

# RALUT REPORTER

RETIRED ACADEMICS AND LIBRARIANS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TOM ALLOWAY

On June 3, 2012, the University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA) and the university administration reached a three-year agreement covering salary, benefit and pension issues. The agreement covers the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2014.

The agreement contains disappointing news for retired UofT academics and librarians. When the increase in the consumer price index (CPI) is less than 8%<sup>1</sup>, our pension plan includes provision for an annual cost of living increase equal to three quarters of the increase in the CPI in Toronto. For a number of years, UTFA was able to negotiate "augmentation" of our pensions to include full compensation for increases in the CPI. However, this time UTFA was unable to secure "augmentation." Hence, our annual cost of living increase will be restricted to the smaller amount guaranteed by the pension plan.

The agreement between UTFA and the

Continued on Page 2

<sup>1</sup>If the CPI increase is over 8%, the pension plan specifies that our pensions are increased by 60% of the amount over 8% or 4% less than the CPI increase, whichever is more.

## SCOTT PRUDHAM DELIVERS AGM KEYNOTE

UTFA President Elect Scott Prudham was the keynote speaker at the 2012 RALUT AGM, held in Hart House on April 26. The subject that RALUT had asked Prof. Prudham to address was the effect that UTFA's certification as a union would have on retired academics and librarians.

Prof. Prudham stated that UTFA is attempting to negotiate improvements to the Memorandum of Agreement that governs UTFA's relationship with the university administration. The Memorandum permits UTFA to negotiate salary, benefit and pension issues but does not allow negotiation about the broad range of workplace issues that faculty unions at other universities can deal with. However, he believes that at the present time a majority of faculty members and librarians at the University of Toronto want UTFA to attempt to negotiate about these matters without seeking certification as a union. UTFA will seek certification only if it believes that certification is something that a majority of faculty and librarians want. For that reason,

Continued on Page 2

### IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Report	1	RALUT Advocacy Questionnaire	5
AGM Keynote Speaker	1	Science for Peace	6
Diamond Jubilee	3	Memorial Fund Update	7
Russian-Canadian Discussion Group	4	CURAC Regional Meeting	7
		Benefit Claim Hints	7

## President's Report Continued

administration is also disappointing for faculty and librarians who have not retired. Across-the-board salary increases will be restricted to 1.75% in the first year of the agreement, 2.1% in the second year, and 2.3% in the third year, for an aggregate compounded increase of 6.29% over the three years. These across-the-board increases may not be enough to keep up with increases in the cost of living. In addition, UTFA has agreed that unretired faculty and librarians will increase the average amount of money that they contribute to the pension fund by about 2% of their salaries. These increased pension contributions effectively reduce the value of the across-the-board salary increases. If the unretired faculty members' and librarians' increases in pension contributions are subtracted from their across-the-board salary increases, it is likely that net percentage increases in our partially indexed pensions will exceed the net across-the-board salary increases of the unretired UTFA members.

Although I regret that UTFA did not secure pension augmentation for retirees, I believe that UTFA did at least as well by us as for the

organization's unretired members. If UTFA had negotiated full augmentation of our pensions, the cost of that benefit to us would have had to be paid for somewhere else, quite possibly by completely eliminating across-the-board salary increases for unretired UTFA members. And I think that would have been unreasonable.

UTFA's agreement with the administration contains two small health-benefit increases that will help retirees. Vision Care will increase the per-person maximum from \$250 every 24 months to \$300 every 24 months effective July 1, 2012 and to \$350 every 24 months effective July 1, 2013. The allotment for physiotherapy, chiropractic and registered massage therapy will increase the combined annual maximum from \$500 to \$600 per person effective July 1, 2012 and to \$700 effective July 1, 2013.

In conclusion, I think that the province's dire financial situation made the recent negotiations especially difficult for UTFA. The results of the negotiations are disappointing, but they would have been much worse except for the hard work and perseverance of the UTFA Negotiating Team.

## RALUT AGM Continued

certification and its effect on retirees are not subjects of imminent concern.

If and when UTFA eventually does certify as a union, it may still be possible for retirees to belong to the organization and UTFA would not need to change current membership privileges for retirees. Retirees continue to be members of certified faculty associations at many Canadian universities. However, retirees would not be able to vote for or against

certification or for or against a proposed union contract with the administration because only employed members of the bargaining unit can vote on those issues.

