MINUTES OF THE TWELFTH MEETING
OF THE
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION
HELD ON
WEDNESDAY,MAY 5, 1993
IN ROOM H 767, THE FACULTY CLUB LOUNGE
IN THE HALL BUILDING

12.1 Call to Order

12.1.1 The President called the meeting to order.

12.2 Approval of the Agenda

12.2.1 A motion to approve the agenda as circulated proposed by Libby Gardham, seconded by Howard Ripstein, was carried.

12.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 27, 1992

12.3.1 A motion to approve the minutes of the Fall Meeting held on May 6, 1992 was proposed by Muriel Armstrong and seconded by Arthur Lermer. Carried unanimously.

12.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

12.5 Reports

12.5.1 Report from the Representative on the Pension and Benefits Committees

In the absence of the member representing the Association on the Pension and Benefits Committee, the Chairman advised the members that the Pension and Benefits Committee are in the process of studying changes to the Health Insurance Plan. He also mentioned that the Committee is conducting a survey of the various employee groups within the University to see if they will support, on a shared cost basis, the introduction of dental care and vision care plans. The results of the survey and any move towards the introduction of such plans will be reported to the membership. Should such plans be seriously considered by the Committee it is not known whether present retirees would be included, however our representative will ensure that our views are brought to the debate at the appropriate time.

12.5.2 Report of the Programmes Committee

Dagmar Brodie-McDougall, Chair of the Programmes Committee reported on the following events which had taken place since the last meeting:

The Annual Luncheon held in December at the Loyola Faculty Club.

Tour of the McAusland Brewery held in January, unlimited samples.

Annual Sugaring-off Party held in April near St. Eustache. Good food, well served.

Dagmar reported that two other potential events suggested at the last meeting (a tour of the Callière Museum and monthly luncheon get-togethers) were still in the planning stage and encouraged members to advise her if they were interested in participating.

As Dagmar is ending her term of office as Chair of the Programmes Committee, she took the opportunity to thank Doreen Bates, Mona Osborne, J-P. Petolas and Doug Potvin for their support and help as members of the Committee. Doreen Bates has agreed to take over the duties of Chair of the Programmes Committee.

Arthur Lermer requested that the Programmes Committee consider planning activities during the period when the "Florida Snow-Birds" are in town so that they may have the opportunity of meeting their fellow members. Dagmar suggested that the Callière Museum tour might be such an occasion.

A member also suggested that the Programmes Committee investigate the possibility of obtaining group rates for the Opera.

12.5.2.1 A motion of thanks to Dagmar Brodie-McDougall for her work as Chair of the Programmes was moved by Mary Callaghan, seconded by Peg McMurray and carried unanimously.

12.5.3 Secretary-Treasurer's Report

12.5.3.1 Financial Report

The financial situation since 1 June, 1992 is as follows:

Opening Balance on 1 June 1992		$ 550.30
Disbursements	$1726.87	
Receipts	$2226.47	
Balance as of March 31, 1993		$1049.90
Plus a petty cash float of		$24.58

It was pointed out that the fiscal year starts on June 1st. and ends on May 31st. Therefore this report is not an "Annual Statement". The Treasurer informed the members that an annual statement would be prepared after the close of the year and presented to the Fall meeting for ratification.

12.5.3.2 Membership

The Secretary reported that the Association acquired 10 new members over the period 1 June, 1992 to March 31, 1993; had lost one member (deceased) and the membership roster stands at 223 members.

12.5.3.3 A motion to receive the report of the Secretary-Treasurer was proposed by Dick MacDonald, seconded by Dave McDougall and carried unanimously.

12.5.4 Report from the Coalition des Aînés

J.P. Petolas stated that the Coalition had been involved in several activities over the past several months. The following is a brief summary of his report:

12.5.4.1 The Coalition held its Annual General Meeting on December 4, 1992 during which it was announced that it had received a Federal Government grant of $100,000 to enable it to develop an information gathering system.

12.5.4.2 One of the Coalition's member groups, the Association des retraité(e)s de enseignment du Québec, had a meeting with the Commission parlementaire du budget et de l'administration on February 3 in Québec City on the financing of public services. The teachers' association reiterated their belief in free and universal accessibility to medical and social programmes. This must be continued and the cost must be assumed by all

taxpayers, not just the users. They pointed out that costs of these health and social services have increased mainly because of increases in professional fees and the government's lack of control and planning in the organization and distribution of human and financial resources. It is not the Seniors who have contributed to the increase in costs, they stated, but it is those who run the programmes who are responsible for the increases. J-P stated that this meeting and the teachers' submission received considerable coverage in the French press.

12.5.4.3 The Golden Age Association of N.D.G. wrote a letter to Mr. Allan Darling, Secretary General of the CRTC, protesting the rate increase proposed last winter for Bell Canada. It pointed out that 75% of senior citizens in Quebec are living on a annual fixed income of less than $15,000 and that the telephone was a lifeline for health, social and emergency services for these "most vulnerable members of our community". This letter seems to have had an effect as the increase was not approved.

