executive reminds ARF members that Great West Insurance imposes a fifteen (15) month limit on submitting bills for payment under the benefits plan. After that, outstanding claims are no longer valid. Where, you might ask, is that in the Benefits Booklet? □



4. A Message from the Treasurer *by Ian Sowton*

ONCE again this issue of the *ARF Newsletter* includes our annual request for membership fees. And, as usual, there has been no increase. They remain at \$25.00 per year for Retirees, and \$10.00 for Pre-Retirees. That gets you three *Newsletters* per year with useful information about our benefits, pensions, and other information for retirees. If you live in the Toronto area, you are also able to attend the two or more general meetings a year. But above all, your memberships help us to continue with our work on your behalf. Donations also are always welcome, and we always receive a number in every mailing. In this current mailing we are trying the experiment of adding a notification to any members who are already paid up for last year, 2004-05, and so are ahead of the game. If you are still wondering whether or not you are paid up for July 2003-June 2004, you can always check with me at isowton@yorku.ca, or by mail c/o YUFA, 5024 TEL Bldg, or by telephone at 416-489-9120.



5. How We Won the Battle for Electronic Access to eReports from Home *by Nicole Keating*

ABOUT two years ago, the faculty of York University received notice that the Finance Department was planning to phase out production of the paper financial statements that were sent to us each month. Current information was to be available on eReports and updated daily!

I then thought it was time I joined the 21st Century, and started my attempt to gain electronic access about my research account. Little did I know it was going to be such a long journey. The problem was that, being retired, working from home and not having easy access to a university computer, the system was not designed for me. Motivated by the fact other retirees were in the same situation as I was, and by the possibility the Finance Department would eventually stop sending paper reports,

I started on my mission of discovery on behalf of all of us.

I was told first that in order to try to access eReports from off campus, I needed to download additional software called VPN, and was given an York web address for instructions. But, after reading these instructions and warnings about problems, I decided against trying to proceed. Indeed, the instructions indicated that I might have to make changes to the configurations in my high-speed service, and I feared that this could cause problems for my home network. In essence, the process seemed too complicated and dangerous for the effort!

I proceeded to say so to the Finance Department, and was assured that my concerns would be forwarded to the computer developers, and that I would be kept informed. In the meantime, I was also assured that the department had no intention of cutting anyone off from receiving their monthly statements until the concerns of the community and problems with access to eReports had been addressed. I was quite relieved to learn this and appreciated the thought.

Finally, I have the great pleasure of announcing to faculty and librarians retirees, that the victory is ours. I just received from the Finance Department an email indicating that it was no longer necessary to download additional software in order to access eReports from off campus. I only had to go to www.yorku.ca/ereports and use my York Passport ID username and password. This I did immediately, followed the instructions and was indeed able to see my financial statement, from my home. The website gives you all the information necessary to proceed. First time users have to obtain a Passport York account and send an email to the Helpdesk requesting access.

I then gave thanks to the very patient member of the Finance Department who had answered all my emails during the two years it took to develop the system and I am very happy to report that, in our name, I have victoriously entered the 21st century! □



5a. Les Rapports financiers à parti de la maison ou comment nous avons gagné la bataille de l'électronique

par Nicole Keating

IL y a environ deux ans, le personnel enseignant de l'Université York a été informé que le Département des finances avait l'intention d'éliminer graduellement la production sur papier des rapports financiers envoyés chaque mois. Ils devaient être remplacés par des rapports disponibles électroniquement, les « ereports » mis à jour quotidiennement.

J'ai donc pensé qu'il était temps que je devienne membre à temps plein du 21e siècle, et me suis lancée courageusement dans ma première tentative pour accéder

électroniquement à mon compte de recherche. Comment pouvais-je savoir que la route allait être longue! Le problème est que, étant à la retraite, travaillant à partir de la maison et ne pouvant accéder facilement à un ordinateur de l'université, le système n'était pas conçu pour moi. Encouragée par le fait que bien d'autres collègues devaient être dans cette même situation, sans oublier la possibilité que le Département des finances allait éventuellement arrêter de nous envoyer nos rapports sur papier, je décidai alors, en notre nom à tous, de me lancer à l'assaut du système.

On me dit tout d'abord que pour avoir accès à mon rapport à partir de chez moi, je devais télécharger un autre programme, appelé VPN, et l'on me donna une adresse électronique à York pour y trouver les instructions nécessaires. Facile! Malheureusement, ayant lu soigneusement ces instructions et les mises en garde qui les accompagnaient, je décidai d'y renoncer. En effet, l'on me prévenait que je devrais sans doute changer la configuration de mon service Internet Haute vitesse, ce qui me semblait porteur de nombreux problèmes. En résumé, trop de risques à courir pour un résultat peu assuré!