Steven Barrett, a lawyer with Sack Goldblatt Mitchell, the law firm that represents UTFA in its negotiations with the university, accompanied Prof. Prudham to the RALUT AGM and participated in the question and answer session that followed Prof. Prudham's talk.

## A JOYFUL DIAMOND JUBILEE

PETER H. RUSSELL

For retirees, watching our Queen - at 86 - holding up so well through the strenuous Diamond Jubilee celebrations was, to say the least, encouraging. And bear in mind that unlike we who resisted mandatory retirement she is a member of that small group of constitutional monarchs that are stuck with a regime of mandatory non-retirement. Her fate is to die on the job.

The success of Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee gives a lift to the institution of constitutional monarchy that begins to throw doubt on the inevitability of its approaching demise. There may be a growing appreciation of the monarchy as the best way of filling the head-of-state position in a parliamentary democracy.

In a parliamentary democracy the head of state must fulfill two functions. One is symbolic - providing a personal embodiment of the state in formal state functions and public occasions. The other is a protector of the parliamentary system of government. That latter role is not well understood. Let me explain.

In parliamentary democracies, the people do not directly elect the head of government. They elect the popular house of parliament - in our country, the House of Commons. It is the House of Commons that decides who will be prime minister and head of government. The prime minister is the member of Parliament who heads the political party (or combination of parties) that commands the confidence of the House of Commons.

When one party wins a majority of seats in the House of Commons, it is obvious that the leader of that party should be prime minister. But when no single party has a majority in the House, it may not be obvious which party leader will be able to command the

confidence of the House. In these situations, the head-of state may have to make decisions on who should be prime minister or whether parliament should be prorogued or dissolved and a new election called. If such decisions were left to an incumbent prime minister regardless of his support in the elected chamber of parliament we would have prime ministerial government not parliamentary government.

This is why in parliamentary systems, in contrast to the US presidential/congressional system, the offices of head of state and head of government are usually separate and held by different people. The head of government runs the government. The head of state sticks to ceremonial functions - except for those rare occasions when it is necessary to intervene and ensure that the government is directed by political leaders who have the confidence of parliament.

The head of state in a parliamentary democracy need not be a monarch. Indeed, most of the parliamentary systems in the world today have republican-style heads of state. In most cases these parliamentary heads of state (usually called "Presidents") are either indirectly elected by parliament (as, for example, in Germany, India and Italy) or directly elected by the people (as, for example, in France, Ireland and Russia).

The problem with republican heads of state in parliamentary states is that elections inevitably involve politics so that the person who is successful in being indirectly or directly elected to the office of president will not be independent of partisan politics. This means that on those rare occasions when the head of state must intervene to protect the integrity of parliament government, he or she may be seen to be and may actually be a supporter of one of the parliamentary parties.

The other problem with elected presidents in parliamentary states is that they are unlikely to confine themselves primarily to a ceremonial role.

Continued on Page 4

## Diamond Jubilee continued

Presidents who have obtained their office by winning an election will see themselves as having a democratic mandate and are apt to be rivals to the prime minister. In some parliamentary republics – for instance France and Russia – the elected president totally eclipses the prime minister, rendering these countries more presidential than parliamentary.

Constitutional monarchs in parliamentary democracies have saved the crown by agreeing to severely restrict their power. That is the explanation of their survival. These monarchical parliamentary states – the Scandinavian states, Belgium, the Netherlands, Japan, Spain and the UK and the 15 Commonwealth countries which have kept the British monarch as their own head of state – have an enviable track record of stability and liberty compared with the ups and downs of republican parliamentary regimes. The royal sovereigns of these countries, precisely because they are born to their office, have an independence of politics that enables them to perform both the ceremonial and constitutional roles of the head of state more effectively than their republican counterparts.

The situation is more complicated in monarchical Commonwealth countries, where most of the Crown's functions are performed by Governors General (and Lieutenant Governors in the provinces). Since the 1930s Governors General have been appointed by the King or Queen on the advice of the Canadian prime minister, and since the appointment of Vincent Massey in 1952, only Canadians have been appointed. While this helped to Canadianize the institution, the political independence of the office has been weakened when prime ministers have selected former political colleagues for the office. Fortunately, the last three Governors General have had no sharp political profile.

For some Canadians, the Canadian crown is still not sufficiently Canadian. But surely it is foolish to deny the British component of our national heritage.

