

UGRA'S PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Maybe it is appropriate for the depths of winter, but I have the feeling we are in a state of suspension as we wait for the economic news to clarify and as the University waits for its day of reckoning (August 1) for the valuation of its pension plans. As of that August date, the University will know the extent of its liability for making up the shortfall in the pension plan; it is a virtual certainty that the plans will not be found to be in surplus. While the Province has said it will provide a year's grace in requiring the initiation of the additional payments required to return the plans to a balanced position, the fiscal pain will probably still be intense. In the meantime, the University's response to any talk of ad hoc pension payments and enhancements to benefits is a firm shake of the head.

Such unfavourable conditions, however, have not stopped the UGRA Executive from equally firmly, although quietly, pressing the case for action on pensions. By tradition, the UGRA Executive meets with President Summerlee and Vice President Sullivan in April each year in what typically turns out to be a vigorous, although still respectful, discussion of mutual issues and concerns. Pensions are invariably a part of these conversations and they will be again when we meet this coming April 6; we have already sent advance notice that we expect pension matters to be on the agenda. While we

expect to see little more than another shake of the head, we will have succeeded in making sure the question of pension relief is still on the table and visible for everyone to see.

While the Executive waits for pension matters to come to a head, it has turned its attention to internal, housekeeping issues. As I indicated in the last newsletter, we are pushing to reformulate our web presence. Our UGRA website needs updating but this is no easy task. It is a multidimensional process that can only be done in steps. Volunteer time and energy are the limiting factors.

At the moment, the website is mostly open to anyone who wants to pay it a visit. One does not have to be a University of Guelph retiree to see almost everything there is to see there. Last year, under Ed Herold's direction, the Communications Committee asked Bob Creedy, the site's web master, to create a Members Area that would require the visiting person to sign in and use a password to explore the members-only part of the site. As of this time, not much is there beyond a message exchange capacity. More will be coming soon.

If we are going to have a useful Members Area on the site, we need to have a mechanism to prevent anyone who is not a member (a U of G retiree) from signing in. This means there must be an authoritative list of members in a behind-the-scenes, restricted-access database. The University, through Human Resources, has recently begun to give us, on an annual basis, the names of all retirees (names, it turns out, are not regarded as private information under privacy legislation), which forms the basis for our names database. In addition, some retirees have, over the years, given us email and postal address information which we have also included in the web database. At the present time we have email addresses of nearly half of our members and we use this information to send out an early email message containing a web link to each newsletter issue. Maybe in the future, likely a number of years from now, this will be the only way the UGRA Newsletter will be distributed. Or, maybe not.

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Making sure this member database is in good shape requires attention. Dana Paramskas has taken on a major responsibility for this task and has been working with Bonnie Hamilton, Chair of the Membership Committee, to eliminate double entries (there are quite a few of those) and to ensure the existing list is consistent with the University's more authoritative list. They are nearing the end of that process at this time.

In the meantime, Ron MacKinnon, Chair of the Communications Committee, has initiated work along with Dana Paramskas and Mark Sears on an overhaul of the website content. The aim is to keep the content current and to make finding things on the site easier. Given the size of the job and the time available to our Executive members, it is likely to be some months

before any big changes are visible on the site. I can say, however, that we have returned to the practice of posting the Executive Committee minutes there after they have been approved at the subsequent meeting of the Executive.

At this time last year, the Executive Committee decided that the UGRA Constitution needed a review. In particular, there was some confusion among Committee members concerning how long they were expected to serve. That review has now been completed and a motion to make a few changes to the Constitution will be brought to the AGM for approval by the membership in June. The main recommended change will be a move away from an election of all Executive Committee members to one-year terms on an annual basis to a more conventional use

of multi-year terms of office. The Spring newsletter will include an article discussing the changes more fully but the upshot is that, under the proposed change, Executive Committee members would be elected to two-year terms renewable twice to make six years the maximum time any member can serve without at least a one-year break in service.

Be assured that the UGRA Executive Committee continues to work hard on behalf of all U of G retirees. If you have any questions or suggestions for the Committee, please write to us or go on the website and use the 'contact us' function to let us know your concerns. We try to be diligent in responding to any such communications.

*Bruce Ryan
President, UGRA*

Upcoming Important Events

Sometimes good things have to end. When the University was forced for financial reasons to move from a noon hour luncheon to an afternoon social for retirees, the convenient linkage between the University event and our AGM ceased. Now, we are going our separate ways; amicably, of course.

UGRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10:00 a.m., Thursday, June 17, at the Arboretum Centre

We hope you will plan to attend. Parking is free and the Arboretum grounds will be at their best. Program details will be in the Spring Newsletter.

PRESIDENT'S SOCIAL 2:30 p.m., Thursday, September 2, in Peter Clark Hall

Reconnect with friends and learn about the exciting research, new buildings and other changes at the University. There will also be an opportunity to address any questions or concerns you may have about your retirement benefits. The Spring Newsletter will have a reminder.

Be a Contributing Member of the UGRA (2009-2010)

All retirees are automatically members of the University of Guelph Retirees Association, but our capacity to operate effectively on behalf of retirees depends on members volunteering to become Contributing Members. This money covers the costs of the newsletter, scholarships, meeting room rentals and support for a member of the UGRA to attend the annual meeting of the College and University Retirees Association of Canada.

Please use the Contributing Membership Form on page 7 to send with your Contributing Membership payment. We have asked for a contribution of \$20 but always appreciate those members who add some extra funds to help us carry on the work.

We have also provided a place on the form for those who might wish to contribute more actively to the UGRA either by a willingness to serve on the Executive or by working on a committee or task group to carry out short term projects.

Passings

Alexander Benben	Oct.31, 2009
Ronald E. Pitblado	Nov. 11, 2009
Bishnoedath L. Raktoc	Nov. 13, 2009
Frederick Coffin	Nov. 15, 2009
Joseph Devos	Nov. 19, 2009
Trevor L. Jones	Nov. 25, 2009
Lloyd Gimmer	Dec. 20, 2009
Terence G. Walsh	Jan. 6, 2010
John Deman	Jan. 12, 2010
Beverley Kay	Jan. 14, 2010
Robert J. Douglas	Jan. 21, 2010
Beatrice McGivney	Jan. 22, 2010
Vern Bowman	Jan. 23, 2010
Ranjit Chakravarty	Jan. 23, 2010



A Winner for the UGRA Scholarship

The UGRA is pleased to announce that we had a highly deserving winner for the \$1500 UGRA Scholarship for 2010. Her name is Rebecca Egan. She is a first year DVM student. The Scholarship is given to a student with a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent who is a retiree of the University and the application form asks for the name of the retired relative. On the form, Rebecca identified her grandmother, Mrs. Isobel Ralston. As you will see, she had a number of other choices as well.

Rebecca writes about Mrs. Ralston: "My grandmother, Isobel, was born and raised here in Guelph. She worked at the University in the housekeeping department from 1965 to 1991. Although I was young, I still remember going with my mother to pick her up in front of MacDonald Hall at the end of the day. Interestingly enough, at one time or another, all 4 of my grandparents worked at the University. Both of my grandfathers, Patrick Egan and Earl Ralston worked in Physical



From left to right: Pamela Wallin, Rebecca Egan, Joe Mokanski, Alastair Summerlee

Resources, while my other grandmother, Marie Egan, worked as a secretary.

My grandmother Isobel was very supportive and always encouraged me to pursue my goals. Unfortunately, she passed away in August of 2007 and was not here to see me graduate with honours from the B.Sc. Animal Biology program or gain acceptance to the Doctor of

Veterinary Medicine program. I will be forever grateful for the example my grandmother set for me, as she was an extremely strong and hard-working woman. I miss her greatly and hope that I have made her proud." Congratulations go to Rebecca and we wish her well in her studies.



Retirement Home Living: How do I know that I am ready?

With the aging of our population, more and more retirement living options are becoming available to retirees. One of the choices that is increasingly attractive is some form of retirement home living. Making the move to this residential form is not always an easy decision for people. In my experience in the field, I have found that the most useful strategy in deciding if and when to make such a change is to invite people to pose some questions to themselves. Answering the questions honestly should help you make up your

mind and leave you feeling more certain of your eventual decision.

Some of the key questions to ask are: Is maintaining relationships and having socialization opportunities important to you? Are you interested in participating in new activities? How important is it that you feel safe and secure in your home? Are you ready to give up the endless chores of cooking, housekeeping and laundry? Are your friends and family too busy in their lives to help you at home? Answering yes

to any one of these questions is an indicator that you may be ready to consider a retirement home that offers opportunities for socialization and stimulating activities.