Je fis donc part de mes inquiétudes au Département des finances qui m'assura qu'elles seraient transmises au développeurs de logiciels, et que l'on me tiendrait au courant. En attendant, l'on me rassura que le département n'avait aucune intention d'arrêter l'envoi de nos rapports financiers sur papier jusqu'à ce que toutes les préoccupations de la communauté soient examinées et les problèmes inhérents au système électronique soient réglés. Bonne chose en attendant mieux!

Finalelement, j'ai le grand plaisir d'annoncer à tout le personnel enseignant et aux bibliothécaires à la retraite que nous avons remporté la victoire. Je viens de recevoir un courriel du Département des finances indiquant qu'il n'est plus nécessaire de télécharger un logiciel supplémentaire pour avoir accès électroniquement à nos rapports financiers à partir de la maison. Il faut seulement aller à l'adresse suivante, www.yorku.ca/ereports, utiliser son nom-utilisateur et son mot de passe. Ce que j'ai fait sur le champ, en suivant les instructions données et j'ai eu le plaisir de lire tranquillement mon rapport financier de chez moi. Le site Web donne tous les renseignements nécessaires. Les nouveaux utilisateurs doivent obtenir un numéro de compte à York (Passport York account) et envoyer un courriel au service d'aide (Helpdesk) demandant l'accès.


J'ai remercié enfin pour sa patience le membre du Département des finances qui avait répondu à tous mes courriels pendant les deux années qu'il avait fallu pour développer le système. Et je suis heureuse de vous faire

savoir que, en notre nom à tous, je suis maintenant fermement installée dans le 21e siècle! □



6. Extra Insurance for Health and Travel *by the Editor*

BILL Whittle and his wife are leaving for a trip to France and Holland during June to visit sites associated with William Morris and John Ruskin. They were immediately faced with the prospect of considerable sums to be paid for flight and tour cancellation insurance, as well as for health coverage while travelling out of the country. As others know, that can be an expensive addition to such a journey. OHIP only gives limited coverage for emergency care, and York's retiree benefits plan also covers only emergency services, with reimbursements to a lifetime maximum of \$10,000. The office of Pensions and Benefits advised purchasing additional coverage.

For us, cancellation insurance for the flight was to be about \$200 for both of us, plus tour cancellation insurance of \$372, without any extra medical coverage while away. So we investigated alternatives, including taking up the possibilities of our Visa account. In the end, joining the Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan made sense for us. [ Note: Representatives from OTIP will make a presentation at the General Meeting on May 20 in Founders College. See the notice elsewhere in this *Newsletter*]. We opted for the RTIP Basic Plan, with added deluxe travel insurance. For \$55.36 per month (for a couple) we get additional medical coverage (private duty nursing, home care), including 80% paramedical coverage, well beyond York's: that is, coverage to a maximum of \$700 per year for a chiropractor, podiatrist, osteopath, naturopath, shiatsu therapist and a range of other therapies, including acupuncture. For full information about the basic and other plans, see www.otip.com/content/retirees/rtip_en.asp

The travel part of the plan includes emergency medical expenses of up to \$1 million per person per trip and remains effective for up to 60 days per trip. Cancellation coverage of any pre-paid portion of trip expenses is \$6000 per person per trip. The details of the extensive travel coverage are given on the OTIP webpage (www.otip.com/content/retirees/rtip_travelling_tips_en.asp), following the links to the complete coverage page.

So, for us, it made sense to spend about \$665 to get a year's cancellation and travel insurance (which would have cost us about \$572 to purchase separately for one trip), as well as increased medical benefits to add to our York plan. It's certainly worth considering. Note that the plan is open to all university teachers and librarians, but to apply you have to be under the age of 70. For further

information, or to have a brochure mailed to you, call the toll-free Waterloo office at 1-800-267-6847. □

7. York Website for Retirees

by the Editor

RETIREES have various places to go on the York Homepage to find useful information about pensions, benefits, and other matters that are of concern to retirees and pre-retirees. On the York Home page, click on Faculty and Staff, and then on either York University Faculty Association (YUFA) or York University Retirees Association (YURA)—both listed under “Human Resources and Employee Relations.” For example, on YUFA’s home page, you can click on “Retirement” in the left column, and find a lot of information, including a copy of the most recent Retirees’ Benefits Booklet, answers to many pension and benefits questions (FAQs), a link to the Retirement Planning Centre, a summary of current benefits, and a number of recent articles on pension and benefit matters at York. Follow the links in the left-hand black border for much more information, including information on Canada Pension and the current YUFA Contract (see the links at the bottom of the FAQ page). Alternatively, in your favourite web-browser, you can enter the following links, for YUFA, www.yufa.org/ and for YURA www.yorku.ca/yura/ □

8. The Back Burner

FROM time to time the Executive and the *Newsletter* bring to retirees’ attention matters that have not yet come to the boil, or that have simmered for far too

long. These items are important, but remain unresolved, or neglected by the authorities entrusted with them. Here are a few items that are still not brought to a conclusion:

☞ A corrected up-dated, and complete benefits booklet that covers the material listed in the “official” agreement that the Administration has with Great West.