We could not invent the Canadian crown. It has been bestowed on us by (to use the Hegelian phrase) the cunning of history. We should tell our grumpy republican friends to smell the roses and thank their lucky stars for having such a remarkably intelligent, generous and gracious woman as our head of state for the last sixty years. Long may she reign!

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 INVITATION TO JOIN RUSSIAN-CANADIAN DISCUSSION GROUP

## METTA SPENCER

I hope to organize some transnational discussion groups between Russians and Canadians (though a few of them may include Western Europeans). Here's the plan:

1. You're eligible if you speak English, own a computer with a webcam and Internet access, and live in Western Russia, Canada, or Western Europe. You will need to join Google Plus. For instructions see [metta.spencer.name/pub](http://metta.spencer.name/pub).
2. I will try to identify clusters of six people (three Canadians and three Russians) who share a common interest and ask one of the members to serve as convener.
3. Clusters will choose the times and dates for six monthly discussions lasting 1-2 hours.
4. Every member should expect to prepare a bit and contribute to the discussion. For example, you might give a five-minute talk to initiate a conversation. Or a group may compile a short reading list for each meeting.

If you are interested, please complete our online application form (see the link at [metta.spencer.name/pub](http://metta.spencer.name/pub)), choose or more the topics, or suggest a topic if the list doesn't match your interests. I hope you can find another suitable acquaintance of yours to invite to your group.

# QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT SCOPE OF RALUT ADVOCACY

TOM ALLOWAY

A questionnaire about the priority that RALUT should attach to various topics about which we might advocate was distributed at our 2012 RALUT AGM. The questionnaire asked people to give a rating of '2' to topics that they felt were the most important issues about which RALUT should advocate, a rating of '1' to topics that were of some importance, and a rating of '0' to topics

that should be of no concern to RALUT. The mean ratings are listed below.

The results indicate that the RALUT members at the AGM believe we should concentrate our advocacy efforts primarily on issues that affect our members most directly

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Rating</b>
UofT Pension Plan	1.95
Preservation of Benefits for retirees	1.95
Pension Augmentation	1.86
Pension Plan Governance	1.77
Pension Plan Financing	1.71
Enhancement of Benefits for retirees	1.65
Benefits Premiums (co-payments)	1.60
Retirees as members of university community	1.60
Membership in AROHA	1.60
Membership in UTFA	1.50
SRA	1.45
Participation in UTFA	1.29
Pension Plan Contribution non-retirees	1.25
Membership in CURAC/ARUCC	1.25
Cooperation with Seniors Advocacy Organizations	1.20
Nursing Home Care	1.19
UofT Governance	1.15
OHIP	1.10
UofT Finances	1.05
Drummond Report	0.89
Health Care Finances in Ontario	0.85
Canada Pension Plan	0.74
Old Age Security	0.68
OAS Supplement	0.68
Federal Funding Canada Health Act	0.68
UofT Research Policy	0.58
UofT Curriculum	0.41

# SCIENCE FOR PEACE

METTA SPENCER

Like the rest of us, you'd save the world if you could. Unfortunately, it's too hard—especially if you try to do it by yourself. But you do have ideas for a few changes that might help, if only others would join you in paying attention to them. You just need a platform and a mike.

That's where Science for Peace comes in. We enable academics and experts to find like-minded partners with whom to study societal problems. Then, if they want, we provide "soap boxes" and attentive audiences.

Let's say you're concerned about honeybees, fearing that global food production will plummet unless we halt the epidemic of bee deaths. If you were in Science for Peace, you could form a working group to inform the general public, as well as government departments, about bees.

Or maybe your top priority is stopping climate change, reforming the UN Security Council, saving the oceans—or disarming nuclear weapons, which was Eric Fawcett's chief concern in 1981. Eric, a physics professor at U of T, invited some scientific colleagues to meet. They formed Science for Peace to encourage abolition of the 50,000 nuclear weapons then existing, which seemed likely to be used in a war. Unfortunately, that problem has not yet been entirely solved, but some of us are still working on it.

Academics are smart, but to be effective we all need partners. Science for Peace is an organizational interface between the university and public opinion, dealing with urgent global issues. We intend to keep re-inventing ourselves, creating ways for public intellectuals to explore their concerns in working groups and fora.