When planning a move like this, ensure that you have spoken openly with your spouse or partner and your family. Be clear about your wishes and what your plans entail. By being proactive, you avoid having to make a decision as a result of a crisis in health and well-being. Take the opportunity while you are well and able to make the choice and ensure that it is your decision and not that of a family member or health care provider.

Planning for your future does not end when you retire. It is a process that continues through the remainder of your life. Take control and make your decisions now. You will enjoy a freedom from worry when you make the decision to move to a retirement home at a time that is right for you. There are tremendous supports in the community that will ensure that your transition is a positive experience.

*Kelly Meeussen
Wellington Park Terrace*

Retiree Benefits and Privileges Provided Through and by the University

When employees go to their pre-retirement interview with Human Resources they are handed a 'brochure' telling them about the UGRA along with a list of the privileges the University extends to its retirees. From time to time we like to remind members of the privileges. Here they are again with wording up-dated to show current practices.

1. Extended Health Benefits and Out-of-Country Coverage. As a University of Guelph retiree currently paying premiums for extended health care benefits, out-of-country coverage will apply as long as you or your insured dependent has provincial health care coverage. Sun Life has confirmed that this provision refers to any Canadian provincial plan, not just Ontario's plan. Sun Life will not accept any substitute for a Canadian provincial plan. OHIP generally covers you for six months while you are outside the province, but coverage may be extended on application to OHIP prior to your date of departure. If you plan to move to another country for a lengthy period of time, or take up permanent residence in another country, check with Human Resources/Client Services, 519-824-4120, Ext. 56598 regarding the impact on your health and dental benefits.

For more information on all non-provincial plan items that would still be covered, it would be wise to check with Sun Life at 1-800-948-1048 or 1-800-361-6212.

If you have any specific concerns or questions, please call Human Resources/Client Services at 824-4120, Ext. 53374. If you have Internet access, refer to the Human Resources Retirees web page: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/HR/former> for detailed information.

2. Scholarship Plan. Available to retirees' spouses and dependent children under the age of 25. They must register as full-time students to qualify.

3. Tuition Waiver Program. Available to retirees who wish to take a single course. Those retirees who are eligible for tuition

waiver must complete a "Staff Registration and Tuition Waiver Request" form and submit it to Human Resources.

It is essential that retirees follow the normal procedures for contacting Undergraduate Program Services, Office of Registrarial Services, Level 3, University Centre, regarding their selection of courses.

4. Retiree Parking Rate. If the retiree is not receiving any payment from the University (pension payments are payments from the pension plan, not the University), then he or she is eligible for a 50% reduction from normal parking rates. Arrangements must be made through parking services.

5. Use of Athletic Facilities. Retirees, their spouses and adult children are eligible to purchase an Athletics Membership from the Athletics Centre cashier. Basic membership provides access to recreational swimming, skating, squash and tennis. Small additional fees are required for recreational hockey, the fitness circuit, weight room, aerobics classes and a locker. The Athletics Recreation Information Line is 824-4120, Ext. 56253.



Retirees Contribute to the United Way

The 2009 United Way campaign is now officially ended and we have the final figure for the amount U of G retirees contributed this year. A total of 239 retirees contributed or pledged to contribute \$56,142 to the United Way. The bulk of this money is directed toward the UW for Guelph and Wellington while smaller amounts go to other communities where retirees are currently living and to which they chose to designate their contribution. This year's amount is just a little less than that contributed to the 2008 campaign when the total came to \$57,099.



6. Use of University of Guelph Email Account. At the time of retirement, a retiree may choose to keep his or her e-mail account. In order to keep an e-mail account, the new retiree must make the request during the retirement interview. Human Resources will contact CCS on your behalf. There is no charge for this service.

7. Library Services. Retirees retain their library privileges with the same rights and responsibilities they had as employees. If you still have your card, you need only register with the circulation and interlibrary Services Desk, 1st floor, McLaughlin Library in order to continue your privileges. If you do not have a current card, Human Resources (5th floor, University Centre), will issue a form to obtain a new card. (This service is not instantaneous.)

As an added benefit, retirees may enjoy access to the Canadian University Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement under which Canadian university libraries have agreed to extend in-person borrowing privileges to students, faculty and staff from across the country. See the web link <http://www.curba.ca/> for more details.

