

YURA NEWSLETTER

A newsletter for members of the York University Retirees Association No. 13 May 2009

Greetings from the YURA Co-Presidents

It is a pleasure to welcome readers to the 13th issue of the YURA Newsletter.

It has been a difficult year for members of the York community as a consequence of the lengthy CUPE strike. One of the casualties of the strike was the annual Showcase Extravaganza that was scheduled for November 2008. We look forward to a return of this event in the fall of 2009.

A considerable amount of time and effort has been focused on the joint YURA/ARFL project as part of York's 50th anniversary celebrations. Over 60 personal reflections, reminiscences and recollections were contributed by retirees for presentation to the York University Archives. A reception to make the archival presentation took place on May 7 in the Map Room and adjacent foyer of the Scott Library. In addition to the aggregation of written items, a number of photos and artifacts were also included in the exhibition. Among these was a pair of earrings constructed from Ross Ramp rubble, a T-shirt commemorating the faculty strike in the 70s, and a plastic cube memento marking 25 years at the university.

Thanks to Cynthia Archer, Michael Moir, Cindy Bettcher, Sarah Brathwaite, DJ Rokhit, John Thomson, John Briggs, Stanley Tweyman and the U50

Committee in helping to bring this undertaking to fruition.

A special feature of the U50 project was the fireside chat by Past President Ian Macdonald on April 28, co-hosted with Vanier College.

Planning has already commenced for hosting the 2010 conference of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) at York. This will be another collaborative venture for YURA and ARFL. A local committee has been established to make arrangements and various tasks have been assigned.

A regular feature of YURA's program is the theatre trips, the first of which took place on April 29. The theatre goers saw a grouping of three Noel Coward plays collectively entitled *Brief Encounters* at Niagara-on-the-Lake. The second theatre outing is scheduled for Stratford on October 22 to see Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. These excursions include a delicious lunch and a walk about town prior to the theatre performance.

Once again we would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation for the ongoing support of Catherine Federico and How Chee Un of the Retirement Planning Centre. And, to the volunteers who work behind the scenes, maintaining the YURA office, many thanks.

Special thanks to Barbara Rowe who has been a mainstay in the office for several years and is “retiring” from this activity to take up other responsibilities. We are also grateful to our fellow Executive members for their commitment, sage advice and willingness to work diligently on behalf of the Association.

And thanks to you all for your ongoing interest and support for YURA and our projects.

Nancy Accinelli / Sandra Pyke

PS A recent mailing led to the discovery that we have incorrect email addresses for several members. If you have changed your email address, please send a message (with changes) to yura@yorku.ca so that we can update your information. If you cannot receive email messages, at your request we can forward messages to you via Canada Post.

Pensions Paid and Pensions Payable

Those of you who are receiving a pension from York have gotten a letter from Terisa Ducharme this year giving you some information about your pension. The letter contains some terminology that may be confusing to members. This is an attempt to clarify the terms used and their implication for your pension now and in the future.

Every year there is an adjustment made to your pension based on the four-year average investment returns of the York Pension Fund. If this average is positive (i.e. the fund increases in value above a 6% return) your pension is increased. Unfortunately, this year the average

return was about -5.1% due largely to the losses in the fund in 2008. However, because of the non-reduction clause in our pension plan your pension will not decrease but stay the same as it was in 2008. This is the ‘pension paid’ that is referred to in the letter. That’s the good news.

The bad news is that the university keeps track of what your pension would have been if the negative four-year average had been applied. That is what the term ‘pension payable’ in the letter refers to. It is also referred to as your ‘shadow pension’. This figure is 5.1% lower than the pension you are currently getting, the ‘pension paid’.

As stated in the letter, any future increases due to positive four-year average returns will be applied to your ‘pension payable’ (i.e. your ‘shadow pension’) and you will not get any actual increase in your pension until the ‘pension payable’ is above your ‘pension paid’. This could change if we are successful in our appeal to the Financial Services Tribunal later this year but we have no assurance that we will convince them that a ‘shadow pension’ is contrary to the wording in the York Pension Plan.

There is worse news to come. Because the loss of nearly 20% in the Pension Fund in 2008 is averaged over four years, it is almost certain that your ‘pension payable’ will decrease again next year. In fact, it is quite possible that many of our members will never receive another increase in their York pension in their lifetime. This is not encouraging news and you need to take this into account in planning for your financial future.

Al Stauffer

Sun Life Insurance

As of December 1, 2008 Great West Life ceased to be the health and dental benefits carrier for York University retirees and their dependants. Sun Life is now the benefit carrier and you should have received a Sun Life card with the policy number and your identification number. If you have not received your card or you need an extra card, contact Sun Life. The website is:

www.sunnet.com/member/signin/index.aspx?

You can also phone the company at: 1-800-361-6212. The Sun Life benefit booklet is not yet available but you can assess benefit information at:

www.yorku.ca/hr/services/semmployees.benefits.html

CARP Membership

Since YURA is a member of the Colleges and Universities Retirees Association of Canada (CURAC) retirees can now become members of Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) at a reduced rate. Membership includes a subscription to CARP's magazine *Zoomer*. Until May 31 retirees may join CARP for one year for \$14.95 (regularly \$19.95) or for three years for \$44.85 (regularly \$59.85). After May 31 the rate will increase to \$26.21 for one year and \$78.64 for three years.

To join CARP at these special rates go to:

www.curac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/CARP

Stratford Festival Trip

On October 22, 2009 YURA members will be seeing the Oscar Wilde comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

The lead (Lady Bracknell) is played by Stratford veteran Brian Bedford.

We will arrive in Stratford in time to browse shops and have lunch at the Queen's Hotel before proceeding to the Avon Theatre.

The cost of the trip is \$110 which includes the coach fare, lunch and a theatre ticket.

The bus departs from York University at 9:00 a.m.

If you plan to attend please notify the YURA office at (416) 736-2100, ext. 70664, or send an email to yura@yorku.ca to reserve a ticket(s).

Another Cautionary Note

In September of 2009, I wrote about an email that I had received with a threat to close my York email account unless I revealed my user id and password. I followed York Helpdesk guidelines and deleted the message. Nonetheless several months later, my email account was blocked and the Helpdesk staff informed me that my account had been used to send spam mail. I was told that I should have been updating my anti-virus protection at the least every two days. After paying a computer technician more than \$300 to reformat my hard drive, reinstall the operating system and other programs, I now update and run my anti-virus protection program every two days without fail.

If you have any inquiries, direct them to CNS Client Services at: (416) 736-5800 or email them at: helpdesk@yorku.ca

Iryna Ostapchuk

Volunteers Needed for the Following Positions:

- *Chair of the YURA Standing Committee on Nominations and Membership
- *Person(s) to assist in the design/redesign of the newsletter
- *Web mistress/master to maintain/update the YURA website

In Memoriam

Karen Cochrane, a relatively new YURA member, passed away on November 28 after a courageous battle with cancer. She was 61. Karen worked in the Department of Psychology for many years as Secretary to the Chair. Always smiling with a cheery word for everyone, she was much loved and will be sorely missed.

Sandra Pyke

* The annual list of deceased YURA members will be published in the September newsletter. In this issue we are inaugurating a new feature in the newsletter. If you have great memories of a deceased colleague, please submit a short article (100 words or less) to the editor and we will publish it in future issues as space allows.

YURA Executive

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New YURA Office Hours

Monday	11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Wednesday	11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Thursday	11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The *YURA Newsletter* is published by the York University Retirees Association. Iryna Ostapchuk, editor.

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