## What We Do

Nuclear weapons seized our imagination in 1981, but we have always described our mission more generally as the promotion of peace research. Peace researchers consider peace to

refer, not just to absence of physical violence, but to many aspects of human security and wellbeing. Peace work cannot ignore social injustice issues or the mismanagement of the environment. Hence some early leaders of Science for Peace, notably Anatol Rapoport and George Ignatieff, also welcomed social scientists, development workers, and other professionals who contribute to peace building. As problems about the economy, demography, energy, and food production are becoming more salient, we hope to attract more new members working in these wider academic fields.

Every day, the Science for Peace email listserve exchanges sizzling polemics—most recently about nuclear power. Occasionally we publish books by our members. Also, our bulletin, web page, and blog offer space to our members for sharing their reflections. We have held numerous conferences over the years, importing eminent speakers on various topics, such as: Arctic cooperation; the wars in Iraq; climate change; food and population; fresh water; and nuclear weapons abolition.

Science for Peace co-sponsors the "Global Issues Project" with the Canadian Pugwash Group. It invites experts to significant conferences that generate papers on various issues, which are displayed on our web site.

Sometimes we invite speakers to address us at dinner in a restaurant. Last year we held an 80th birthday party for Mikhail Gorbachev, complete with paper hats, balloons, and an excellent biographical slide show presented by Professor Sergei Plekhanov.

Throughout the academic term we hold free weekly public lectures at University College, near our own office. In 2012-13 they will be at 7:00 pm on Thursdays.

## Contact Information

(<http://www.scienceforpeace.ca/>) or contact Bryan Eelhart, Room 045, University College 15 King's College Circle, Toronto Ontario M5S 3H7. Phone (416) 978-3606

## RALUT MEMORIAL FUND UPDATE, JUNE 2012

BEATE LOWENBERG

We are delighted to announce that RALUT has just been informed that the fiscal 2012 year-end investment income distribution will be nearly \$3000. Thus with a minimal 'top-up' contribution from RALUT the expendable total sum available will suffice to make *three* awards of \$1000 each, which is an extremely gratifying further expansion of last year's two \$1000 awards.

Thus the following timely comment made by one of last year's two recipients becomes more pertinent: "I greatly appreciate this award and hope that RALUT is able to expand its reach to support more students in the future, as this award makes a positive difference in students' lives".

The gratifying financial achievements of the RALUT Endowed Memorial Fund since its inauguration just five years ago to commemorate our deceased members by assisting academically excellent students in

financial need, is due to the ongoing generosity of our donors as well as the past dollar-for-dollar matching contributions from the Ontario government's Trust for Student Support (OTSS) program. This program is however currently suspended.

Online donations can be made using this link: <https://donate.utoronto.ca/> Enter "RALUT" in the box labeled 'enter keywords here'.

For those who prefer the more traditional alternative, a donation pledge form accompanies this Reporter issue and is also available from the RALUT office as well as the RALUT website.

**Every donation will receive a university-issued income tax receipt.**

Many thanks to committee member Diane Henderson for all her help.

## CURAC REGIONAL MEETING IN ONTARIO

The College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) has announced that it will hold an Ontario regional meeting somewhere in the GTA on October 15, 2012 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. All member associations and individual members member associations are invited to attend.

Topics to be discussed will include retiree benefits, the Drummond Commission Report, the relationship of retiree organizations with faculty unions, and the formation of an Ontario conference of CURAC and its impact on the national organization.

In order to encourage maximum participation, the format of the day will involve a round table discussion with the assistance of a facilitator. A plenary session will be held at the end of the day to consider potential resolutions.

## SOME BENEFIT CLAIM HINTS

DOUG CREELMAN

I've spent some time now helping RALUT members with questions and concerns regarding our health and dental coverage. Here are some things I have learned in the process:

- Travel coverage - If you have an ongoing medical condition, you will be covered for emergency treatment if you have a written statement from your physician stating that you are fit to travel. It is best to get this statement before leaving.
- If you declined university health coverage when you retired, you may be able to obtain it by calling Human Resources at 978-4673
- The University is preparing a handbook describing our benefits, which will be available soon (whatever that means).
- Information about our health coverage is available at <http://www.hrandequity.utoronto.ca/faculty-librarians/benefits/Benefits.htm>

## PUBLICATION NOTICE

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Tom Alloway edited and set up the current issue, and James Beckwith proofread it.

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