College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC)



The CURAC website (<http://www.curac.ca/>) lists a number of reciprocal arrangements (some new) that have been made with various organizations. For example, one can have reduced fees for CAUT membership or a lower subscription rate to the Literary Review Of Canada. Also, CURAC has arranged with Waterloo Insurance for house and auto insurance at advantageous rates.

The web site describes working relationships that CURAC is developing with organizations that have similar interests. These include the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE); Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT); Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC); and the Academy for Higher Education and Development

(AHED/UPESD). For further information about AHED see Jim Shute's article in this newsletter.

The latest CURAC Newsletter (Fall, 2009, by President John Meyer, Windsor) is also available on the website. In the announcements and comments Meyer notes that CURAC's committees have been changed to be portfolios with a coordinator, who can be contacted about the issue he or she is in charge of.

The newsletter also has several articles which may be of interest to UGRA members. One, by Courtice Rose, President of the Association of Bishop's University Retirees, is on the elimination of indexation in their pensions for the next six years. In the faculty, librarian and staff unions' collective agreement with the University there was an understanding to continue cost of living adjustments, with the amount to be determined at each contract negotiation. In the spring of 2009 the unions agreed to increase their contributions to the pension fund and at the same time eliminate the indexation for current retirees for six years without informing or consulting the retirees. This was done as part of the university's attempt to reduce the pension fund deficit.

Another article by Ken Ross (University

of Toronto) describes the opening of an academic retiree centre at the U of T. The centre has offices, internet carrels, and a lounge area for academic retirees of the University. It is managed by a board under the auspices of the Provost's office.

The newsletter includes a summary of a CURAC submission by Paul Huber (Dalhousie) and Howard Fink (York) to the Quebec government pension review commission, which was seeking reactions to proposals for alterations in the Quebec Pension plan. It gives some insight into the issues of the QPP and its relationship to the CPP. Marilyn Bowman (Simon Fraser University) has written a supplement to the Fall Newsletter which compares the Canadian health system with the health systems of a number of industrialized countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Germany. She includes indices of spending, resources, preventative measures, and outcomes in her analysis. Readers interested

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

A follow-up to Phil Keddie's letter. I retired in 1985 as a Full Professor with 33 years pensionable service. Since then the purchasing power of my pension has decreased by some 40-50 percent. Is it not unreasonable to think that when that degree of erosion has been reached, a mechanism for some ad hoc adjustment is called for?

I realize that I should have done the decent thing and fallen off my twig by now, but with the combination of my genes, my wife's TLC and the good sense to retire to Southern Vancouver Island, I plan to be around for a few years yet.

Then there is the matter of the unindexed Civil Service supplement but I won't hold my breath on that one.

R.G. Rowberry

PS. My pension is less than the average Ontario teacher's pension.

Obtaining That Travel Medi-Passport

In the Fall 2009 issue of the UGRA Newsletter, we published a piece by Phil Keddie who advised retirees to get a current copy of the Travel MediPassport that comes with the benefits package provided to retirees by Sun Life. In that article, Phil gave the web link to the U of G HR website so that retirees could print a copy of the card for themselves. The web link provided was http://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/hrmanual/documents/TravelMediPass_GB00200-E-07-07.pdf. This link works if it is entered into the browser without error. And that is the problem. It is, to be frank, a long and ugly thing to type in without error. We heard from a few retirees who could not make the link work so we decided to provide another means for retirees to obtain the card.

Please call Ornella McCarron in HR at 519-824-4120 x52851 or write to her at omccarro@uoguelph.ca. She will happily send you a copy of the card with information on what is covered in the travel benefit.

UNIVERSITY of GUELPH

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 5, 2010

Prof Bruce Ryan
President,
University of Guelph Retirees' Association

Dear Bruce,

I am writing in response to your correspondence of November 5, 2009. My apologies for the delay. I have been very busy with international speaking and research engagements.

Thank you for your understanding of the University's financial situation, as well as the need to reduce expenditures. We are actively eliminating non-core activities and their related expenses across the system, while striving to improve the quality of teaching and research we undertake and maintain service levels.

I understand that some retirees may be disappointed with the change from annual luncheon to reception, but I can assure you that due to the tremendous cost and effort associated with the luncheon, the change to a reception is permanent. I do hope that the Executive of the Retirees' Association will work with staff in my office to help make the reception increasingly more attractive to and better attended by retirees.

The Association well knows that I and the University deeply appreciate the contributions of our retirees and I hope that together we will be able to work in more creative and imaginative ways to ensure that we keep our retirees engaged with the University.

