



**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN  
RETIRES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

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**Editor- Garry Wacker**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

As a new year begins for USRA, I would like to outline for members, as I have done for the Executive, my goals as President for this year. The first is to increase our membership. Our current membership is 208 and your Executive will be working towards increasing that substantially. The second is to review the mandate of the Association. The Executive will be devoting a future meeting or meetings to reviewing our mandate which currently includes an annual educational symposium, several social events, and our Annual General Meeting. Members who have comments or suggestions regarding our mandate are encouraged to submit them either to me or to any member of the Executive. (See list of members, their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses elsewhere in this Newsletter.) My final goal is to engage in co-operative endeavors with the University. This is an initiative begun by last year's Executive. I have spoken with President MacKinnon about it, and he is enthusiastic about encouraging closer collaboration between USRA and the University.

*Iain MacLean*

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Bill Stolte** passed away on June 18, 2001. He was born in 1943. Bill was an active member of the Civil Engineering Faculty at the time of his death. He was committed to helping engineering students understand their societal responsibilities, as well as their technical role. His area of research was hydrology, particularly in surface water. Recent projects included reclamation on the waste material of the tar sands in Alberta, and a wetlands project near Aberdeen. Bill's gentleness, wisdom and contributions are missed in the College of Engineering.

**Ray Boyle** passed away on September 23, 2001. He was born in England in 1920. Ray joined the Electrical Engineering Department in 1965, where he developed an international reputation in automated cartography. Ray was granted Professor Emeritus status upon his retirement. He continued to contribute to the University through his active involvement in research, the Faculty Club and the Retirees Association. He served in various capacities for USRA, including its President in 1991-92, and he assisted in bringing it into the computer age. He applied his computer map-making skills to the mapping of elm trees in Saskatchewan for the SOS Elms Coalition. Ray's contributions in many areas, and his kindness and infectious laughter, will be missed.

**Stanley Hanson** died suddenly at his home on October 31, 2001. He was born in 1942. Stan was the first University Archivist, a position he held from 1970 to 1995. For three years he was also the Director of the Diefenbaker Centre. He served on numerous University committees, as well as on the executives of both provincial and national professional associations. He authored numerous books and

articles, including "Saskatoon: The First Half Century," co-authored with Don Kerr. He retired from the University on December 31, 1999.

**Mary Melnik** passed away on November 2, 2001. She was born in Saskatchewan in 1914. Mary received her R.N. Diploma at City Hospital and worked there until leaving to take post-graduate studies in medical nursing. She joined the faculty of the College of Nursing until her retirement. Mary had a lifelong love of art, literature and music, a great sense of humour, and a compassion and sense of justice that found expression in her career and her long involvement with the CCF-NDP.

**Eyrle Brooks** passed away on December 5, 2001; he was born in December, 1921. Eyrle taught part time in the College of Engineering beginning in the late 1940's until he joined the Mechanical Engineering Department in 1961. He retired in 1989 and became Professor Emeritus. Eyrle was very much a people's person, he enjoyed teaching and loved the interactions with both students and faculty. After retirement, he applied the same energy and enthusiasm to his golf game and friendships as he had to his teaching. He never failed to visit the College every spring after returning from winter in California. His jovial, upbeat and entertaining ways will be missed.

**Peter Millard** passed away on December 8, 2001. He was born in South Wales, UK in 1932. He joined the English Department in the early 1960's, and served as its head from 1985 until his retirement in 1991. He is also remembered for his service as Chair of the Faculty Association, his leadership in the Art community both on and off the campus, and his untiring efforts in the cause of human rights abuses, especially against gays and lesbians. His love of art, literature and music and his dedication to scholarship and human rights agendas has made a lasting contribution.

### **OPEN FORUM ON UoFS DIRECTIONS**

**President MacKinnon** will speak to the University community on his **Direction Statement** for the University of Saskatchewan at the following dates and times:

Wednesday, January 16 at 12:00 noon in Place Riel Theatre, and  
Tuesday, January 22 at 4:00 p.m. in Place Riel Theatre.

Retirees are invited to attend.

### **PENSION AND BENEFITS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Earlier, several retirees asked whether it would be possible to have a group medical and dental plan for retirees. We first approached the University about the possibility and then did a survey of retirees living in Saskatchewan. Only Saskatchewan retirees were surveyed since the insurer's plans cover only people in one province. Each province has different provincial coverage and the insurers, therefore, have to tailor a plan for each province. Of 257 retirees in Saskatchewan, 164 responded to the questionnaire. Only 6 were not interested in a possible group plan. 140 had some coverage already, 120 with Blue Cross.

Representatives from the Committee and the University met with Darwin Forbes from Blue Cross and Chris Brown, a consultant on health care with William M. Mercer Ltd. A broad discussion took place concerning the possibility of a retirees group plan, the likelihood of sufficient retirees signing up for a plan, plan administration and costs. A number of problems appeared:

1. It would probably be difficult to get the high sign-up rate needed for such a plan (likely 90%).
2. Blue Cross generally does not set up plans in which individuals can form a group plan.
3. A retirees' Plan would involve a diminishing group since there would be no new entrants.
4. Blue Cross has a Conversion Plan for individuals who are in a group plan and transfer to an individual plan, but the costs are actually higher than for a person who is currently in a Blue Choice plan. The reason for this is that medical evidence is required for Blue Choice but not for the Conversion Plan. Additionally, the plans are not identical; specifically, the Conversion Plan has a limit on drugs, while the Blue Choice does not. The Faculty Association negotiated that its retiring members may choose to join the Conversion Plan. This option became available in July 1, 2000, and anyone who missed the conversion opportunity in 2000 may still wish to contact Blue Cross.

The final conclusion was that Blue Cross is not particularly interested in a Retirees' Group Plan, and even if it were, it would not be sufficiently attractive to retirees to make it feasible.

Turning to the Retirees Pension Plan, all pensioners should have received two Newsletters outlining the current position of the Plan. Although the recent downturn in the stock markets has had a negative effect, the Plan still has an actuarial surplus and is in a sound financial position.

### **OFFICE STAFFING**

The USRA office in the TRC Building is staffed for an hour or two each weekday during the University session, generally between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. Because many of the volunteers are out of Saskatoon for an extended period during the winter, there is always a need for additional volunteers. The duties primarily involve checking the mail and the telephone for messages. The office is equipped with a computer, linked to the internet, that is available to those staffing the office and there is also a lounge next door, which is open at all times that the building is open.

Any member who is willing to volunteer an hour or two of his/her time for one or several days a month should get in contact with Les Coleman (Tel: 652-9044, Email: [les.coleman@sk.sympatico.ca](mailto:les.coleman@sk.sympatico.ca)).

### **MAGAZINES**

A couple of magazines that specifically target retirement issues are:

*Fifty Plus* - formerly *CARP News* (Canadian Association Of Retired Persons). For more information, see their Website: [www.50plus.com](http://www.50plus.com), or contact them at 1-800-363-9736, or by e-mail: [carp@50plus.com](mailto:carp@50plus.com).

*Good Times* - for more information: email: [goodtimes.pub@mail.transcontinental.ca](mailto:goodtimes.pub@mail.transcontinental.ca) or call 1-800-465-8443 to subscribe.

### **USRA EXECUTIVE MEMBERS 2001-2002**

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