

**Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association  
November 12, 2008, 1:30PM  
Student Centre Room 220**

**Present:** Helen Barton (chair), Geoff Evans, Helen Dietsche, Al Fraser, Mike Hedden, Michele Leroux, Allisan Noble, Kathy Overholt, Wayne Rouse, Kathy Ryan, and Marianne Van der Wel

**Regrets:** Cliff Andrews, Beth Csordas, Margaret Jenkins, Joe Laposa, Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Anne Sinclair

**1. Welcome & Regrets:**

Helen welcomed Wayne Rouse to his first Council meeting and passed on regrets from the people who were unable to attend.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

a) The following corrections/changes were made to the Council meeting minutes for October 8, 2008:

Page 2, section 3a) remove "on one date" following "Open Door" event, running ...

Page 2, same section 3a), last line: Change "participating" to "participate"

Page 6, first paragraph: Change "to talk suggest" to just "to suggest"

Page 6, section 7i) Trips: Change "Brigadie" to "Brigadoon"

**MOTION**

- Geoff Evans **motioned** that the minutes be approved with the above corrections.

- Kathy Ryan **seconded** the motion.

- **Carried** unanimously

**3. Business Arising**

(a) Scholarship Endowment Fund (Beth Csordas): Helen Barton reported for Beth. The endowment fund amount as of November 1/08 was \$20,155, an increase of \$600 from the last report.

*Fall letter to Retirees:* The plans discussed at the October 8, 2008 Council meeting are progressing but a couple of weeks behind schedule because of the Brandon Hall fire. Murlis Cooper has volunteered to write (with the help of a ghost writer) and sign the letter to be sent to McMaster retirees with the theme "Why I give to McMaster". This letter is nearing its final stage.

*McMaster Open Door program:* The Advancement Office, in conjunction with their "Why I give to McMaster" theme is holding a Fall "Open Door" program. See the MURA web site under "Features". A Spring "Open Door" event is being planned; post cards will be sent to retirees to advertise the Spring event.

(b)MURA Cards (Kathy Overholt): Kathy reported that "Titles", Mac's bookstore, purchased 150 cards to sell in the bookstore, and Kathy sold 1 package of 10. Kathy will approach Allison, the bookstore contact, again to ask if the MURA cards will be or could be sold at the Medical Centre branch of the bookstore. Another suggestion given was to approach stores in Westdale such as "Brian Prince Book Store" and "Write Impressions" to ask if they would like to sell our cards. Geoff Evans' nephew may be a good contact for "Brian Prince's" as he works there.

Helen Barton reported , based on information from Beth, that only \$700 worth of cards still need to be sold to break even, excluding the cards just sold to the bookstore and the 10 sold in the past month.  
[Secretary's note:  $\$700/\$1.50 = 470$  cards (approx.), or  $470-150-10= 310$  cards.]

(c)Volunteer Bureau (Helen Barton)

Answering previous questions from Council:

- *Police Check*: Since we are not working with young or disadvantaged people, a police check of volunteers will not be necessary.
- *NON-McMaster people*: As long as the person who wishes to volunteer is qualified, they will be accepted.
- *Selection process*: The only public point of contact for the volunteer positions will be the Advancement Office. The first screening will be done by a designated person in the Advancement Office (Laura Escalante). Candidates then deemed suitable will then be put in touch with the actual department.
- *Confidentiality*: The volunteer will sign a confidentiality agreement.

There will be about 15 positions for the pilot project. This too has been delayed somewhat because of the Brandon Hall fire.

For example:

History will hopefully have 3 positions:

- lead program planning of joint events with the RHMI
- assist in co-ordinating events, conferences and grant applications
- help plan experiential learning positions

Science will have volunteer positions such as judges and administrators of the Science fairs, and helping with recruitment of students via e-mail.

Human Resources is also developing volunteer positions.

Position and procedure write ups, as well as a web site are under development by the Advancement Office.

(d) Clinical Faculty Pension Surplus Distribution Helen Barton and Les Robb will be meeting with the RMA Executive Administrator, the current

president and a past president on November 25.

e) Prospective Mad Lappers Walking Program (Joan Parker)

Marianne Van der Wel and Helen Barton reported that, along with Joan Parker, they met with Debbie Marinoff-Shupe and Alana Harris from Athletics and Recreation. It was decided that we will try to set up an 8 week recreation program for retirees starting in mid February 2009. The program will consist of one hour of instruction, sampling different activities offered by Athletics and Recreation, each week a different activity. These activities could include such activities as pilates, yoga, aquatics, fitness, dance, Tai Chi, marshal arts and wall climbing. After the hour of instruction, there will be a less formal "drop-in" hour including activities such as table tennis, volleyball, basketball, badminton or walking. Drop-in activities will be available during the first hour as well for those who do not wish to partake in a particular instructional class. Depending on numbers participating, the cost is expected to be \$50-\$70 for the 8 weeks.

Helen/Marianne will survey those who can be reached via muramembs-l to find out what activities our members are interested in. Debbie will start looking for instructors.

