



McMaster University Retirees Association

1280 Main Street West,
Hamilton, ON, L8S 4L8, Canada

Tel: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23171

Home: 905 528 6506

E-mail: wayne.rouse3@yahoo.ca

<http://www.mcmaster-retirees.ca>

Wayne Rouse, Secretary

McMaster University Retirees Association

1280 Main Street West,

**THE 28th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Of the McMaster University Retirees Association
Tuesday June 4, 2013, Celebration Hall, Kenneth Taylor Hall**

The meeting was preceded by a light lunch starting at noon.

Following lunch, Dr. Mick Bhatia addressed the AGM with a presentation entitled

'Human Stem Cells: Biology and Applications towards the Clinic'.

Dr Bhatia is Director and Senior Scientist of the McMaster Stem Cell and Cancer Research Institute, Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences and an Associate Member of the Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine. Bhatia gave a fascinating and entertaining account of this frontier and complex research field.

After giving the audience a primer on stem cells and what makes them special, he described ground breaking stem-cell research by his team at McMaster. and elsewhere. This research indicates a future where stem cell therapy may use stem cell lines derived from human skin. He also described how, in the future, stem cells might be used to evaluate new drugs and for cancer treatment.

While this future looks bright Dr. Bhatia cautioned us to use common sense and healthy skepticism when reading reports in the news media and on the web. Advertisements for products purportedly based on stem cells are especially suspect. He warned to beware of 'stem cell snake oil'.

MINUTES of 28th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
Tuesday June 4, 2013, Celebration Hall, Kenneth Taylor Hall at 2:00 PM

1. Approval of the minutes of the 27th AGM, held May 27th, 2012

Moved by Mary Johnston, **seconded** by Mildred McLaren.

Helen Barton suggested that it was unlikely that the meeting was as short as the adjournment time indicated and suggested it be changed to 3:30 pm.

“That the 2012 AGM minutes be approved as amended”

Carried.

2. President’s Report (Marianne Walters)

A review of MURA the past year’s activities was presented , organized around the MURA objectives as set out in our Constitution.

Objective 1: to contribute in as many ways as possible to the welfare, prestige and excellence of the University

Three examples of activities that contribute in this way were given: the MURA endowed scholarship and prize awarded yearly to a full-time and a part-time student in gerontology, the volunteer activities carried out by MURA retirees both within the University and in the community, and the alerts given to retirees via our quarterly newsletters and via additional e-mail notices regarding volunteer activities in the community.

Objective 2: to promote interest in, cooperation with, and support of the University

While recognizing that volunteer activities play an important role in meeting this objective, Marianne stressed that *MURAnews* plays the prominent role by keeping our membership connected with the University, providing information about what is happening at McMaster, lectures, events of interest, and notice of books published by our retirees, etc. Other examples of important University activities include retirees volunteering as subjects in McMaster student or faculty led research projects, and faculty retirees who serve on Ph.D. Oral Committees.

Objective 3: to encourage and promote a spirit of fraternity and unity among the members of the association, and to provide means for continuing the associations which retirees enjoyed as employees of the University

The two MURA sponsored social events, the annual Christmas luncheon and the AGM, were highlighted, as well as the MURA Trips and MURA Special Events as important elements of providing fraternity and unity. Marianne also pointed out that *MURAnews* plays an important part with many articles on health, the listing of both new members and passings, and sharing information of many kinds. Finally, as to continuing associations

with the University, Marianne referred to our parking arrangements, the use of the library, availability of e-mail accounts, and reduced fees at the gym and University Club as fostering the continuation of our former associations.

