



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

**THE 27th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Of the McMaster University Retirees Association
Wednesday May 30, 2012, Celebration Hall, Kenneth Taylor Hall**

The meeting was preceded by a light lunch starting at noon. There was a cake cutting, to commemorate McMaster's 125th Anniversary (and to thank donors to the MURA Endowment Fund for Gerontology Students). Joe expressed thanks to Karen McQuigge and Meggie MacDougall from University and Alumni Advancement for providing the cake.

Following lunch, McMaster President Patrick Deane addressed the AGM with a presentation entitled '*McMaster and the Hamilton Community*'. Dr. Deane began by thanking the many donors to the MURA Scholarship and Prize.

Deane noted that 2012 marks the 125th anniversary of McMaster University and the 82nd year of its relocation to Hamilton. He feels that McMaster and the City of Hamilton have enjoyed a great partnership exemplified by shared goals, ambition, competitive spirit and talent. With the following examples he illustrates some of the important hallmarks.

- Ambitious leadership prompted McMaster to move from Toronto, where it was under the shadow of the University of Toronto, to Hamilton in 1930.
- The same competitive spirit and ambition drove the McMaster leaders in the 1950's to build McMaster's scientific research capability into the world leader it is today.
- In the 1960's the visionaries, who founded the Faculty of Health Sciences, created inquiry and problem-based learning, which subsequently has become a worldwide model.
- Subsequently McMaster is now firmly entrenched among the world's first-rate universities.

Deane went on to emphasize that the university has a responsibility to participate in the pursuit of health, culture and prosperity in the world at large, but also at home, which, for McMaster, means the city, the province and the country.

McMaster's various inputs which have been very substantial over the years, Deane noted the following.

- McMaster is one of Hamilton's top five employers, and the scale of our activities is important to the region's prosperity.

- McMaster increases the gross provincial product of Ontario by nearly \$1.5 billion annually.
- About 17,000 Hamiltonians owe their permanent full-time jobs to the presence of the University.
- McMaster has worked to support Hamilton's priorities, from helping to invigorate the downtown by increasing our presence there, to working with our municipal partners to extend clinical health care practices throughout the Hamilton/Burlington region. These are ongoing and substantial activities. He points to the downtown medical centre as an obvious example that will provide public space, research facilities and a clinic for 16,000 people who do not presently have a family doctor.
- The city has served and continues to serve as an ideal environment for experiential learning by students. This learning, in turn, feeds back to benefit Hamiltonians.

Historically and concurrently, all of these activities feed on inputs from the city and feed back to the well-being and development of the city. It is a juxtaposition of mutual advantages that the President wishes to foster further.

**MINUTES of 27th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
Wednesday May 30, 2012, Celebration Hall, Kenneth Taylor Hall at 2:10PM**

1. Approval of the minutes of the 26th AGM, held May 25th, 2011

Moved by Cliff Andrews, **seconded** by Stefania Miller
that the 2011 AGM minutes be approved as circulated
Carried with no discussion.

2. President's Report (Joe Laposa)

2.1 MURA's Current membership

Our total number of 2100 represents an increase of 82 members since last year's AGM.

2.2 Highlights of ongoing efforts to serve our membership through information transfer, Joe highlighted the following. We have published 4 issues of MURAnews. He noted that many MURA members have chosen to save us postage and printing by reading MURAnews on our website. He emphasized that lots of useful information is there, at www.mcmaster.retirees.ca A prime example Laposa pointed to is MURA's explanation of how the \$10,000 out of province emergency medical benefit that retirees have can be used. He thanked Marianne Walters and her Pensions and Benefits Committee for their efforts in pursuing this initiative.

In terms of information sources he noted the following.

- MURAnews is issued 4 times/year. Available through MURA website and through snail-mail.
- Mura Website – is being continuously updated in our attempts to keep up with current knowledge and happenings.

- Email information – Current information is disseminated through the MURA ‘Listserve’ to all our members with email.

2.3 Financial Support

A new three year funding cycle is in place with the continued support of our three main sponsors, the University President’s Office, the McMaster University Faculty Association and the Canadian Auto Workers Union Local 555. This sponsorship has allowed MURA to continue to operate without imposing member fees.

2.4 Out-of-Province Medical Coverage

This has been a continuing research quest and information dissemination that has been transmitted to MURA members through the information transfer media noted in 2.2 above. It is a constantly changing scene, and information from our members can help keep this initiative current.

2.5 College and University Retirees' Association of Canada (CURAC)

Through our membership in CURAC, MURA members are eligible for special rates on home and auto through Waterloo Insurance. These are negotiated on an individual basis and brochures are available at the AGM desk.

2.6 Trips

MURA-organized trips continue to be well-advertised, popular and well-subscribed. These trips have been documented in the MURA web site and described in MURAnews. Laposa noted that in the past year these have included a Danube River boat cruise, a trip to Chicago and most-recently an Alaskan cruise. He thanked Trips chair Anne Sinclair for her efforts over the years.

Under Shari Mercer and Mary Johnson’s collective leadership, MURA retirees toured the new Engineering building, viewed the Canadian Art Collection at the Kleinberg Gallery, attended the ‘Twelfth Night’ at Stratford and ‘My Fair Lady’ at the Shaw Festival, took in the ballet ‘Swan Lake’ and had a guided tour of the Hamilton Art Gallery.

