

# Spring 2010 Newsletter

## Association of Bishop's University Retirees

### 1. President's Message

Organizations grow through many stages and in many different directions; we are probably no exception. We have made considerable progress since our founding over a year ago. We have a growing membership, a solid executive, good links with the national organization of university retirees and a brand new website. The links we have established at Concordia and with the CURAC Executive have proven to be very valuable as we move into our next stage; let's call it "early maturity".

Our formal relationship with Bishop's is, at this point, tenuous at best. Progress has been made on a few pension matters such as reporting the value of the pension fund on a regular basis, contacting new retirees and forestalling a reduction in drug coverage for all retirees. I am encouraged by Dr. Child's effort to reach out to our pool of excellent teachers in his "université de troisième âge" proposal. Initiatives such as this should help repair the broken bond we have with the current administration.

As for the APBU, there is reason to believe that with a new Executive in place there can be a more fruitful relationship with ABUR in this next year. We sincerely hope that the APBU will understand and act on our need to be represented in crucial areas such as continuing health benefits and, of course, on the matter of indexation. We are not alone in this struggle with our Union – at many universities across Canada it has taken years to establish a working relationship that ensures that retirees' rights are respected. I am hoping that this renewed relationship can occur sooner rather than later but I am pragmatic enough to see the obstacles ahead. In the end if we must take the legal route to protect ourselves from further losses, then I will be the first to sign on. But there is always the hope that our future can be secured in a cooperative, consultative and collegial manner, (a very "Bishop's-like" thing), without the need to call a lawyer every time we encounter a problem.

So we shall stay the course and for now look forward to "a certain justice", remembering always that all justice is necessarily imperfect.

Be well,  
Curt Rose

### 2. Highlights of the Annual General Meeting, May 12, 2010

- The ABUR website is now functional.
- "The Campus" newspaper published two articles on our concerns about the loss of pension indexation.
- The ABUR may have representation on some APBU committees, except negotiations.
- All members of the APBU were mailed an 'Open Letter' concerning the loss of indexation. The ABUR also sent a letter of support to the Staff negotiators.
- An overview of the B.U. Pension Plan was discussed. Ongoing costs for the plan are a concern and an actuarial evaluation will be necessary in 2011.
- Several models of pension indexation were discussed.

- The ABUR fees for 2010-2011 are not changed.
- Our ABUR bank balance is \$423.46.
- A motion was passed instructing the Executive to investigate the possible costs for a legal opinion concerning our loss of indexation; a one time levy may be necessary.
- Suggestions were made as to how we might reach a wider audience with our pension concerns.

### 3. Memberships

We now have about a hundred paid-up members including spouses and beneficiaries. Terry Skeats is in contact with AON in Montreal regarding the notification of the remaining retirees who are potential members. A goal of 130 to 140 members by the end of the year is not unrealistic.

### 4. Bishop's Update

After a few false starts and a lot of phone calls and e-mails our new website is up and running. The address is: [www.buretirees.org](http://www.buretirees.org) Many thanks to Terry, Julie Fradette, ITS Webmaster, and Mark Pezzi for a great job!

At the annual pension meeting held on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010, we managed to make some of our concerns known to the Committee and to many of the active members. One difficult area concerns the accrued costs of the early retirement options that Bishop's has offered since about 1995. In the end there was a motion passed instructing the Pension Committee to calculate the accumulated costs of these programs. As you know, the Collective Agreement requires that these accumulated costs not be included whenever there is a question of the financial health of the pension plan. Overall, the pension fund is regaining some of its lost ground and now stands at about \$90 million.

Following an initiative by the Université de Sherbrooke, Bishop's will shortly announce its own "université de troisième âge" program. Dr. Michael Childs is in charge of this new venture which is aimed at bringing a broad range of educational opportunities to seniors in the area. If you are interested in giving not-for-credit courses, the topics are completely open; everything from archery to zebra mussel prevention. Courses will be twenty hours in duration offered over a ten week period beginning in the Winter 2011 semester. Compensation is about \$50-60/hr. The courses will be offered in both English and French. For more details, please contact Dr. Childs at (819) 822-9600 ext.2388 or [michael.childs@ubishops.ca](mailto:michael.childs@ubishops.ca)

### 5. APBU Update

Our relationship with the APBU continues to be a matter of great concern. As it stands now, we have no formal representation in the day-to-day workings of the APBU since the Labour Code directs all Unions to represent only their full-time dues-paying members (on penalty of breach of duty). Our response has been to question the legal basis of this statement and to set up a working committee (two APBU plus two ABUR) to deal with any matters which affect Bishop's retirees. So far this committee has met only once and the outstanding issue is how to grant representation to the ABUR on the Executive Committee of APBU. To this end, we were able to give notice of motion at the

annual APBU meeting (April 29<sup>th</sup>) asking for the inclusion of one ABUR member on the Executive Committee. A vote on this motion will take place at the next general meeting of the APBU in the fall. (By the way, anyone who was eligible to be an APBU member while they were working full-time, can become an Associate member of the Union for the huge sum of \$1 and be permitted to attend and speak at any Union meeting.)

Another matter still under discussion with the APBU is the continuation of health plans for surviving spouses of staff retirees beyond an initial period of two years. We hope to have news of progress on this issue fairly soon.

## **6. CURAC Conference**

Dr. Joanne Craig and Curt Rose attended the annual CURAC conference held May 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> at York University in Toronto. The report is available on the website under the heading Current News.

## **7. Pot Luck**

The second annual pot-luck supper will be held in September at the Uplands Cultural Centre in Lennoxville. Notices will be sent at a later date....watch for it!

## **8. Next General Meeting**

Our next General Meeting will be held in early December.

*We welcome your comments and suggestions. You can contact Curt Rose at [cerose@videotron.ca](mailto:cerose@videotron.ca) or 819-346-2612, and Terry Skeats at [ptskeats@sympatico.ca](mailto:ptskeats@sympatico.ca) or 819-842-3102. Let us hear from you on issues that affect all retirees.*