
Colleges and University
Retiree Associations
of Canada



Associations de retraités
des universités et collèges
du Canada

NEWSLETTER / BULLETIN

Fall 2014 Issue No. 18A

Time well spent in Hamilton with colleagues from coast-to-coast.



A word from Sandra Pyke, president

Hello CURAC Colleagues:

The highlight of the spring was the 12th annual CURAC conference held this year at McMaster University and hosted by the McMaster University Retirees' Association and the Retirees' Association of Mohawk College. The local organizing committee, coordinated by Mary Johnston, Helen Barton and Heather Grigg, did a superb job of designing and implementing an exciting program, jam-packed with new ideas as well as entertaining events appropriately befitting the conference theme of "Innovation: The Future of Aging." Many thanks also to the conference sponsors—

this event would likely not be possible without their support.

At the risk of perhaps "jumping the gun" with this information, I am nevertheless very pleased to announce that the 2015 CURAC conference will be held in Kingston May 20-22 and organized by the Retirees' Association of Queen's University. Co-chairs of the on-site committee are **George Brandie** and **Eleanor Rogers**.

At the AGM in Hamilton, a summary of a productive year of activities was presented and new Board members introduced. Welcome to **Bev Stefureak** (chair of the benefits committee), **David Swayne** (webmaster), **Jim Boyd** (treasurer), **Ed Unrau** and **Michel Tousignant** (newsletter and bulletin editors).

Thanks again to the retiring members of the board for their outstanding contributions during their terms – **Joan Cunnington**, **Bryan Harvey**, **June Panteluk**, and **Patti Stoll**.

An increase in CURAC's membership fee was passed at this meeting such that the fee is calculated at \$0.75 per local member with a minimum annual fee of \$25 and a maximum

annual fee of \$300. This new fee schedule will be implemented with the 2014-2015 membership renewal.

As you know, CURAC has connections with a variety of external agencies not the least of which is our American counterpart – the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) with whom we have a complementary membership arrangement. **Ken Craig**, CURAC vice-president, is our official delegate to AROHE and he represented us at its conference in Minneapolis in August. An intriguing new initiative has surfaced as a result of exposure to activities sponsored by AROHE. CURAC is pursuing the possibility of establishing a relationship with a tour company such that both CURAC and its members would benefit from travel bookings. More will be forthcoming as this arrangement develops.

Our health policy committee, chaired by **Linda Kealey** has been very active. A position paper focused on the inadequacies of current care for our aging population was prepared and sent to the prime minister and other politicians. The document which was also circulated to member associations has attracted considerable attention. The next committee project will likely focus on home care.

Paul Huber, long time chair of the pension committee, had a serious accident in early summer and has been quite ill. We are very pleased to report that he is showing signs of a dramatic improvement. **Jack Boan**, a past director and recipient of the Contribution to CURAC Award is also suffering from ill health. We extend our very best wishes to these CURAC colleagues for their recovery.

The 2014 Contribution to CURAC/ARUCC Award honours founder

Jack Boan of the University of Regina Retirees Association and one of the founders of CURAC/ARUCC was honoured at the 2014 conference and presented with the association's first Contribution to CURAC/ARUCC Award.

Although Jack did not attend the conference this year, the following citation was read by Ed Williams, CURAC/ARUCC secretary, at the banquet:

“Jack Boan has a secret for longevity. At a celebration marking his 96th birthday held at the Regina University Club, he said: “I chose my parents very carefully,” to the laughs and delight of the crowd of professors, staff, and friends.

“Jack was born December 16, 1917 in Briercrest, just southeast of Moose Jaw. After serving with



the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II, he earned a BA in History and Political Economy from the University of Saskatchewan, and then earned a PhD in Agricultural Economics from Ohio State University. He worked for the Canada Department of Agriculture, and during the 1950s was a sessional lecturer in economics at the University of Alberta.

“In 1962, Jack became an associate professor of economics at the Regina Campus of the University of Saskatchewan, and when he first started lecturing, classes were held at what now is known as the College Avenue Campus.

“Jack remembers when the new campus – now known as the main campus – opened in 1965. “As I walked through the mud to the new campus, my feet became about ten times larger than normal because of all of the mud that accumulated on my shoes,” he recalls. The campus then consisted of just two buildings – the classroom building and the lab building. He remembers that “We had the library on the fourth floor of the classroom building, until the library building was completed.”