Over the next few weeks, we will confirm a date for the annual reception.

Yours sincerely,



Alastair J. S. Summerlee, LL.D, BSc, BVSc, PhD, MRCVS
President and Vice-Chancellor

Address Changes Via the Web

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a side box, "Moving", which tells you how you can inform the University of any change of address. For those who are web-inclined, there is another way. You can do it directly on the U of G's HR website. Go to the following web page: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/addresschange/>. On this web page you are invited to provide your name, email address, the mailing address you wish the University to use, and your home phone number. Once you have entered the required information, you click 'Send' and the message goes directly to the records section in Human Resources.

Remember, among other things, this is the address the University uses to mail you the UGRA Newsletter. We are certain you won't want to miss any future issues.



Moving?

If you move to a new home, please remember to notify Human Resources of your new mailing address. This will help us ensure that you continue to receive your correspondence. Contact Human Resources at 519-824-4120, extension 53374 or by e-mail at hr@uoguelph.ca.

They will inform the pension payroll administrator, of any address changes.



Letters to the Editor

Do you have comments or concerns regarding issues, in this newsletter or otherwise, that you would like to raise with other University of Guelph retirees? We welcome your ideas, suggestions and comments. You can write to us at:

Newsletter Editor
University of Guelph Retirees' Association,
P.O. Box 48-4916
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

Or you can go to the UGRA website and click on Contact Us under the About Us tab (<http://www.ugra.ca/contact.shtml>). Post a message and we will respond.



UGRA University of Guelph Retirees Association Contributing Membership Form (2009-2010)

YES! I want to help promote the welfare of retirees and to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between retirees and the University. Please accept my cheque for \$20 as my contribution to the UGRA's administrative costs.

Name..... Date.....

Address

City/Province Postal Code.....

E-mail

I would like to receive more information about serving on the Executive of the UGRA or on one of its committees. Yes No Maybe Later (Please circle one)

If Yes, please provide a phone number:

Please make cheques payable to: University of Guelph Retirees Association

Mail this form with your cheque to: University of Guelph Retirees Association
University of Guelph
Guelph Ontario, N1G 2W1

Recent Retirees

November 1, 2009

Connie Hughes President's Office
 Derk Hovius Plant Agriculture
 Penelope Scott Admissions
 Matthijs Tollenaar Plant Agriculture

December 1, 2009

Knut Brundtland Hosp & Tourism Mgmt
 Judy Anne Campbell Food Science
 Luigi Diloreto Physical Resources
 Jeanne Stegeman School Of Languages & Literature
 Lewis Melville Molecular & Cellular Biology
 Claude Weil Kemptville Campus

January 1, 2010

Herminia Gillingham Library
 John Gruzleski Sch Of Engineering
 Yoko Imai Library
 Reid Kreuzwiser Geography
 Yukio Kakuda Food Science
 Paula Bacon Student Finance
 Susan Morrison College Of Arts, Dean's Office
 Douglas Morrison Library
 Becky Morrison Geography
 Robert McLaughlin Avp Agrifood
 Margaret Middleton Human Resources
 Ellis MacDonald Cdn Network of Toxicology Centres
 William Milne Learning Technology
 Carmelina Ridi CSAHS, Dean's Office
 Dave Scott University Ctr, Building Management
 Keith Solomon Toxicology Centre
 Patrick Schmidt Physical Resources
 Georgina Voparil Physical Resources
 Diane Gilbertson Revenue Control
 Helen Woodhouse Campus Comm Police

International Volunteer Opportunities

Retired faculty members interested in either continuing their international work or in becoming involved for the first time may wish to take a look at Academics for Higher Education and Development (AHED). This Canadian non-governmental organization, founded in 2007 and based in Montreal, solicits academic (and non-academic) professionals for short-term volunteer capacity-building assignments in developing countries. At present it has projects in Indonesian and Liberian universities.



AHED, now consisting of a network of 45 colleges and universities across Canada, invites faculty, staff and administrators, whether retired or not, to join its roster. All the relevant details, including annual reports, advisory board membership and roster application, are found on the AHED website www.ahed-upesed.org

*Jim Shute
 AHED Representative
 University of Guelph*


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RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO: ITEMS TO
 UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH RETIREES' ASSOCIATION
 P.O. BOX 4916
 UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
 GUELPH, ONTARIO
 CANADA N1G 2W1