☞ The state of the YUFA/ARF Trust Fund with respect to its being subject to tax. Currently it is awaiting legal opinions and decisions among the tax people and their lawyers. Will hell freeze over before it is settled?

☞ The position of the administration on the shadow pension. For a current comment, see Walter Whitley’s response in March to the question of whether your pension will increase after retirement (www.yufa.org/retirees/pension.html). Walter is a Trustee of the Pension Fund nominated by YUFA. The whole matter is currently before FSCO (Financial Services Commission of Ontario) and there is some hope that it will be heard in April or May. As Walter says, “The dispute is not about ‘what is reasonable.’ It is about what the text says, and what people expect when they read the text and plan for the future.”

☞ The position of the administration with respect to parking for retirees. The joint ARF/YURA parking committee submitted proposals last Fall to the Parking Office and to Barry Miller (Director of Academic Employee Relations), but so far there has been no response.

Wouldn’t it be splendid if each of these long-standing issues were concluded efficiently and equitably? □

The ARF Newsletter is published by the Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians of York University (ARF). 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. ARF is a member of CURAC (College and University Retirees Association of Canada).

At the Annual General Meeting of October 2003, the following slate of officers was returned, including those subsequently nominated to the Executive to extend its base and representation, as the meeting agreed.

EXECUTIVE

President

Peter Harries-Jones

peterhj@yorku.ca

Vice-President

Alex Murray

amurray@yorku.ca

Past-President

Margaret Knittel

knittel@yorku.ca

Secretary

Fred Morgan

fmorgan@yorku.ca

Treasurer

Ian Sowton

isowton@yorku.ca

Editor of Newsletter

William Whitley

wwhitla@yorku.ca

Pre-Retiree Member

Arthur Haberman

arthurh@yorku.ca

Members-at-Large

Sylvie Arend

sarendl@gl.yorku.ca

Nicole Keating

nkeating@glendon.yorku.ca

Barry Loughton

loughton@yorku.ca

Chester Sadowski

chesters@yorku.ca

Mary Williamson

maryfw@yorku.ca

The Editor of the Newsletter welcomes comment, letters, or items of interest to other ARF members, but reserves the right to edit any submissions. Please send them by e-mail (wwhitla@yorku.ca) or by post to ARF, c/o YUFA, 5024 TEL, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto ON M3J 1P3. Other members of the Executive may be reached by post at the same address or by e-mail.

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

**DUES FOR 2004/05 ARE NOW RECEIVABLE.
FIRST NOTICE
PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ARF WITH YOUR
MEMBERSHIP**

Please mail to: Association of Retired Faculty and Librarians, c/o YUFA
5024 TEL
York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3

- 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, 2004 to 30 June, 2005.

- \$25 Regular Membership
- \$10 Associate Membership (available for pre-retirees)

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

NAME (please print) _____

HOME ADDRESS

Street _____

City _____ Province _____

Postal Code _____ Country _____

Home Phone _____ Campus Phone _____

E-Mail _____ Fax _____

**ASSOCIATION DES PROFESSEURS ET BIBLIOTHÉCAIRES RETRAITÉS
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK (APBR)**

**COTISATIONS 2004-2005
PREMIER APPEL
DEVENEZ MEMBRE DE L'APBR OU RENOUVELEZ VOTRE ADHÉSION
VOTRE SOUTIEN EST INDISPENSABLE**

Veillez envoyer votre cotisation à :

Association of retired Faculty and Librarians, a/s YUFA
5024 TEL Building
Université York
4700, avenue Keele
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3

- Je désire devenir membre de l'APBR, recevoir ses bulletins et soutenir ses activités
 Je désire renouveler mon adhésion à l'APBR
 Je suis prêt(e) à participer à l'occasion aux travaux de l'APBR
 Je ne suis pas encore à la retraite, mais je veux devenir membre associé de l'APBR

Veillez trouver ci-joint mon chèque pour la période du 1er juillet 2004 au 30 juin 2005, au nom de ARF.

- 25 \$ membre titulaire
 10 \$ membre associé

Plus _____ \$ de contribution supplémentaire pour aider l'APBR à poursuivre ses travaux au nom des professeurs et bibliothécaires retraités de l'Université York.

NOM (en majuscules) _____

ADRESSE À LA MAISON

Rue _____

Ville _____ Province _____

Code postal _____ Pays _____

Téléphone (maison) _____

Téléphone (campus) _____

Courriel _____ Télécopieur _____