Epilogue

Association of Professors Emeriti - University of Alberta

Editor's note

Ice pans now floating in the North Saskatchewan River indicate that winter will soon settle in for sure. This issue reminds members to sign up now for the Christmas Brunch, and gives the scheduled dates for the Winter term Lunch With… events. Business at the October AGM included the President’s Report and the results of the election of members of the APE Executive Committee. Also, in this issue, Gordon Rostoker reviews important topics concerning Canada that were discussed at the 8th November meeting of the Current Affairs interest group. Alas, the In Memoriam box is large, with the loss of 13 academic staff. Finally, the issue ends with a reprint of Keith Smillie’s Mousing Around #61 (2013), a description of early calculating machines. Finally, after many months of change, we now have a new web site whose address you can see in the top left corner. We are now on the official University web site, so you can also find us by going to www.ualberta.ca and clicking on Faculty & Staff near the top of the page and scrolling down to the bottom of the page where you will find Groups and Associations (like us!)

Ruth Gruhn

Notices

Dates of Lunch With… Speakers and topics are to be confirmed, and will be announced later in the weekly e-mail newsletter.

January 24

28 February

28 March

To attend an event, notify Emeritus House before noon on the Monday before the date.

The Christmas Brunch will be on Saturday 15 December. Order forms have been mailed out to members, and must be returned with payment by 14 December.
Reports

President’s Report to the AGM, 28 October 2018

I want to welcome all of you to the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Association of Professors Emeriti. In past years, this meeting has been held in conjunction with a Photography Exhibit and competition; but as was mentioned in a recent Newsletter, with the demise of the Photography Group, it would have difficult to mount an exhibition. So, on behalf of the Association, I would like to thank Ken Barron, Nils Peterson, and David Baine along with the group members for their dedication to this project over the years.

Now to an overview of the Association and its activities over the past year. At our monthly Executive meetings, in addition to approving the Minutes of previous meetings and receiving reports from various coordinators, several issues have dominated the Executive Committee meetings:

Membership: The drop in membership continues to be of great concern. Last year I reported that we had 121 members, and we are currently down to 103. A major problem in attracting new members is that recent retirees have not been receiving the Association’s letter of invitation and brochure in their retirement packages. This lapse was discovered when we contacted Employment Services; as a result, we provided that office with both documents in enough numbers that they could be sent to the current year’s retirees as well as last year’s. An additional problem is that we are not able to obtain names of the staff retiring because of privacy issues. At the moment we are waiting to see if there will be further results from the recent mail-outs.

The Association’s website: Gordon Rostoker has been diligent and determined in ensuring that we have an updated website. As he reported at our last Executive meeting, our current website will have to move to the University’s Sitecore system and hopefully it will be operational by November 1st. Gordon will be taking two courses at the Technology Training Centre prior to being allowed to change content on the web pages. Once moved, our website will be listed on the University of Alberta’s website under the heading of Faculty and Staff: scrolling down to Groups and Associations, our Association will be listed along with others such as the Faculty Women’s Club. [Editor’s note: we have now been advised that the APE website may be reached simply by going to www.ualberta.ca/professors-emeriti].

Office Assistant: Danielle Perreault joined the Association as Office Assistant in spring last year; but this past summer she left the position and Gordon Rostoker served as interim office assistant in July and August. In September a selection committee consisting of Gordon, Doug Dale, and Fatima Jaffer from University Relations interviewed two candidates. Luke Panteluk, a first-year business student, was selected and joined APE in mid-September.

Parking: Now that construction has been completed on the student residence next door to Emeritus House, Parking Services has allocated two stalls behind Emeritus House for use by our
members. Yellow ID cards are available inside the back door of the house, for placement on the car dashboard. One of these stalls is marked Handicap; but unless there is a member who requires it, it can be used by any member. It is good to have these parking stalls again.

Lunch With: Bente Roed is the coordinator of the program; and along with Ruth Gruhn, Vivien Bosley, Jan Murie, and Allan Offenberger, organized an excellent program of speakers. There was an average attendance of about 20 people per luncheon: we would have hoped for more, but the members who attended always engaged the speakers with interesting questions. Thanks are due the members of this group for their collaboration in selecting the speakers, and arranging for members to introduce and to thanks the guests as well as for coordinating each event.

