MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING
OF THE
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION
HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 1995
IN ROOM H 767, THE FACULTY CLUB LOUNGE
IN THE HALL BUILDING

16.1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the President, J-P Pétolas. Over 45 members were in attendance. In his introductory remarks, the President announced the names of ten new members: Paul Arsenault, Henry Beissel, John Buell, Hildegard Enesco, Hubert Guindon, Elizabeth Harney, Frank Hayes, Denise Maisonneuve, Joseph Princz and George Xistris. He also stated that Peg MacMurray, one of our most faithful attenders, who travels regularly from Toronto to be with us, was recovering from a broken hip and thus unable to be there. He announced, with great regret, the deaths of Mary Kornas, Bill Shore and Joyce Vézina. He took the opportunity of thanking Doreen Bates, whose term on the Executive was up and who was not seeking re-election. She had been particularly effective as convener of the Programmes Committee.

16.2 Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved, as circulated, on a motion by Libby Gardham, seconded by Christine MacKay.

16.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 26, 1994

The Minutes of the meeting of October 26, 1994 had been distributed. The President reminded members that it had been decided not to send copies of the minutes to all members, since a summary of each meeting appears in CUPARUC. The Minutes were approved on a motion by Ken Adams, seconded by Kurt Jonassohn.

16.4 Guest Speaker - Dr. Randy Swedburg, Associate Professor, Leisure Studies

Since the invited speaker, Dr. Randy Swedburg, had already arrived, it was agreed that the order of business be modified so that he could deliver his address at that point. The President introduced Dr.Swedburg, Associate Professor of Leisure Studies at Concordia and founder of the programmes in that field. In recent years, Dr. Swedburg has been particularly interested in the Elderhostel movement, and he had been asked to use Elderhostel as a basis for his address.

Dr. Swedburg set his remarks in the context of lifelong learning and leisure education. He cited the example of a retired couple he had come across, of whom the wife, aged 72, had learned to operate a knitting machine since retirement, while her 74-year-old husband was activeon the local library board, as well as driving seniors unable to get around on their own. This, he said, is an example of "what I want to do when I grow up". When dealing with retired people in class, he believed in starting off by challenging their imagination - for example, asking pseudo-mathematical questions. He recalled listening to "Jackrabbit" Johanssen, aged 110, reminiscing about what he had done forty years earlier - when he was 70! Retirement gives people a chance to be what they'd rather be. While there are things that one must do, even more important are the things that one wants to do.

The Concordia Leisure Studies Department was created in 1984 - one of the first in Canada. It has now attained a respectable level, and significant research is being carried out. Leisure is not the antithesis of work - it is now seen in a much broader context: freedom to appreciate what is around one without necessarily having to do something about it. He cited six aspects of leisure - not necessarily in order of importance: the physical, the social, the creative (especially arts and crafts), the cultural, the benevolent (volunteer work) and the intellectual.

It has been stated that "we teach young children to hate learning" and we tend to continue to do so throughout life. How can one persuade people to be creative learners?

The key to a healthy leisure environment is not how you play the game, but whether you play it at all. What prevents people from undertaking learning is often fear of failure.

Some five years ago an American Medical Association spokesman stated that the number one problem for the twenty-first century was going to be boredom. Already the impact of TV on seniors is alarming -the average senior watches twice as much as the average child - an average of 47 hours per week - and yet public concern so far has been with children. One of the barriers to involvement cited by seniors is lack of time - but how can that be if they watch 47 hours of TV a week?

Despite the success of Elderhostel, and the existence of such organizations as the McGill Institute for Learning in Retirement, the findings of research into leisure do not seem to be getting around. A site survey is under way, covering each region of Canada. At Concordia the possibility is being explored of creating a

"college" along the lines of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, which would act as a focus to bring people together.

Elderhostel activities take place on 325 sites in North America and in forty other countries. Last year there were 18,000 participants, 3,000 of them outside North America. Course topics vary widely - the only forbidden topic is ageing! These are not "pablum" courses - Dr. Swedburg recalls listening to a skilled teacher explaining Einstein's theory of relativity in such a way that his audience of seniors all caught on.

Elderhostel Canada is a non-profit organization with a mailing list of 60,000 individuals. Membership lists are not made available to any organization, so that membership does not bring in any more junk mail. Accommodation for Elderhostel programmes is normally in college residences. For programmes in North America, participants provide their own transportation, for those in other countries transportation is normally included in the package.

The Concordia programme has been in existence since 1984. Current offerings include Quebec Culture; Montreal, the World and the City; Tai-chi and World Politics. Volunteers are needed to conduct local tours. Those interested in volunteer work should call the office on the Loyola Campus (848-3313). Catalogues of North-American activities are sent to anybody who asks. Making a financial contribution to Elderhostel Canada, which qualifies as a charitable donation for tax purposes, automatically brings in this catalogue. The international catalogue comes out of Boston, and is available at the Concordia office as well as in local libraries.

Dr. Swedburg concluded by citing his own golf performance, where he commonly takes twice as many strokes as most people to complete a round, but in this way, he said, he gets twice as much pleasure. This, he stated, shows the timid that "anything that's worth doing is worth doing badly".

After a brief question period, the Vice-President, Geoff Adams, thanked Dr. Swedburg for his stimulating address.

16.5 Business Arising from the Minutes

Relevant matters all appear elsewhere on the agenda.