#### **4. Correspondence**

- The Retirees Association of Mohawk College sent us their newsletter, four sheets of loose paper that one had to assemble into the newsletter, an interesting way to save on collating costs. Their newsletter concentrates more on social events, restaurant reviews and has some good jokes. Helen Barton passed this newsletter to Allisan, our MURAnews editor, for ideas to consider.

- We received information from Ellen Ryan about previous retirement workshops presented through the Chaplaincy Office. Twenty-five people, including a few retirees, attended the Fall 2008 "Seeking Meaning in Retirement" workshop; 8 participants attended the Spring session. Twelve people including one retiree attended the Fall 2007 seminar on "Transitioning Into Retirement".

Ellen is requesting ideas for a Spring 2009 discussion series. They are also considering a "Journal Writing" workshop for the Fall of 2009 or Spring 2010. Please send your ideas to Helen Barton who will forward them onto Ellen.

- We received a note from Gary Warner thanking us for our invitation to speak and the gift card from Titles which he may use as a down payment on a new laptop (he had some technical difficulties before the start of his talk at the dinner on October 23).

#### **5. President's Report (Helen Barton) -**

*Portfolios:* Al Fraser has agreed to be the liaison for the hourly group as well as join Pam Penny on the Xmas Lunch committee. Joe Laposa has agreed to join the Pension and Benefits committee. Helen invited Wayne Rouse to join Geoff Evans as co-liaison for MUFA and he immediately accepted.

*Recent Retirees Reception:* This annual reception, hosted by the University President, is Monday November 17, 2008 starting at 4:30PM. As everyone in the room was planning to attend, Helen will e-mail a roster of duties, mainly greeters at the front and side door as well as people to say good evening at the end and hand out the chocolates provided by the President's office. MURA Council members attending are asked to arrive at 4PM. Our prime role as MURA councillors is to assist the University President at the reception and mingle with the guests.

*Human Resources Pre-Retirement Workshop:* There will be room for 1-2 observers from MURA council to attend this workshop on Dec 3, 8AM-4PM. If anyone is interested in attending to learn about these sessions and determine if there is a role for MURA on an ongoing basis, please let Helen Barton know. These workshops are generally attended by McMaster employees 10-15 years before retirement age or closer. However, anyone who is a member of the pension plan may attend. See: [www.workingatmcmaster.ca/rss-workshops](http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/rss-workshops) Select: "Financial & Life Planning Workshop Schedule & Registration".

*Muramembs-1 e-mails sent:* This past month, we sent e-mails to our members on the listserve concerning the "Institute of Volunteers Overseas", Children's Xmas Party and Open Doors.

**6. Treasurer's Report:** Helen Barton reported for Beth that there was a \$68.18 short fall for the Gary Warner dinner. Two people committed to coming and then did not, and did not pay. Because we had ordered dinner for these two, MURA has to cover the cost. We have budgeted for such shortfalls with MURA Special Events, which happen infrequently.

## **7. Information Reports From Committees**

a) **AGM** (Pam Penny) - no report

b) **Cards** (Helen Dietsche) - Helen Dietsche sent bereavement cards to the families of Natalie Kisunus (Hospitality Services), William Zao (Registrar's Office), and Rudolph Palme (Glassblowing Shop), MURA members who died recently. Maria-Ampero Gonzalez-Nicolau (Romance Languages) and William Lyons (Purchasing Services) died last spring (2008) and were not reported until just recently. Michele Leroux will investigate the late listings.

c) **Constitution** (Chair: Vacant, Joan Morris Consultant) - no report

d) **Membership** (Pam Penny) -

*Membership figures:* Including three who retired on November 1, we have a total of 1874 members.

*Lunch Bunch:* 18 people again attended on October 31, 2008 but not all the same 18 as in September.

e) **MURAnews** (Joan Parker)

- Geoff Evans mentioned that a fellow retiree thought the Fall 2008 MURAnews was the best issue ever.

- Allisan Noble reported the next deadline for submitting articles for the 2009 winter MURAnews is January 14, 2009, the January MURA council meeting.

- Allisan solicited ideas in addition to the ones mentioned in the October 2008 minutes.

- A Financial Corner, possibly called "You and Your Money" to discuss matters such as "Canada Pension Plan" and "Old Age Security" applications, comparing our pensions with those of other universities. Also general discussions about our pensions, for example: "How bad would the economy have to be before we could lose our McMaster pensions?". Michele Leroux agreed to tackle this topic. (Also see section 7g) "Pensions & Benefits.)

- Kathy Ryan suggested a column for questions from retirees with answers from us, using an "Ann Landers" style format.

- Kathy Overholt suggested a "Tips Corner" on topics such as Saving Money, Budgeting, etc. For example: there is a "cash and carry" store on Ewen Road where one can save significantly on fruits and vegetables. Also one can save on electricity by unplugging TV's, stereos and computers when not in use.