Objective 4: to represent the interests of the members of the Association in all matters relating to the benefits accruing to the members

Marianne said that having a MURA voting representative on the Salaried Pension Trust Committee, a representative on the Hourly Pension Committee and an Observer on the McMaster Board of Governors are very important in meeting this objective. Also MURA Council has, as an ex-officio member, the director of Human Resources or delegate (Michele Leroux), who works with us to address general member concerns as well as errors sometimes made by both Sun Life and its agents in answering inquiries and processing reimbursements. MURA's membership in CURAC, the College and University Retirees Association of Canada, provides us with information on benefits and pensions across the country. One area of interest and discussion at a recent Ontario regional meeting was the move by government to amalgamate pension funds across all universities in the province.

Objective 5: to foster an understanding of the functions of the Association among employees of the University who are nearing retirement age

Marianne provided a number of examples of activities which relate to this objective: Mary Johnston, a member of MURA Council, will attend McMaster Financial and Life Planning Workshops preparing current employees for retirement, giving MURA an opportunity to provide feedback to the organizers.

MURA sends each new retiree a letter informing them of their lifetime membership in MURA and MURA's objectives and activities, encouraging them to participate.

MURA Council is invited to an annual reception the University President hosts for new retirees; the MURA president addresses this group to inform them about MURA.

Marianne concluded that going through this exercise of matching our activities to our stated objectives had provided reassurance that MURA is doing what it should be doing.

She then moved on to relate some specifics about MURA and the people involved:

- After being elected VP of MURA at last year's AGM, Jack Evans resigned last October due to health concerns.
- We were fortunate to get Mary Johnston, an elected Council member, to agree to serve as VP for the remainder of his term.
- We were saddened to lose an Ex-Officio Council member, Lorraine Allan, to pancreatic cancer. She was serving as Chair of the Pension and Benefits Committee as well as our representative to the Board of Governors.
- Helen Dietsche has completed two 3-year terms on Council. Her dedicated service and many contributions are appreciated, and we will miss her.
- Shari Mercer is completing her first 3-year term on Council. She has done an outstanding job as Chair of the Trips Committee

Marianne thanked Patrick Deane for his interest and support, and especially for partially

subsidizing our Christmas lunch. She also thanked the Faculty Association, CAW and the President's Office for providing the funding for MURA which allows all retirees to be members with no fee-parking, for providing free parking for members attending our special events and accessible parking to those who need it, and Human Resources for working with us to address retiree concerns relating to pensions and benefits as well as updating our membership lists.

She gave special thanks to the MURA Council members and representative to University Committees who all volunteer their time and efforts, and to all those who attended today's AGM

3. Treasurer's Report (Beth Csordas)

Treasurer Beth Csordas outlined the MURA financial statements for the year ending April 2013, as circulated to attendees. She pointed out that the excess of Income over Expenses for the 2012/2013 fiscal year was \$1,007 and Total Members' Equity at April 30, 2013 was \$45,950. Questions on the financial statement were solicited but there were none.

Marianne Walters requested a motion to accept the MURA Financial report.

Moved by Harold Siroonian, **seconded** by Cliff Andrews.

“that the MURA Financial report be accepted as circulated”

Carried without discussion

4. Auditor's Report (Robert West - presented by Beth Csordas)

The Auditor's Report was circulated in the package given to the AGM attendees. For the year ending April 30, 2012, Robert West reports that he has examined MURA's financial statement and all supporting documents that he deemed necessary. He finds everything gives a fair representation of our finances and is in order.

Marianne Walters requested a motion to accept the MURA Auditor's report.

Moved by Kathy Heywood, **seconded** by Helen Otrosina.

“that the MURA Auditor's report be accepted as circulated”

Carried without discussion

5. Reports on Pensions

5.1 Salaried Plan (Bob West - presented by Les Robb)

Bob West's remarks were circulated separately in '**Comments on Salaried Pension Plan for 2013 MURA Annual General Meeting**'. This document addressed the following questions.

What is the financial condition of our pension plan?

