

**MINUTES for COUNCIL MEETING
of McMaster University Retirees Association -
Wednesday December 12, 2007, 1:30PM at Student Centre Room 220**

Present: Helen Barton (chair), Helen Dietsche, Geoff Evans, Brian Ives, Margaret Jenkins, John McCutcheon, Kathy Overholt, Veronica Morrison, Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Rod Phillips and Marianne Van der Wel

Regrets: Cliff Andrews, Jeff Chuchman, Beth Csordas, Roman March, Joan Morris, Anne Sinclair

1. Welcome & Regrets

Meeting convened at 1:45PM because of Council's annual photo shoot at 1:15PM by the fireplace in the student centre lobby.

Council Attendance: As Helen Barton had responded earlier in the week to a query from Roman, Helen reiterated to Council that MURA's constitution has no rules on meeting attendance. The only part of the constitution that would guide us in this matter is that quorum is 5 out of the elected members (currently 5 of 12). We would only need to take action if continued absences of a number of council members were to jeopardize MURA's work.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings - Council Meeting - Nov 14, 2007 - for approval

- John McCutcheon **motioned** that the minutes be approved as circulated.
- Geoff Evans **seconded** the motion.
- Motion **carried** unanimously.

3. Business Arising

a) Report on scholarship endowment and fund raising campaign (Beth Csordas/Helen Barton)

- Helen Barton reported that as of November 30, 2007, we have 47 donors with \$10,080 in pledges and \$7,155 received. That puts us at 31.5% of our goal.
- Mel and Marilyn Hawkrigg sent us a thank you card for their honorary membership which included a generous donation to our endowment fund.
- John McCutcheon **motioned** that:
 - Helen Dietsche, Helen Barton and Kathy Overholt form a

group to design and produce cards that MURA can use to send thank you notes for the fundraising project as well as for other Council use.

- The initially order of 250 is expected to cost \$237.50 (95 cents per card including envelope) plus set up costs, hopefully not to exceed \$100.

- This group will also investigate the feasibility of using the design of the cards for personal use that can be sold to the general membership to raise funds for MURA.

- In designing the cards, the group will first consider the art work that Stephanie Lisak (from Political Science and now a McMaster retiree) made for Graduate Studies and, if her art work is used, obtain Stephanie's permission as well as ensure she is credited.

- Joan Parker **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** Unanimously

Brian Ives reminded us that a couple of years ago MURA had a contest to design a logo for our association. That logo could then have been used on various merchandise items such as a tie, shirt, glass, etc. Since MURA received only two entries, the contest was abandoned. We could consider resurrecting this contest and use the winning design on our "official" cards.

Sarah Cook, advancement office, will give us a list of donors(not including amounts) so we can send "Thank You" notes.

b) Recent Retirees Reception - Discussion with President's Office

- This discussion is still pending

c) Liaison with Athletics & Recreation re fitness and rehab programs (Joan Parker)

- We received a note from Debbie Marinoff Shupe that we would get something from her soon regarding the Open House, Pilot Recreation Program and general usage of "Athletics & Recreation".

- Jeff Chuchman and Helen Barton have written a general statement about insurance coverage for "paramedical" services such as those offered by "Sports Medicine & Rehab" for the January MURAnews. Basically, retirees with coverage could receive up to \$15 per qualifying visit to a maximum of \$225-300 per year, depending on which plan the retiree belongs to. Retirement Support Services (RSS) is preparing a spreadsheet of the details from the various plans so they can quickly answer questions from retirees. Helen Barton will ask Jeff Chuchman to include all benefits in this spreadsheet not just the "paramedical". Council will ask for a

copy of this spreadsheet and for RSS to consider making it available to the McMaster Sports Medicine & Rehab. Clinic as well.

4. Correspondence

- Consolidate Retiree Perks on A Single Web Page: Because of two phone queries, one dealing with getting a retiree parking permit and the other with university library lending privileges, Marianne Van der Wel looked at MURA web site and discovered that information about retiree benefits (parking, e-mail accounts, tuition assistance, library privileges, gym membership,...) is found in various places (mostly under 'Pension and Benefits' and 'Useful Links'), and often points to McMaster sites with information that isn't always clear or helpful. Ideally, we can consolidate, on a single web page, all these benefits with links to sites (MURA's or a University Department) that give clear descriptions of the privilege/benefit.