- Report more on "university issues" e.g. the Brandon Hall fire

Kathy Ryan was so enthusiastic about ideas she was immediately recruited for the MURAnews committee, an activity she had indicated interest in earlier in the year. Kathy accepted this appointment.

- Allisan mentioned that she has training sessions set up for next week with Marianne Van der Wel, to continue to learn how to use her new computer to become self sufficient in producing the newsletter.

- The MURAnews committee is meeting on Nov. 26/08 to plan the content for the 2009 winter issue.

- Geoff Evans asked if we had received any comment regarding the 10 year tables comparing our pension increases with the increases in the cost of living. No one had!

f) **Nominating** (vacant) - no report

g) **Pension & Benefits** (Geoff Evans) -

Geoff is planning a meeting of the P & B committee. Michele Leroux agreed to write a "reassuring article" to MURA members regarding our pension "security" (Also see MURAnews report)

h) **Special Events** (Margaret Jenkins) - no report

i) **Trips** (Joan Parker) - no report

j) **Xmas Lunch** (Pam Penny)

- Special guests invited by Helen Barton who have let us know they will attend are:

- Art Bourns - Honorary President
- Peter George - University President, his wife Allison Barrett, and their new daughter
- MURA Prize Winner: John Froud
- President of MUFA: Richard Stubbs

The chancellor, Charles "Red" Wilson and his wife send their regrets as they will be in Montreal.

Helen Barton received a note that Mel and Marilyn Hawkrigg will be attending.

- Pam Penny is handling the door prizes, candy canes, etc. and has asked for chocolates from the President's office.

- Helen Barton will ask Allison Barrett to say grace. If Allison can't, we need to develop a contingency plan for an 'ecumenical' grace.

- Duties: Several members of Council volunteered for various duties. Helen will report to Pam, who will complete the roster and make sure people know their assignments. Al Fraser is getting a sound system pro bono and will set it up. Marianne Van der Wel will bring name tags for council and head gear (Santa hats) for those who wish to wear them.

All council members without specific duties are asked to arrive by 11:30AM.

k) **Web Site** (Marianne Van der Wel)

- CIRA (where all internet domains ending in **.ca** are registered: Nicholas Solntseff contacted us asking that we put our web site registration in MURA's name instead of his. Helen and Marianne are working with Nicholas to make this change.

- Ed McCaffery, system manager of our current host site, a server in Material Science, contacted us explaining that a fire in one of their labs resulted in the shifting of equipment around and thus a major reconfiguring of their servers. There is no rush for us to find a new host site as we're welcome to stay on the Material Science server for now.

- We discussed the idea of posting information for "segments" of our membership on our web site, such as notices that apply only to retirees from MUFA or the newly retired. In general, we agreed this was a good idea.

- Marianne and Helen are working on a redesign of the web site to include an "Events" page, a "Features" page" and a page for announcements applying to "segments" of our membership. Our target date for an initial redesign is January 2009.

- While redesigning, we will also try to add a link for "Campus and Community" news that can be designed and maintained by a third party.
- Marianne will investigate rewriting the web site using less cryptic code to make maintenance of the site easier and less technical, so someone with basic computer skills can maintain the site. Right now, only Helen or Marianne can update the site. If all goes well, we may be able to launch this second phase of the redesign by spring 2009.

## **8. Information Reports from Liaisons**

- a) **University Board of Governors (Lorraine Allan):** Lorraine Allan sent two report from the October Board meeting. One was the President's Report to the Board of Governors (lilac sheets) and the other Lorraine's "Observer's Report" (blue sheet). Helen Barton pointed out the paragraph in the "Observer's Report" explaining that the pension costs are currently being funded, in part, from "non-restricted endowment funds". The cost of benefits and investigation of benefit changes for FUTURE retirees was also discussed by the Board. The Board also discussed plans to make information about wage and benefit contracts for Senior Management more available to the public.
- b) **Colleges & Universities Retirees Associations of Canada (CURAC) (Helen Barton) -** The CURAC Board has negotiated with "Waterloo Insurance" to offer home and car insurance at group rates, with potentially substantial savings, for members of CURAC member associations, if allowed by provincial law. Ontario law does allow this. MURA will receive information shortly from Waterloo Insurance, which we can then discuss at Council to decide if it's in our members' best interest to pass information about this plan on to them.
- c) **MUFA (Geoff Evans) -** Wayne and Geoff will discuss how to best followup with MUFA to develop a grievance process for retired faculty, and to discuss the possibility of MUFA becoming involved in the "contracts" faculty negotiate with the University when they retire.
- d) **CAW (Kathy Overholt) -** No Report
- e) **Hourly Staff Liaison (Al Fraser) -** No Report

## **10. Other Business -**

Helen Barton passed around Xmas photos taken of council in past years. Council decided to continue the tradition. Please meet 15 minutes early for the December Council meeting in our meeting room to have our annual photo taken. No hats this year!

## **11. Next meeting**

Wednesday December 10, 2008 at 1:30PM in the Student Centre, Room 220

## **12. Adjournment**

Geoff Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:40PM