The last actuarial valuation of the pension plan on July 1, 2011 showed a deficiency of approximately \$168 million. This is a large amount but not out of line with many other pension plans. There are several reasons for the deficiency, among them:

- The fallout from the 2008/2009 world financial crisis which saw negative investment returns of 11.69% in 2008 and 3.98% in 2009
- The artificially low interest rates (which still prevail today) that were used to calculate the plan liabilities (lower rates equates to higher liabilities) and thus the higher assets needed by the plan
- The good news, retirees are living and collecting pensions for a longer time.

How is this being dealt with?

- The University is required and has been making substantial additional contributions to the plan. Because of the unusual situation, the Province has allowed these payments to be spread over a longer period
- The University has negotiated changes to the early retirement "Rule of 80" up to a new "Rule of 90"
- The Province has proposed consolidating the assets of Ontario University pension plans to reduce costs and provide access to a wider range of investments to improve investment returns. The plan was outlined in the "Morneau" report in the fall of 2012 but no legislation to enact its recommendations has yet been introduced

The success of these measures will be determined by the next actuarial valuation due as of July 1, 2014. To its credit, the University is attempting to keep a defined benefit pension plan when other employers have converted to a defined contribution plan which has much less certainty for employees.

Will we ever see another increase in our pensions?

The January increase (if any) each year is calculated as the excess of the average investment returns for the 5 years ended the previous June, over 4.5%. The last increase received was in January 2009. No increases have been given from 2010 to 2013 as the 5 year average includes the negative returns in 2008 and 2009. Any increase is restricted to the average increase in the Consumer Price Index over the same 5 year period.

In order to receive an increase in January 2014, it would be necessary to earn investment returns of at least 9% for the year ended June 30, 2013. Investment returns for the first 9 months of this period have been good and I am cautiously optimistic that a modest increase in January 2014 is possible. Increases beyond 2014 are more likely as the large 11.69% negative return of 2009 will drop out of the 5 year average.

Les Robb added the following comments.

MUFA's recent contract includes the establishment of a University/MUFA joint committee on indexing that will report through the official joint committee. Any changes will not be retroactive. Thus MURA may need to lobby for application to current retirees

5.2 Hourly Plan (Cliff Andrews)

Cliff noted that the hourly plan continues in a struggling condition and is on the cusp of receiving indexing. This year the earnings on investment were +12.1%. The hourly pensioners may see an increase in the next few years.

6. Nominating Committee (Joe Laposa)

Joe Laposa, chair of the 2013 Nominating Committee, presented the Nominating Report for 2013-2014 which was circulated to the members present. The members of the Nominating Committee were Helen Dietsche, Les King, Joe Laposa (chair), Jan Peer, and Janice Rischke. Joe explained that the Nominating Committee report as included in the agenda package was approved by Council in March. Our constitution permits new nominations to be made up to 7 days before the AGM. No nominations were received by the MURA secretary (Wayne Rouse). The nomination list as circulated is

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| President | Marianne Walters (One year term) |
| Vice-President- | Mary Johnston (One year term) |
| Councillors (<i>until 2016</i>) | Brian Beckberger |
| | Betty Ann Levy |
| | Shari Mercer |

The constitution also permits nominations from the floor and requires that the question be asked three times. Joe Laposa asked three times if there were additional nominees from the floor. There were none.

Moved by Cliff Andrews, **seconded** by Helen Barton

'that nominations be closed'

Carried without discussion

7. Election of Executive and Council (Joe Laposa)

Moved by Joan Parker, **seconded** by Beth Csordas

'that the slate of nominees be accepted as presented'

Carried without discussion.

7. Incoming President's Address (Marianne Walters)

Marianne presented the following summary.

- Council will continue to be engaged in all the usual activities noted in her earlier report.
- MURA will host the annual CURAC conference for 2014. It will commence with an opening reception followed by two days of sessions on a number of different topics. Mary

Johnston has agreed to chair the Organizing Committee, and will keep Council and members informed throughout the year

9. Other Business

None

10. Adjournment

Moved by Brian Beckberger

'That the meeting be adjourned

Carried at 2:56 PM