Interest Groups: There were five interest groups functioning over the past year: the Arts group, Book Club, Dining Out, the Travel Group, and History and Historiography. Martin Katz, the coordinator of the History group, developed health problems during the year and will not be able to continue this role next year. Declining interest and attendance at the Photography group meetings led to its demise early in the year, and it is not certain that it will continue. The remaining four groups are maintaining good attendance at meetings; and Current Affairs, dormant last year, will meet again in November [Editor’s note: in this issue, Gordon Rostoker describes topics covered in the first meeting].

Financial: As the Treasurer’s Report states, we received our annual grant from the Office of the Vice-President (University Relations) to support our office operations: for the current fiscal year, the grant has been reduced by 4%, in line with budget cuts across the University. This grant is used to cover the salary of our Office Assistant as well as the cost of our telephone. And as in the previous two years, we have been allowed to carry forward unspent funds from last year’s grant into the current fiscal year. The Association continues to donate $1000 to the Emergency Bursary Fund at the Student Financial Support Department in the Registrar’s Office. At the present time, we are in good financial shape.

In addition to those Executive Committee members who look after the Lunch With… and interest groups, Ruth Gruhn continues to attend AASUA meetings as an observer; and provides a report at our monthly Executive meetings. Gordon Rostoker and Doug Dale serve as alternates when Ruth is unavailable. Attached is a summary of the AASUA meetings prepared by Ruth for the interest of APE members. Ruth is as well our Epilogue editor, and many thanks are due Ruth for the excellent job she does in producing four issues a year. Gordon Rostoker, as Past President, served as Chair of our Nominations Committee and also chairs the ad hoc committee that reviews IODE doctoral scholarship applications.

CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) is the umbrella organization comprised of 40 universities and colleges, and supported by nominal fees from each association. We were fortunate that this past May, our Association was represented by a Delegate, Peter Murphy, at CURAC’s Annual General Meeting held in Halifax; and he reported on the various sessions that he attended. (Our Association of Professors Emeriti was a founding member of CURAC, which was established twenty years ago).
Thanks are due to all members of the Executive; and especially to Gordon Rostoker, who steps in when needed and to be involved in a huge way in all aspects of the Association.

June Panteluk, President

Summary of AASUA Council Meetings 2017/2018

In the course of the 2017/2018 academic year, Council meetings were preoccupied with structural changes entailed by the shift from the old post-Secondary Education Act to the Provincial Labour Relations Code; in effect, making the AASUA a union. This shift in status required a number of changes to the AASUA Bylaws. One key issue was AASUA membership rights, and retirees will be affected. Retirees can attend AASUA meetings and serve as advisors to AASUA committees; but we cannot vote, or hold an AASUA office.

Since recognition as a union entails the right to strike, much of the Council’s business this past year involved preparation for the possibility. A Job Action Committee has been struck, with a number of subcommittees to attend to the details necessary to prepare for a faculty strike. The current Collective Agreement with the University Administration ended on 1 July 2018. The bargaining for a new Agreement began in mid-March 2018; but is still ongoing at this moment, with hope for completion by this December. Meanwhile, in the course of the academic year, the dues of the AASUA members have been raised in order to create a strike fund. The continuing bargaining sessions are reported to be proceeding in an amiable manner, so hopefully agreement will be reached before long.

Ruth Gruhn

Results of the election of the APE Executive at the AGM of 2018:

For the term 2018-2019:

President: J. Douglas Dale
Treasurer: Walter Allegretto

For the term 2018-2020:

Secretary: Peter Murphy
Member-at-Large: Bente Roed
Member-at-Large: Jan Murie

For your information:

Executive members whose current term will expire in 2019:

President: J. Douglas Dale
Vice-President: Tim Hartnegal
Lunch With …. Event of 26 September 2018

At the first Lunch With … event of the season, Elaine Hyshka spoke in detail of aspects of the legalization of cannabis. With long professional public health experience in dealing with the subject of substance use and abuse, she was able to demonstrate that much misinformation is now circulating widely. She reviewed the risks and the benefits of cannabis use, medical and recreational. Actually, most cannabis users take the drug infrequently: health risk increases with early or prolonged heavy use.