16.6 Amendments to the Constitution

16.6.1 The President summarized and explained the proposed amendments, which had been circulated to all members with the notice of meeting. The amendment to the membership of the Executive was to allow for the addition of special expertise, or to ensure full representation should this be appropriate. The amendment on membership dues was to establish an equitable procedure for dealing with delinquents. The change to the quorum was designed to reflect the reality that many of our members do not reside close enough to Montreal to be able to attend regularly. It was moved by Bill Cozens, seconded by Muriel Armstrong that the amendments be approved. Carried.

16.7 Reports

16.7.1 Report of the Representative on the Pension and Benefits Committees

Muriel Armstrong reported that there had been no further developments on Dental/Vision Care, as only two groups in the University had expressed interest in participating. On Health Insurance, she reminded members of the changes approved in November, which had been communicated by the University to all retirees, these changes including addition of the Metlife Assistance for Travel Emergencies benefit. An up-dated booklet on the health care plan is in progress, but no date of production is being forecast. On the possibility of access to Internet, referred to in the last Newsletter, the Alumni Association project had been a pilot one, terminating this September. Doubtless the Association could ask for a similar pilot project if there is sufficient interest, but the matter has been raised in the Benefits Committee. In the meantime, the cheapest way of getting access to Internet is by enrolling in a course. As for the possibility of guaranteed indexing of pensions - which is becoming increasingly important as inflation rates being to creep back up - the matter is being discussed, but the defined-benefits nature of the Concordia plan brings about considerable risks for the University as the number of pensioners increases. In her opinion, there is a reasonable chance of guaranteed indexing at the level of the Consumer Price Index less 2%, but there might also be a cap on the allowable inflation level, to protect the University plan from the effects of a potential return of high inflation rates.

16.7.2 Report from the Programmes Committee

Doreen Bates reported for the Programmes Committee on successful visits to the Pointe à Callières Museum, the Montreal Casino (where one member had won $400) and the Architecture Centre. The annual luncheon had gone well, and there had been a lunch at the Lasalle College Dining Room. Finally, the sugaring-off

party at St-Marc-sur-Richelieu had been a great success, the setting being a vast improvement over that of the previous year. She thanked her fellow committee members, Christine MacKay and Mona Osborne.

16.7.3 Secretary-Treasurer's Report

In the absence of John Hall, Jim Whitelaw presented a statement of income and expenses for the period June 1, 1994 to March 31, 1995. It indicated total expenditures of $2106.30 as against total revenues of $2558.00, and a current balance of $2045.12. Cost of the additional issue of CUPARUC had been largely off-set by the decision not to mail the minutes of meetings to every member. Since October 1994 there have been ten new members, while three members have died. The membership list now stands at 231.

16.7.4 Report from the Coalition of Quebec Seniors / Coalition des Aînés

Geoff Adams reported on the Coalition of Quebec Seniors / Coalition des Aînés. This group represents a total of some 500,000 individuals. CUPA / ARUC is therefore a very small part of it. Initially its activities had been somewhat low-key, but it is now working towards a statement of principles in the face of radical changes at the federal and provincial government levels. The Coalition is prepared to be more militant. He undertook to raise at the Coalition a question from the floor about increases in cable rates, despite stable telephone rates. Sarah Maritzer obtained permission to circulate three petitions from the Golden Age Association, the first addressed to the prime Minister, expressing concern about the transfer of block funding to the provinces, the other two addressed to Diane Marleau, concerning what is happening to Medicare, and drawing attention to the dependence of seniors on the telephone, hence concern with telephone rates.

16.7.5 Chair's Report

The President stressed the good relationship which the Association continues to have with the University, especially the Department of Human Resources. On the matter of the telephone tree, it had not yet been necessary to use it for emergencies, but it had been helpful in getting people out to meetings. Updating had shown a considerable number of errors, which would be corrected over the summer. The new retirement packages being pushed by the University should help to feed our membership. It may be that the time has come to do another survey of members' experience and needs, as was done four years ago. The Association had received a proposal from a group of retires at the University of Calgary for the creation of a National Federation of Retired Professors and Academic Colleagues. We had responded that our association is not limited to

academics, so that we could not very well be part of such an organization, but the matter was to be raised at the forthcoming meetings of the Learned Societies in Montreal, and he asked for volunteers to speak for CUPA.

16.8 Establishment of Fees for 1995-96

It was moved by Jack Bordan, seconded by Bill Ellis, that annual dues be maintained at $10.00. Carried unanimously.

16.9 Report of the Nominating Committee

Geoff Adams, convener of the Nominating Committee, - the other members being Evelyn Donnelly and Ken Adams - reported that the Committee recommended that John Hall be proposed for a second term as Secretary-Treasurer, and that Bruce English be proposed to replace Doreen Bates as member-at-large.

16.10 Elections

There being no further nominations, it was moved by Geoff Adams, seconded by Mona Osborne, that John Hall be elected Secretary-Treasurer for a second term and that Bruce English be elected member-at-large. Carried unanimously.

16.11 Other Business

A question was raised from the floor as to whether members could bring spouses to meetings. While no objection was voiced at the meeting, it was agreed to place the matter on the agenda for the next meeting.

16.12 Next Meeting

Jim Whitelaw, on behalf of John Hall, explained that if we were to follow the practice of the past two years and hold the Fall meeting on the same day as the Annual Meeting of the Pension Plan, scheduled for Oct. 26, we would have to meet in a small room, whereas the Faculty Club was available on Oct. 24. Request for a show of hands indicated a minimal level of interest in the Pension Plan meeting, and those few who regularly attend did not seem too shattered at the prospect of attending two meetings in one week. It was therefore decided to meet on Tuesday, Oct. 24, 1995 at 10.30 a.m.

16.13 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11.59 a.m. on a motion by Bill Ellis.