“Since his official retirement in 1983, Jack has remained very busy. He was a visiting scholar at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He taught a number of classes at the University of Regina. He wrote papers, briefs, and studies on health care issues. He reviewed articles and edited books. He wrote and delivered lectures at conferences. He founded the Canadian Health Economic Research Association. He was awarded the University of Regina Board of Governors Distinguished Service award in 2006. He was active in community organizations, including the University of Regina Group for Refugees and the John Howard Society. He has also been involved with the United Way and the Early Learning Centre.

“In addition, Jack was an early proponent for the establishment of a national organization of college and university retirees. Not only did he support this idea, he saw it come to fruition with the formation of CURAC/ARUCC in 2002. And he has been a strong supporter right up to the present day. He has served as the official delegate representing the University of Regina Retirees Association and was chair of the local organizing committee for the 2011 CURAC/ARUCC annual conference and AGM. He has also served on the health care policy committee which has benefited from his extensive knowledge and experience especially as one who served with Emmett Hall during the initial implementation of Medicare in this country.

“As for turning 96 last year, he says ‘I’m surprised that I’m still here. I never expected to live this long. I never really took care of myself. I worked hard. I smoked until 1963, and I drank, but never to excess. I never did any phys ed until about ten years ago.’

“While he may joke about choosing his parents carefully, they are indeed a big reason for his longevity: his mother lived to 92, and his father to 97.

“It is my pleasure to announce that Dr. Jack Boan, University of Regina Academic and Administrative Pensioners Association, is the first recipient of the “Contribution to CURAC/ARUCC Award”. I can think of no other more worthy candidate at this time. He is without doubt one of our most accomplished older Canadians (I will not refer to him as a senior citizen) who is deserving of this award not just because of his long and valuable service but because he is an all-around nice guy. “

New faces join The CURAC/ ARUCC board

At the annual general meeting, five people joined the CURAC/ARUCC board for two-year terms:



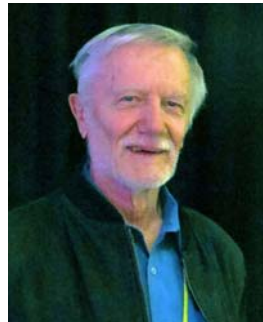
Jim Boyd, currently president of the Simon Fraser University Retirees Association. He retired as treasurer of SFU and since then has been an advisor and consultant on business financial matters as well as participating on a variety of community boards. He will be serving as treasurer.



Bev Stefureak, currently an executive officer of the Retiree's Association of Lakehead University. She retired from a long career in university governance, serving as secretary to the board and senate of Lakehead University and the University of Toronto.



David Swayne, a past president of the University of Guelph Retirees Association and retired professor of computer science with a specific research interest in environmental modelling and the application of computer technology to environmental science. Familiar with the software for editing and delivering web content, Swayne has agreed to be the CURAC/ARUCC webmaster.



Michel Tousignant, currently vice-president of the Association des professeurs et professeurs retraités de l'université du Québec à Montréal. He retired from the department of psychology at UQAM with research interests in social and human ecology, mental health, suicide and suicide prevention.



Ed Unrau, currently president of the University of Manitoba Retirees Association. He retired as manager of publications and special projects thus concluding a university career in public affairs that included writing, editing, publishing, and overseeing projects involving university and community interaction.

Tousignant and Unrau have agreed to look after the news letter and bulletin for CURAC/ARUCC.

Continuing members of the CURAC/ARUCC board:

Sandra Pyke, president (York University); **Kenneth Craig**, vice-president (University of British Columbia); **George Brandie**, past-president (Queen's University); **Ed Williams**, secretary (Memorial University), **Linda Kealey**, director (University of New Brunswick); **Gowri Gowrisankaran**, director (McGill University) and

Geraldine Thomas, director (St. Mary's University).

Board departures:

The terms of four board members ended with the 2014 AGM. The service of each one was recognized at the conference banquet.

They are:

Joan Cunningham, Ontario Colleges Retirees Association, has served with distinction on the CURAC/ARUCC board for eight years and is best known as the editor of the newsletter. Her dedication to this task was appreciated by all.

June Panteluk, University of Alberta Association of Professors Emeriti served on the CURAC/ARUCC board for five years and is best known as the association Treasurer.

Patti Stoll, Ontario Colleges Retirees' Association served on the board since 2011 and is best known as chair of the benefits committee. She helped compile a survey of benefits across the country and then establish a network at the local level to keep us informed of any changes in.

Bryan Harvey, University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association, served for one year as chair of the communication committee.