Government rationalization for legalization at this time includes not only the need for quality control of the substance but the high cost of enforcing the past law, as more than 50% of all drug offences are simply possession of cannabis. Conviction results in a criminal record, with a lifelong effect on employment and travel. Polls show strong public support for legalization. Public Health agencies need to reduce chronic dependence on the substance, aiming at strict regulations in order to discourage use.

Comment

Topics in the Current Events Salon

Over the years, the Current Events Salon led by Janet Robertson was one of the most successful interest groups run by the Association of Professors Emeriti. When Janet stepped down from her leadership role in 2017, the group went into a hiatus for the following year. This year, it was decided to attempt to restart the Interest Group; and on the first Thursday of November, it held its first meeting in over a year.

The topic chosen by Gordon Rostoker was “Whither Canada;” and the question addressed was whether our country had become too difficult to govern in a democratic fashion, given the complexity of our modern society. Gordon presented several examples, all of which were open to discussion and dispute by the attendees. These examples were:

1. Inability so far to build a simple pipeline extension to the west coast to permit the export of hydrocarbons from the Alberta oils sands. The government was elected by Canadians and presumably reflects the collective wisdom of Canadians; despite the clear statement from the federal Government that the Trans Mountain pipeline should be built forthwith, various subgroups of the population have prevented that development from taking place. This is a poster child for the inability of elected governments to carry out their mandates.
2. The Phoenix pay system fiasco has demonstrated that even with the expertise of Big Blue (IBM), the system is too complex to function. [A smaller and more local example of this kind of thing is the inability to merge the Capital and Metro LRT lines because the contractor was unable to make the signal systems for the two lines function together]. Our modern society uses computer software in virtually every facet of our lives. The software is designed by incredibly talented computer specialists; but the actual operation of the systems they create is managed by mere mortals, who may be able to learn the operation of the components of the system; but often move from job to job (i.e., due to little stable employment in today’s Canada), leaving the operations to other individuals who then have to go up learning curves in order to do their jobs effectively.

3. It is difficult to go back far enough in history to be able to track when the federal government decided to replace their aging fleet of CF-18 fighter jets. For over a decade, they pondered whether they should purchase modern F-35 fighter jets from Lockheed Martin. The procurement process started in 1997, and hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent in joint development of these jets. Where are we in the process? --trying to put off the decision by buying used Australian F-18’s that could basically be used for spare parts to keep our old fleet of F-18 fighter jets in the air until new ones could be purchased. One can sympathise with politicians and senior civil servants for whom this whole business is ‘way too complex’.

4. The justice system in Canada is in a catatonic state, with inadequate resources being provided to an overwhelmed cadre of judges dealing with an increasingly complex set of processes in getting to final acquittals, or convictions and sentences. Recently, the Supreme Court of Canada, in what is known as the Jordan decision, ruled that if a case cannot be brought to trial inside of 18 months for provincial courts and 30 months for superior courts, the defendant must be released. Consequently, there are many criminals back on the street because the complexity of the legal system makes it impossible for all but the most serious offenses to be prosecuted in good time. There are no signs that this breakdown of the justice system is going to be remedied in the foreseeable future.

5. #metoo has changed the face of interpersonal relationships between men and women in the workplace. It has become far more complicated!! No doubt things had to change in terms of allowing more women in the workforce to advance to positions of increased responsibility based on merit. As well, there have certainly been cases of sexual misconduct that have adversely affected some women in the past. However, the threat to men of being accused of what is considered, today, to be misbehaviours of a sexual nature, has cast a pall over the workplace. One of the first casualties is the plight of male doctors not wishing to mentor females for fear of being put in a situation, warranted or not, which might threaten their careers. Probably to their consternation, they are being blamed for not performing their responsibilities as mentors. Life in the workplace has become increasingly complicated, and we will see more of these social complexities in
the coming years. How those complexities will affect operations in workplaces across the country is yet to be determined.