- John McCutcheon **motioned** that Marianne Van der Wel, Brian Ives and Helen Barton investigate the feasibility of providing a consolidated web page of retiree benefits, privileges and perks.

- Pam Penny **seconded** the motion

- **Carried** unanimously

- Helen Barton received an e-mail from "Dundas Collision" to remind us of discounts and savings for McMaster Retirees at this establishment. Pam Penny will again ask Purchasing for a list of business discounts available to McMaster retirees. These benefits could be included in a consolidated web page listing retiree perks.

- CURAC's Annual Conference for 2008 will be in Montreal, Quebec May 21 to 23.

- Helen Barton corresponded with Julia Kraveca, UTS (University Technical Services) about retiree e-mail accounts, which has resulted in a new e-mail policy. In the past, accounts needed to be renewed every 5 years. This was drawn to the MURA president's attention because of the rather stern and confusing expiry notices sent to retirees by UTS.

THE NEW POLICY: All retiree e-mail accounts will be set up "for life". Current retirees will need to renew their account at the next 5 year expiry date, but not again after that. Accounts will expire if not used for 13 consecutive months.

Helen Barton is also working with UTS to improve wording on UTS' web page for retirees, and on the expiry notice.

- Brian Ives received an e-mail from the Menno DeGroot's family inviting MURA members to celebrate Menno's 100th Birthday on December 31, 2007. He is our most senior member! The party will be from 11AM-1PM in Brampton. Marianne would like to go but needs a ride. Dr. Art Bourns been asked if he would like to participate. Helen Barton will likely go but will be coming from her cottage in the north. If anyone wants to go, please let Helen or Marianne know.

- Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE), a North American association, sent Brian Ives a survey asking how retirees are supported by the institution. It was forwarded to Helen who will fill in the survey.

- the October/November 2007 newsletter from MUFA is now on their web site.

5. President's Report

a) Funding for next 3-year period:

Kathy Overholt and Helen Barton have a meeting set with CAW555 on January 10/08 and will discuss funding.

Helen Barton spoke with Ted Mansell, secretary of SEIU, when he called to decline our Xmas lunch invitation. He is open to the idea of helping to arrange some funding for MURA on behalf of SEIU's hourly retirees, and would like to talk to Cliff Andrews about this. Cliff would like Helen Barton to be part of these discussions. Rod Phillips will also be invited to participate in these talks.

b) Cost Cutting/MURANews Opt-Out:

Helen Barton distributed samples of the printed "opt out" card (on green thick paper) and the return envelope. The cost of the cards and the envelopes is \$325 which is \$25 below the amount approved at the last Council Meeting. The cards and envelopes have been printed and are stored in the MURA office.

c (d in agenda) Volunteer Network

Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Ellen Ryan and Helen Barton had a meeting with Peter George on Dec 11 to discuss setting up a McMaster volunteer network. Helen reported that Peter is very enthusiastically supporting the setup of such a network. Karen McQuigge from Alumni Advancement gave a cost estimate for adding resources to that department to support the network; Peter asked that Karen include this in her budget submission to support a trial for the next 3 years. Jason Cole from Human Resources provided information on areas that need to be addressed such as insurance and volunteer 'contracts'. Retirees may be the initial focus, with alumni also a primary focus for volunteers. The network will likely be administered through Advancement, but it was stressed by the MURA reps at the meeting that it is very important that the volunteer network have a unique identity, separate from Advancement.

d (e on the agenda) Mohawk Retirees Association:

Incoming chairman of the Mohawk Retirees Association, Hans Bastel, is interested in sharing trip information between our two organizations. Mohawk is particularly interested in MURA's non-day trips and our special events. Mohawk's association has four newsletters per year at approximately the same time as ours. Their organization is strictly a social/cultural one as their pensions and benefits are handled provincially.

We agreed that the Mohawk Retiree Association (Hans Bastel) should be getting MURAnews, and that this should be done electronically if possible, so as to not add to our mailing costs.

We will discuss further whether it is feasible to make any of MURA's trips available to Mohawk retirees.