12.5.4.4 The Coalition wrote a letter to Premier Bourassa requesting a meeting (the second one within the past three years). Due to Mr. Bourassa's poor health, the letter was passed on to Mr. Marc-Yvon Côté, (Minister of Health Services) and it is believed that a meeting will be held with him soon.

12.5.4.5 The Coalition feels that the wishes of seniors should be made known with respect to the upcoming Federal and Provincial elections. Therefore it is preparing a "manifesto" or a statement of priorities and expectations. This will be sent to the parties and the candidates to see how they will react. It will also be made available to individual members, to provide them with a series of questions or positions the seniors would want the electorate to take and to be used by members if they meet the candidates during the campaign period. J-P mentioned that one of our members, Michael Sheldon, has been active in the drafting of these last two documents prepared by the Coalition.

12.5.4.6 Finally, the Conseil des Ainés, a Provincial Government committee, composed of representatives of the various Provincial seniors' associations, is to be set up with the purpose of defending the rights of seniors. Each provincial association has been asked to submit names of candidates who would be interested in joining. Meetings would be held in Quebec City and attendance would be at one's own expense. The Coalition feels that to have only provincial associations represented misses a lot of the people. Since most Quebecers live in the Greater Montreal area, they feel that representation should include city-wide associations as well as Anglophone groups, and not just one provincial group.

12.5.4.7 J-P noted that the Coalition feels the waiting period for individuals to get on the list of Transport Adapté is too long. It has decided to get at least one member on the Executive of the MUCTC Transport Adapté.

12.5.4.8 There is a group called "One Voice" which is sponsoring a conference in Montreal on October 28, 1993, the theme of which is "Healthy Aging - Assessing the Canadian Commitment". One Voice is the Canadian Seniors Network, which has identified health issues as its main priority over the next few years and is promoting public discussion and action on issues related to health and well-being of older Canadians. It works with such groups as the Canadian Coalition on Medication Use and the Elderly, the Canadian Senior Packaging Advisory Council and the National Awareness to Access Week. It recently launched a three-year project on Elder Abuse. The conference will be held at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel and invitations are available to any member at a cost of $ 150.00.

12.5.4.9 At this point J-P Petolas provided the membership with some details about the Coalition's project mentioned at the beginning of the report (item 12.5.4.1) concerning the $100,000 grant. The project is called "Inform-Action". Michael Sheldon is a key member of the project team and CUPA members have been invited to join. To date Dorothea Vibrans, Fred Sauer and Guy Gervais have expressed interest. The purpose of the project is to set up a resource and information centre where data and documents concerning seniors' issues can be made accessible to groups for policy formulation. The grant will be used to gather data and train volunteers to use the data and documentation and to maintain the resource centre after the initial eighteen months. An orientation meeting will be held on May 10 at 1:00 p.m. at the offices of the Coalition (5700 Westbury Ave.) to provide members with information on the scope of the project. Members are encouraged to attend to find out about this project, but attendance does not mean a commitment to work on the project.

12.5.5 <u>Chair's Report</u>

12.5.5.1 Relationships with the Human Resources Department

The Chair reported that our contacts with the Human Resources Department remain on a very positive level. He explained that they advise him before anything is mailed to retirees so that he is aware of the purpose of the mailing in the event he is questioned by the membership. They also advise him of the names of those retiring but, due to confidentiality, we are not provided with the addresses or phone numbers. This is why we rely upon the help of the membership to bring in new members.

12.5.5.2 Pre-retirement Information Sessions

Jim Whitelaw mentioned that the Association again participated in the University's Pre-retirement sessions which are held for faculty and staff members to assist them in preparing for retirement. This year again both Dick MacDonald and Guy Gervais spoke to the participants about retirement. Dick (who addressed the faculty group) stated that the purpose of their presentations is to provide a personal account of the retirement experience. He stated that it also provides him with the pleasure of meeting some of his former colleagues and to realize that they are contemplating retirement. He said that he also distributed a copy of the latest edition of the Association's newsletter (CUPARUC) which was well received. Guy Gervais stated that those in his session (staff) spent considerable time asking questions which was a good indication of the interest the participants have in the subject. Jim pointed out that this participation by the Association in these sessions is part of the Association's mandate to assist the University in a useful way.

12.5.5.3 Telephone Tree

Jim Whitelaw advised the group that this project has yet to be completed. He explained that the concept is to develop a communication chain (or telephone tree) to call members to remind them of events or urgent matters. He stated that he and John Hall would try to put together a basic list over the summer and that hopefully in the Fall it could be started.