Very vigorous discussions were held as each of these matters was introduced. Meetings of this interest group will continue, with the next one being held at Emeritus House on December 6. The topic to be considered is the recent U.S. midterm election, and the effect that the results might have on Canada-U.S. relationships.

Gordon Rostoker

**In Memoriam**

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<td>Ted Blodgett</td>
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Mousing Around

Keith Smillie

61. A couple of old calculators

Today a hand-held or pocket calculator that will perform all of the arithmetic that we need may be purchased for a few dollars in a variety of stores. These personal calculators first became available in the early 1970s; and since then have decreased in size and price until now one can purchase a calculator on a key-chain for a dollar, although its small size makes it rather difficult to use.

In this column we shall have a brief look at just a couple of the many mechanical calculators that preceded our present devices. Both of these calculators may be seen in a calculator exhibit which presently sits rather forlornly along with some other exhibits in a long hallway on the ground floor of the Biological Sciences Building.

The first of these calculators is the Millionaire, which was designed in the 1890s in Munich and manufactured in Zurich. It was a large machine, measuring 25 inches by 12 inches by 6 inches; and weighed more than 60 pounds. Between 1894 and 1935, a total of 4655 Millionaires were sold in Europe and the United States, with government agencies being the largest customers. The first page of the instruction manual advertised “Calculating machines of superior workmanship, embracing Expedition and Accuracy in reading results in the Four Rules of Arithmetic, Economy in Time and Energy of the Operator.” On the following page, we read that “The MILLIONAIRE Calculating machine Is the most efficient Calculating Machine in the world. Requires only one turn of the crank for each figure in the Multiplier”. Below a picture of the machine is shown the product

\[ 18,769,423 \times 23,769,814 = 446,145,693,597,322 \]

followed by “Result obtained in 6 or 7 seconds, by only eight turns of the crank”.

Addition was performed with the Millionaire by setting an indicator to “A”, and then successively entering the numbers to be added on a keyboard and pressing the crank after each summand had been entered. The three other arithmetic operations were performed in a similar manner.

A Web search on “millionaire calculator” will give a few hits to the Millionaire; but most are to online calculators allowing one to calculate how long it will take to become a millionaire in one’s present financial situation. For example, if one invests $100 per month at 3% interest, one can accumulate a million dollars in 108.7 years. Just what I’ve always wanted to know!

The second calculator is the Curta, shown in the photograph below. It weighed 8 ounces, cost $125, and came with a metal carrying case measuring 4½ inches in length and 2¼ inches in diameter. It is often called the “first pocket calculator”; and informally, because of the
crank at the top, the “pepper mill”. The following is from an advertisement appearing in *Scientific American* in the 1960s: “The Curta is a precision calculating machine for all arithmetical operations. Curta adds, subtracts, multiplies, divides, squares and cube roots… and every other computation arising in science and commerce…”.

Numbers are entered using the eight slides along the side of the calculator, and results appear on the revolution counter and the result counter around the top carriage with the knurled circumference. A single turn of the crank adds the input number to the result counter, and increments the revolution counter by 1. If the crank is pulled upwards slightly before it is turned, the input number is subtracted from the result counter. Multiplication and division require a series of simple shifting operations. The Curta was intended to be used by holding it in one hand so that the fingers could change the digits on the sliders and manipulate the carriage, leaving the other hand free to rotate the crank and record results.

The Curta was designed and built by Curt Herzstark (1902-1988), an Austrian whose family sold office machines. Herzstark had almost completed the design of an easily portable calculator on the outbreak of World War II, when, because of having a Jewish father, he was imprisoned, eventually in Buchenwald concentration camp. There he came to the attention of the commanding SS officer, who sent him to the slave-labour factory associated with the camp, where he was put in charge of making precision instruments for the Peenemünde missile launch site but allowed to continue the design of his calculator. After the cessation of hostilities, Hertzstark eventually settled in Liechtenstein; and produced his first Curta calculator in 1948. When production ceased in the early 1970s, about 140,000 machines had been sold. The Curta continued to be used for some years, and was popular with car-rally enthusiasts even into the 1980s, since it performed better in a race environment than the early electronic calculators.