Hearing, driving and best practices: An overview of the 2014 Hamilton conference

The one evening and two-day 12th annual conference of CURAC/ARUCC that was held May 28-30 in Hamilton, Ontario, was attended by 60 people from Newfoundland to British Columbia.

Our hosts from the McMaster University Retirees Association and the Retirees Association of Mohawk College did a masterful job of moving people from hotel to event locations and back. We not only were on time, but we had a good time.

At the conference banquet, **Mary Johnston**, on behalf of the local organizing committee, accepted an award of thanks for the superb arrangements evident at the 2014 AGM and conference. The dedication of all who volunteered to assist with the planning and execution of this meeting was very much appreciated.

The working part of the program had two parts. One part consisted of the presentations from researchers whose projects explored specific issues related to aging. The other part consisted of sessions where CURAC members described “best practices” related to projects or concerns in their associations.

Common concerns

A central issue for CURAC/ARUCC and its member associations was a concern that universities properly acknowledge the contribution made by retired professors and support staff and, at the same time, promote their continued participation in the university community. It is important that universities view the rich and varied life experience as an asset that has the potential to enrich the academic community and its educational enterprise. It would be a mistake to see retired staff members merely as employees who have completed their “work” and no longer have a useful role

More specifically, CURAC/ARUCC members are also concerned with their ability to recruit new members. Access to the names of new retirees is not necessarily automatic; some administrations are concerned by the privacy of this information; some associations also fear that the increase in the age of retirement will inhibit the renewal of their board and volunteers; and there is always

the problem of funding the retiree association (university subsidy and/or dues). There are no easy answers.

If you can't hear: Then what?

How Mac Researchers Developed a Leading- edge Hearing Aid, was a presentation by **Sue Becker**, department of psychology, neuroscience and behaviour, McMaster University

Prof. Becker gave an overview of the Neurotechnology Lab at the McMaster University and its investigations into the way the brain receives information and stores memories in relation to hearing loss. She described the most common types: conductive hearing loss which occurs when there is a problem conducting sound waves anywhere along the route through the outer ear; sensorineural loss which is the most common, occurring when there is damage to the inner ear (cochlea) or to the nerve pathways to the brain. A combination of aging and exposure to noise damages the structure of the cochlea so that it takes ever louder sounds to activate the nerves. The McMaster lab embarked on a project to develop a leading edge hearing aid that ameliorates this damage. Their device, which they call a neuro-compensator, starts with a computerized model of the human ear structure. In effect, it tries to predict how a normal ear responds to sounds and also models the responses of a hearing-impaired person. The neuro-compensator model decides how to adjust the volume for a sound as a whole to get optimal restoration of ear function. It amplifies the audio bands to reproduce near-normal neuronal activity in the brain and ear auditory system, even when there is existing damage to the ear. The idea is that the output from the neuro-compensator's

software-on-a-chip methodology provides signals similar in strength and quality as those in a person without hearing loss. Their device is programmed specifically to the individual user. This research, patented in 2006, was funded by an NSERC Collaborative Grant.

Road Hazard: The over-65 Driver?

Shifting Gears: Changing Perceptions about Older Drivers in Canada, was the title of a presentation by **Brenda Vrkljan**, department of occupational therapy, McMaster University

Supporting safe driving by older people represents a great public health challenge because the automobile is the most viable travel mode for older adults. Some of the questions that need to be explored: How do we determine medical fitness to drive? Are today's cars suited to older drivers? What alternatives are there for safe transportation among seniors? What about the psychological impact (e.g. depression, isolation) when the licence of older driver is taken away? CanDrive, an international project at seven universities in Canada, as well as others in Australia and New Zealand has tracked more than 1,000 drivers aged 70 and older. Its objective is to develop a scientifically valid method to determine medical fitness to drive and to act as a risk assessment tool. This end-point is still a long way off and is partly due to the fact that the ability to drive among the elderly cannot be linked to common specific markers and ability to drive is unique to each driver. A sore point for older drivers is the focus on the over-65 driver when younger drivers, especially the teenage and twenty-something drivers, are also a road hazard and are not the focus of this kind of research.

Rethinking community so it is a place of supportive living

Fostering Resilient Aging Through Social Participation, was a presentation by **Ellen Ryan**, professor emeritus in gerontology, McMaster University.