2.7 Christmas Luncheon

The venue of the ever popular Christmas luncheon was held for the first time at The CIBC Centre in the McMaster University Student Centre. This was necessary because MURA had outgrown the available space in Celebration Hall. There were some problems with sometimes slow service, congestion in the dining hall and parking and these are being addressed for the upcoming year. The University President continues to support this annual event financially and we are grateful for this.

2.8 MURA Academic Awards Endowment Campaign

MURA’s initial financial goals have been attained. However, additional donations are actively being solicited in order to continue building the fund to help combat inflationary pressures.

2.9 MURA Notecards

MURA Note Cards are one of our fundraisers. These are available at the AGM desk.

2.10 Recognitions

Joe Laposa noted that MURA Council meets 10 times per year and all members are volunteers. He thanked Al Fraser, Kathy Overholt, Les Robb, Pam Penny and Anne Sinclair, whose terms as Council members are ending, for the service they have given to MURA. In these recognitions he

noted each of their substantial inputs to the Association. Additionally, he thanked the membership for supporting the organized events and University Parking Services for facilitating on-campus parking for our members.

3. Treasurer's Report (Beth Csordas)

Treasurer Beth Csordas outlined the MURA financial statements for the year ending April 2012. It was noted that this year's income (2012) again exceeded expenses. Questions on the financial statement were solicited but there were none.

Joe Laposa requested a motion to accept the "MURA Financial" reports and the Auditor's report.

Moved by Joy Carson, **seconded** by Harold Siroonian
that the MURA Financial report be accepted as circulated
Carried without discussion

4. Auditor's Report (Beth Csordas reporting for Robert West)

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.

Joe Laposa requested a motion to accept the "MURA Auditor's report.

Moved by Les Robb, **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 (Les Robb)

After representing MURA on the Pension Trust Committee for the last 8 years Les felt that it has generally worked quite well. In this his last report he decided to talk generally about the state of the Salaried Pension Plan and how he views the current deficits.

Before addressing the deficit issue, he pointed out that due to poor market performance, there was no increase in pensions in the current year and there was unlikely to be any in the upcoming year. Robb emphasized, however, that in the current economic climate, we are fortunate to have defined benefit plans.

Since the financial crisis began 5 years ago, the Plan has been doing badly and those still working have been asked to increase their contributions to help make up the shortfall. The University as 'contributor of last resort' has made major increases in its contributions and will continue to do so. However, the plan is still not in good shape and it will be some years until deficits are eliminated.

Les listed a number of reasons how the large deficit came about. The stock market crash in 2007/2008 and is one of the reasons. Also, of major importance is that in recent years liabilities have grown substantially. This arose because the expected interest rates on investments needed to fund the liabilities (such as pensions) have been much lower than anticipated from historical performances. The lower the interest rate, the more money that must be set aside to cover the pensions. In Les' words 'defined benefit plans have been hit by the double whammy of low market returns and low bond interest rates'. Robb elaborated on the nature of the problem in more

technical terms and noted that, for those interested, the discussion can be followed up on by reading the Actuarial Valuation reports on the 'Working at McMaster' website. He concludes that the liabilities of the Plan are a big part of the problem and that it will not be until interest rates rise again that the deficits can be escaped.

Under rules established by the Provincial Government employers are required to make up deficits fairly quickly to avoid long-term risk to the employees. Universities have argued that these rules are designed out of a concern for the bankruptcy of private companies and are inappropriate for quasi-public employers. The lobbying worked, and the rules were relaxed early last year to allow such organizations to make up their deficits more slowly. McMaster chose to switch to this new regime in the fall of 2012. Under the new legislation, McMaster University will put less into the Plan to restore financial health than they otherwise would have for at least the next 3 years. Details on this can be found on the 'Working at McMaster' web site under the 'Plan 2000 Solvency Relief' link.

Les concluded by saying that, in the extremely unlikely event that McMaster should declare bankruptcy, its assets are very large and he expects would be more than sufficient to pay off the debts to pensioners and others.

5.2 Hourly Plan (Cliff Andrews)

Cliff concurred with the general assessments made by Les Robb described above. He feels at this time that the hourly plan is being well-run.

6. Nominating Committee (Joe Laposa)

Joe Laposa, chair of the 2012 Nominating Committee, presented the Nominating Report for 2012-2013 which was circulated to the members present. 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- Jack Evans (One year term)
- Councillors (*until 2015*)
 - Helen Barton
 - Dianne Coventry
 - Linda Grocott

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

Moved by Jim Kramer, **seconded** by Janice Rischke
that nominations be closed
Carried without discussion

7. Election of Executive and Council

The slate of nominees recommended by the Nominating Committee for 2011-2012 with the changes noted above requires a vote.

Moved by Helen Dietsche, **seconded** by Mike Hedden
that the slate of nominees be accepted as presented
Carried without discussion.

8. Incoming President’s Address (Marianne Walters)

Marianne thanked Joe for his efforts during his term as President. She made particularly mention that he will be noted as the ‘presidential punster’. She pointed out that, during the recent past, MURA has been successful in delineating for members their options on health insurance and how to pursue these most effectively. Marianne stated that the usual MURA activities will be continued during the upcoming year. She foresees an increasingly major involvement of MURA in volunteer activities within the community, in keeping with the University President’s task force in this direction. She concluded by wishing all a happy and healthy summer.

9. Other Business

None

10. Adjournment

Moved by Brian Beckberger
That we adjourn the meeting
Carried at 2:30 PM