6. Treasurer's Report - Since Beth was away, Helen Barton presented Beth's year to date financial statement circulated before the meeting. Note that the figures for MURAnews printing and postage do not include any potential savings from "opt out" card responses. The printing and postage expenses for the AGM invitation was in with MURAnews expenses in earlier reports but are now in "Other Communications". "Other Communications" also includes the cost of the "opt out" printing.

Query to Beth: Do we pay the scholarship expenses a year in advance or for the current year?

Auditor for 2007-2008:

- Brian Ives **motioned** that Bob West be appointed as our auditor for 2007-2008 and Eleanor Gow be appointed backup auditor.
- Kathy Overholt **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** unanimoously

Eleanor Gow worked in the university investment department before retiring.

7. Information Reports from Committees (as required)

a) **Cards** (Helen Dietsche): - Sympathy cards were sent on behalf of Ralph Neale (Health Sciences Administration) and Anna Barsony (McMaster Hospitality Services).

A get well card has been sent to Jessie Dunlop who is now convalescing at Townsview LifeCare Centre, 39 Mary St. Room 411, Hamilton, ON L8R 3L8. Helen B. reported that Jessie won't be allowed to put weight on her fractured leg until at least mid January, and suggested that individual Christmas and/or greeting cards be sent and also that Jessie would appreciate a visit or phone call. She has a tiny Christmas tree. If you can, send/bring her little ornaments.

- Brian Ives **motioned** that Helen Dietsche send a get well card to Roman March on council's behalf.
- Joan Parker **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** Unanimously

b) **Constitution & By-Laws** (Joan Morris): - Joan Parker reported that Joan Morris will be meeting with Jeff Chuchman on January 2, 2008 to review the MURA membership definition with him.

AGM (missing from the agenda): We agreed that Wednesday May 28, 2008 would be a good date for the AGM provided it not interfere with

convocation. Joan Parker will investigate if there is a conflict and if not, will let Joan Morris know this date for the AGM.

c) **Membership (Pam Penny):** - This month we have 1799 members. (See attached report for membership breakdown numbers.) Helen Barton and Pam Penny are reviewing the membership data base for inaccuracies and duplications as well as the codes to ensure the desired information is being tracked.

d) **MURA News (Joan Parker):** The next MURAnews deadline is January 9, 2008
Content ideas to date are:

- Xmas luncheon
 - Nominating Committee report
 - Pension increases - salaried & hourly reports
 - MURAnews mailing opt-out writeup
 - Marianne's article on networks & security
 - Trips
 - Special Events
 - April Exam hospitality (sponsored by the Chaplaincy Office)
 - Spring Retirement Workshops (Ellen Ryan, sponsored by Chaplaincy Office)
 - Athletics/Recreation & Sport Medicine Clinic - basic info for retirees, open house, pilot program
 - CARP - annual notice of discount for new CARP membership
 - President's Corner - opt out, MURAnews (reporters & short submissions), fundraising status, retiree email accounts
- Possible other items:
- A 'retiree profile' on Gary Warner by Veronica
 - a box re Alumni trips
 - a box re Mohawk trips
 - P&B committee - a portion from the website posting
 - Info from other committees
 - Info from Retirement Support Services
 - CURAC - conference notice

e) **Nominating: (Brian Ives) -**

- Brian Ives **motioned** that the nominating committee consist of:
 - 1) Pam Penny (MURA Council)
 - 2) John McCutcheon (MURA Council) and
 - 3) Donna McGreal (formerly from the President's Office and MURA member not on council)
 - 4) A second non-Council MURA member to be Lorraine Allan (with alternates Bob or Dorette James).
- Margaret Jenkins **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** Unanimously

Before retiring, Loraine Allen was a faculty member in Psychology, Bob James was a Technician in Biochemistry and Dorette was in Health Science Human Resources.