Interviews with people age 100 and older revealed the following characteristics of this long-lived group of retirees: they sidestepped adversity (never lamenting their fate with a "why me?" question), had strong family ties, had religious faith and values, and were optimistic, resilient, hardworking, all with a sense of humour. A sense of community is vital and elders can lead the way to putting "neighbour" back into our neighbourhood. The aging future, however, is often posed as an idealistic image of aging in our own home vs. the spectre of a nursing home. Community is a concept that offers social connections and supports and by creating intermediary options between independent living in a house/condo home and totally supportive care in a nursing home, it may be possible to reduce the number of seniors in nursing homes and the amount of time spent there. Accordingly, aging in community models can be viewed in terms of social networks and housing. When individuals no longer drive or are easily able to use public transportation, they risk social isolation. Community supports – formal and informal – can enable active social participation, which is essential for a meaningful, resilient old age.

Re-thinking age 65 as the “normal” retirement age

Population Aging in Canada: Implications for Our Standard of Living, a presentation by **Bryon G. Spencer, Dept. of Economics**, McMaster University.

Canada’s population is aging. The baby boom that occurred following the 20 year period after the Second World War was followed by the baby bust when the number of births per year declined. Concurrent with the baby boom was an increase in life expectancy which since 1966 has increased by two to three years per decade: for example, the life expectancy for men increased by 10 years. It is absurd therefore to keep age 65 as the normal age for retirement, and governments should maximize participation rates among older workers (55+). The labour force will grow for three decades even if participation rates of older workers do not. That suggests an increase in the productive capacity of the economy. However, population growth will be greater than labour force growth which suggests a downward pressure on income per capita. Older workers could provide an offset but a higher growth rate would last only while the participation rates are increasing. More output could result also from higher growth in productivity. A trade-off could achieve the same output from a 30 per cent increase in the older work force as from relatively modest gains in labour productivity.

Living long and living well: A Long Term follow-up

The Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging and the Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative, a presentation by **Mark Oremus**, associate scientific director, Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, McMaster University.

This study (CLSA) is a Canada-wide research platform designed to provide data for studying the factors that promote healthy or unhealthy aging. It has the intent to recruit 50,000 participants between ages 45 and 85 from across the country. The study involves up to 160 researchers in 26 institutions and has funding from a variety of government and university sources. The intent is that the participants will be followed for at least 20 years. For example, every three years participants will be interviewed in their homes or by telephone. Those visited in their homes will also visit a CLSA data collection site. Selected research goals include: A study of health components’ progression from middle age onwards; determinants of well-being and quality of life; social participation; labour markets in retirement and post retirement; cognitive functioning/mental health; disabilities. Those who visit a data center also participate in a variety of medical tests. At the end of May, 2014, around 20,000 baseline interviews and more than 20,000 in-home interviews were completed as well as 18,000 visits to the data centres. The goal of the findings is to present the material back to the ordinary Canadian public as well as health care professionals and policy makers for their consideration and action. An on-line component is underway to bring health information and research findings to all interested.

Best practices from across the country

Joint Consultative Committee, a direct line of consultation for the Windsor University Retirees' Association with the President of the University of Windsor

by **Datta Pillay**, University of Windsor Retirees' Association

University of Windsor has an annual budget of \$13,000 funded by the university. Its members funded a \$156,000 bursary that pays out five student scholarships of \$1,600 each. The overall tone of the university/retiree relationship is one that celebrates retirees.

The departmental representation system

by **Ken Craig**, UBC Association of Professors Emeriti.

This association has a departmental representative system of retired members who maintain relations with their former department. The provost actively supports the association (makes retirement more attractive!) and there is a sense among retired academics that “We’re the people alumni remember.”

New developments in university and college support for research and continuing scholarly and professional activities of retirees

with **Peter Russell**, Retired Academics and Librarians of the University of Toronto, and **Hiroimi Matsui**, Simon Fraser University Retirees Association.

Hiroimi Matsui said that at SFU there is a retirees research fund of \$50,000 that annually makes five awards of \$10,000 each. The SFU faculty of science has initiated its own research support for retired researchers. There is the hope that other units will also develop their own programs.

Peter Russell said that the university’s Seniors College, a “college” for “retired” scholars, is well known. It is an entity that receives clerical and office support from the university. The college is now working with the development office to raise funds and serves as a linkage to and umbrella for the University

Establishing what the membership wants, with L. Calder and R. Blackmore, Wilfrid Laurier University Retirees’ Association

Concern with the relevance of the association within the University, WLURA conducted a focus group with retirees and a representative from OCUFA; the conclusion was that the association was important because it represented the university to the community and gave valuable information to the president and administration, as well as bringing retirees together. Emphasis was placed on expanding activities for its 186 members in addition to eight monthly speakers drawn from the university and the community, four newsletters per year, and centennial activities, including a book of reminiscences by faculty members and a garden. Calder emphasized the important role played by CURAC in writing reports that can influence policy development, noting that CURAC will continue to receive WLURA support.