12.5.6 Establishment of Fees for 1993-94

On a motion proposed by Muriel Armstrong and seconded by Mona Osborne it was agreed that the fees for the 1993-94 fiscal year should remain at $10.00. This motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

12.5.7 Report of the Nominating Committee

The Chair explained that the only term of office that was expiring this year was the position of Member at Large held by Dagmar Brodie-McDougall. Also that Dagmar was eligible for reappointment. The Chairman also mentioned that the Executive Committee felt that an addition to the Executive Committee could provide a candidate for the position of an alternate representative position on the Benefits and Pension Committee if that was agreed upon by the University. The Executive Committee therefore felt we should add a position to the Executive Committee to provide for this situation as well as to provide broader representation. We therefore had two positions

to fill this year. J-P Petolas, as Chair of the Nominating Committee then gave the following report:

The Nominating Committee was composed of Catherine Hughes, Lila Van-Toch and J-P Petolas. They approached Dagmar Brodie-McDougall and Stan Kubina, both of whom had agreed to stand for election as Members at Large for a three-year term (1993 to 1996).

The Chairman asked if there were any other nominations. As there were no other nominations the Chair asked for a motion. Mona Osborne moved that Dagmar Brodie-McDougall and Stan Kubina be appointed as Members at Large for a three-year term from 1 June 1993 to 31 May 1996. The motion was seconded by Anne-Marie Ketter and carried unanimously.

12.6 Guest Speaker - Dr. Tannis Arbuckle-Maag

The President introduced Dr. Maag by stating that she has been at the University for many years as a member of the Psychology Department having been active in teaching and research, particularly at the graduate level. She is currently a member of one of the Centres of Excellence - "Productivity and Independence in Aging Populations". She is also part of the Centre for Research and Human Development.

Dr. Maag commenced by stating that her research area is adult development and learning and the sphere of interest of her colleagues and herself are the factors that maintain competence and well-being as people grow older. She mentioned that her colleagues are Dr. Dolores Gold and Dr. June Chaikelson, also of the Psychology Department. They have been working on a variety of research projects in the above field and Dr. Maag's personal interest and expertise is in human learning and memory. In her own research she is primarily focusing on how learning and memory abilities change as we grow older.

She mentioned that, in addition to this focus of study, her group had just received a grant to study women between the ages of 30 and 60, to see how the changes in women's roles and lifestyles is affecting their ability to cope with the stresses brought about by these changes. Having accumulated much data on 60+ women, this study will now provide a basis of comparison between the two groups.

The focus of the talk, however, was to be on learning, memory and aging. In today's society there is a belief that in growing old there is associated with it a fear of losing mental capacity. In our own culture there is a strong expectation of an age decline. This is reinforced in our literature and general attitudes. The reaction of people as they grow older is

that, as soon as they forget or can't remember something, it must be because they are growing old. This tradition of expectation of a severe loss of mental capacity in old age came from the fact that, until recently we did not distinguish between normal aging and abnormal aging. For example, we did not recognize that Alzheimer's was a disease and therefore not normal.

What then comprises "normal aging"? Human Development is a continuous process. There are some losses but there are some gains as well. Therefore while older people may be slower at learning (as in physical capacities) they are much more able to integrate what they have learned with their past experiences and this makes them much more selective about what is worth learning and remembering. Dr. Magg cited an example of a study her group did with World War II veterans. On enlisting, in their early 20's, these men were required to take a series of mental aptitude and intelligence tests (The Army M Test). A large number of these people were re-tested some 42 years later. The results showed that while some abilities declined, and some increased, there were no major changes, on average, in the abilities except in the vocabulary area, which improved significantly with age. The conclusion is that while there are some age declines they are small and are compensated for by experience.

Another area of the group's research is that of examining individual differences, since people differ so markedly in how much age change they show. Using the veterans study as an example Dr. Maag stated that those who showed a marked difference in their scores were those who had gone on to further their education after the war. This was not only due to the additional education but a sign of the type of person they were. This and other studies seem to support the theory that the more active a person is as they age the more they tend to retain their memory capabilities. This seems to reinforce the old adage "use it or lose it".

Dr. Maag then went on to discuss a new project they are starting up as part of their membership in the Federal Networks of Centres of Excellence (in this case The Canadian Aging Research Network). The project will deal with the learning of new technical skills, particularly by older workers. She cited the North American tradition of organizations discarding older workers whose skills had become obsolete rather than retraining them. The project hopes to do "demonstration experiments" which set up learning situations where older workers can be retrained efficiently and enjoyably. These situations would be designed to be self-paced and to draw on people's past experience catering to the needs and strengths of older workers (eg. converting typing skills into word-processing skills). They

hope to develop programmes that meet these characteristics and to demonstrate to employers that you can train new skills quickly and efficiently. The group is beginning a programme of word processing training for older workers, developed at the University of Waterloo. Women over the age of 55 who have typing skills but no word processing experience are being invited to participate. Dr. Maag suggested that if any of the audience who met these criteria and wished to participate, they should call her lab. The phone number is 848-7552.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Arbuckle-Maag for a most enlightening and enjoyable presentation and congratulated her on the work her research team is accomplishing concerning learning and development in older people.

12.7 Other Business

12.7.1 Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on October 27, 1993 at 2:30 p.m.(this is the day the University holds the Annual Meeting of the Pension Plan).

12.8 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion made by Dagmar Brodie-McDougall.

John L. Hall
Secretary-Treasurer
August 23, 1993