f) **Pension & Benefits (Geoffrey Evans/Roman March):**

- Helen Barton met with the P & B committee to discuss the committee's goals and objectives.
- Geoff Evans reported that the P&B Committee hopes to have Les Robb attend a meeting of that group in January. The group would like to learn more about the role of MURA's Pension Trust Committee representative, discuss ideas on the indexing formula and, since Les has indicated we should be considering his successor, talk about how best to replace Les on the Pension Trust Committee when the time comes.
- Geoff modified the report posted on MURA's web page (also now posted on the private web site) to report that the McMaster 2006 pension plan rate of return equalled the 13.1% CAUBO median of the 54 reported Canadian respondents. Geoff had 10 phone calls after retirees read this report on the web.
- Geoff spoke with Diane Parker from Parking. The policy change formalizing the fact that retiree parking permits are not transferable has not yet been taken to the President's Committee, so we will not put a notice in MURAnews about this yet.
- Les Robb's report from the November Pension Trust Committee meeting indicates that the recent good returns on the plan has improved the deficit position and will allow the university to reduce its contribution rate to close to twice that of employees in the near future.

g) Special Events (Margaret Jenkins): - Margaret hopes to have a lunch event in April 2008 with a possible visit to the planetarium. She does not yet have a new date for the evening dinner with Gary Warner. She intends to have both dates determined by January 9, 2008 in time to submit the announcement of these events for MURAnews.

h) Trips (Joan Parker): - Since Anne Sinclair was away, there was no report but Joan Parker did report that the "White Christmas" event was great!

i) Xmas Lunch (John McCutcheon): - Overall comments were favourable. Most people seemed to prefer East Side Mario's location, ambience and menu. We were a "victim of our own success" and one table had to be seated outside in the public restaurant area. We estimate about 110 people attended. If we decide to return to East Side Mario's next year, the restaurant is willing to put us in the public area which is much larger. The general public would be seated in the room we used this year.

Tipping was a concern as we had two systems - the collection basket and/or individual tipping. The concern is whether or not all the wait staff received their fair share of the tips. Pam and John will enquire at the restaurant about how tips are shared. For next year, we suggest using only one system - either tip baskets (which helps those who can't afford to tip much) or individual tipping (which helps people who use only plastic), but not both.

Helen Barton will send "Thank You" notes to Walmart, Eastside Mario's, the President's Office and Retirement Support Services for donating draw prizes.

Helen Barton reported that Peter George indicated he would consider subsidizing the MURA Xmas luncheon for up to \$10 per person to enable the event to move to an on-campus location at a reasonable cost to the

retirees. There was discussion that, if it is decided that the Xmas luncheon should be held off campus again, perhaps Dr. George would agree to the subsidy being used for a spring/summer on campus event such as a barbeque or strawberry social. Cliff Andrews has had indications from Parking recently that they are willing to consider special arrangements for MURA special events in future, as they did for the AGM last year.

j) **Web-Site (Brian Ives):** - Brian now has a photo of Kay Richardson. At the moment, he has a lot of stories/photos for the MURA home page (which Brian changes every 10 or so days) so some will have to wait their turn.

8. Information Reports from Liaisons (as required)

a) **University Board of Governors (Brian Ives):** - The next meeting is Dec 13, 2007. Brian spoke with the Assistant Vice President of Finance, Lilian Scime, about the reported fact that each retiree and their dependents cost the university \$6500 per year for benefits. The discussion revealed that the actual current cost is less, and that the university sets aside funds for the next 20 years to cover current retiree benefit costs. So there is assurance that current retirees benefits will continue uninterrupted.

b) **College & University Retirees Association of Canada (CURAC):** The Curac conference is May 21-23, 2008 in Montreal No additional report.

c) **MUFA:** Geoff Evans has not yet met with Peter Sutherland, MUFA President, due to time table conflicts despite many efforts to connect. Hopefully, they will meet in January 2008.

d) **CAW (MUSA) (Kathy Overholt):** - A meeting is set with President Matt Root and Vice President Rosemary Viola for Jan 11, 2008. Brian asked for photos of this occasion for our web site.

e) **Hourly Staff Liaison (Rod Phillips):** - Rod shared a delightful story about "taste".

9. Other Business

Marianne Van der Wel has the photos of the AGM taken by a retiree, Alvine Orechwo-Lawson, given to Joan Morris at the Xmas lunch. She'll get them to Helen Barton.

10. Next Meeting

Wednesday January 9, 2008 at 1:30PM in Student Centre, Room 230

11. Adjournment

Geoff Evans motioned we adjourn at 3:50PM

Carried