The retiree association as facilitator for volunteer opportunities on campus and in the community, by J. Lennox, York University Retirees’ Association.

YURA already has volunteer activity as a main focus specifically for student scholarships which are funded by special events. The association has agreed to a continuing commitment for these projects for the next three years. Efforts that link

the association to the ongoing mission of the university have resulted in a 2012 memorandum of agreement that pledges to support retired members' activities. Examples of retirees' activities include: Skills workshops for the Faculty of Graduate Studies; chairing of graduate defenses; handing out diplomas at convocation and mentoring activities. Future opportunities may include participation of retirees in thank-athons to donors. Volunteering should be an enjoyable and appropriate activity and new recruits should be approached carefully paying attention to individual talents and interests.

Succession planning—identifying and preparing members for executive positions in the association

by **I. Stebelsky**, Windsor University Retirees' Association.

This presentation emphasized the need to mentor prospective leaders in order to ensure the long term viability of the association and, like other presenters, Stebelsky stressed focusing on newly retired faculty and librarians using both formal and informal channels to identify potential recruits and matching candidates with the positions to be filled. Generally, the Windsor association recommended service on association committees before recruiting to the executive. Windsor's association is different from others in that it is closely tied to the university's Faculty Association, having eight representatives on Faculty Association committees and the executive. WUFA consults with WURA and negotiates improvements for both groups.

Working Collaboratively

with presenters **Liz Aldrey**, Mohawk College, **John Clark**, Niagara College, and **Doug Willford**, Humber College.

All the college retiree associations represented by the speakers are all-inclusive and thus include retirees who were academic and support staff. For the Mohawk, Niagara and Humber retiree associations, old friendships led to the sharing of information and ideas among the three associations. The "presidents" lunch table at the OCRA annual meeting provides another opportunity for retiree association leaders to meet and exchange ideas. As a result, ideas for social events and other activities are discussed at the board meetings of the three associations, and programs developed to include events sponsored by each association. One example: the retirees of Niagara College noted for its viticulture and horticulture programs, organized tours of the college's winery and greenhouses. Collaboration leads to benefits that accrue to each member association by providing the opportunities as well as the numbers needed for successful events. These associations survey members occasionally to determine which activities are of interest to the members, what needs the members have for transportation, accommodation, willingness to carpool, etc., and the results are shared with the other associations.

Provincial honour for Ed Williams



Ed Williams, CURAC/ARUCC secretary, was one of five people the government of Newfoundland and Labrador singled out for special recognition on National Seniors Day and the International Day of Older Persons in early October, 2014. They were presented with the province's Seniors of Distinction Award.

The citation said "Dr. Edgar Williams has spent a lifetime positively contributing to the collective culture of this province and country. Dr. Williams has written extensively on the need for increased numeracy in Canada and in Newfoundland. He was instrumental in the development of basic education programming which developed into the present-day adult basic education program, a means by which adults can achieve high school equivalency.

"Dr. Williams has contributed to the work of various professional organizations at the provincial, national and international levels, including the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association Mathematics Council of which he is a founding member; the Newfoundland and Labrador Science and Technology Advisory Council; the Atlantic Provinces Council on the Sciences; and executive director of the Canadian Mathematical Olympiad. Dr. Williams has been active in many community organizations including the Boy Scouts of Canada, the Canadian Red Cross Society, St. John's Municipal Parks and Recreation committee, Royal St. John's Regatta, and he is a founding member of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons."

News, notes and stuff for the next edition

You are encouraged to contribute material for the next edition of this newsletter. What kind of material? It may be a news item from your university association highlighting a program or the outstanding contribution of a retired member. It may be a piece exploring an issue specifically relevant to people who have retired as academic or support staff from employment at a university or college in Canada.

Send your material to the co-editors:

Ed Unrau: ed_unrau@umanitoba.ca
Michel Tousignant: tousignant.michel@uqam.ca

Deadline: anytime before the end of 2014.



CURAC/ARUCC is a non-profit federation of retiree organizations at colleges and universities across Canada. Its primary aim is to coordinate activities that promote communication among member organizations, to share information, provide mutual assistance, and speak publicly on issues of common concern to its more than fifteen thousand members across Canada.

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Note:

Member organizations of CURAC/ARUCC are asked to circulate this newsletter to their members.