



Photo/Gene Herzberg

Your Voice

MUN Pensioners' Association (MUNPA) Newsletter • Vol. 17, No. 1, March 2019
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Williams, Whalen Honoured with 2018 Annual Tribute Awards



Ed Williams, Jane Foltz and Pres. Gary Kachanoski

Edgar Williams Citation

Dr. Ed Williams retired from Memorial University in 2004, after almost 40 years of service with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Faculty of Science. Both during those years and since his retirement, he has given of his time and talents to many community organizations.

He has served on the Board of the NL branch of the Naval Association of Canada for over 30 years, and in addition to other executive positions, has served as Secretary for the past 10 years. He has served on its National Board of Directors, and is the only member of the NL branch to serve as National President.

In 2017, he served as Co-Chair of the Local Organizing Committee for the National AGM of the Naval Association of Canada held in St. John's in conjunction with the 75th Anniversary of the Crow's Nest Officers' Club. In 2018, he served on the Local Organizing Committee for

Continued on p. 2



Doreen Whalen and Karyn Butler

Doreen Whalen Citation

After a 37 year career, Ms. Doreen Whalen retired from Memorial University in 2007 finishing her career as Director of the Division of Lifelong Learning.

Doreen has long served her church, Wesley United, and has continued that service in her retirement. Locally, she has played a key role

Continued on p. 2

Inside this issue

- President's message 3**
- Upcoming events 4**
- Christmas socials 4**
- WW1: Quilters' Stories 5**
- What's up with pensions . . 6-7**
- Craft group activities 8**

Ed Williams, continued

the 75th National Reunion of the University Naval Training Division held in St. John's.

He has been a member of the Royal St. John's Regatta Committee for 24 years and, since his retirement has served in many capacities, including as editor of the race day program, Chair of the Constitution Committee, and Chair of the Program Advertising Committee.

From 2008 to 2016, he served as Chair of the St. John's – Avalon chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP), a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of adults 45 and over. Provincially, CARP can be credited for the recent appointment of a Seniors Advocate. Nationally, Ed advocated for the ultimately approved pension splitting for tax purposes, a benefit for Canadian seniors coast to coast.

For the past three years, he has served on the Pouch Cove Heritage Society Executive Committee currently as Vice-Chair. The Society has undertaken a number of initiatives to preserve the heritage and history of the community of Pouch Cove.

Ed has not forgotten his university community. Immediately after his retirement, he was elected to the MUNPA Board of Directors, serving for six years. In 2010, he was the first MUNPA member elected to the Board of Directors of the College and University Retiree Association of Canada (CURAC). He served as Chair of its Awards Committee, was a member of its Constitution Committee, and from 2012 to 2017 served as National Secretary. He helped organize the AGM of CURAC held in St. John's in 2013.

And, he is especially proud that, in 2016, he had served as an usher at our Convocations for 50 years!

In recognition of these efforts, he has been awarded the Gold Medallion, the highest award of the Naval Association of Canada, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, the NL Community Sector Council Volunteer Award, the Senior of Distinction Award by our provincial government, and, most recently, the CURAC Appreciation Award.

Doreen Whalen, continued

in the restructuring of the governance of her church and visioning for the four downtown churches. Provincially, she has chaired the staff committee of the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference, a position not unlike Director of Human Resources. Nationally, she served on the Learning Fund Committee. And recently, she has been involved in a proposal to develop assisted living housing for seniors on church property. VOWR Radio station was launched in 1924, Newfoundland and Labrador's pioneer radio station; its call letters are protected in the constitution of Canada. It broadcasts easy listening music throughout the week, a short spoken-word program each evening, and was the first radio station to broadcast religious services for all denominations twice each Sunday. Its motto – We Serve.

Doreen serves VOWR. She has been a member of the VOWR Radio Board since 1996, serving for the past five years as its Secretary. In 2014, she took on the daunting task of Manager of the VOWR Radio Station, a case of baptism by fire. In addition to addressing regulatory issues, fee structure and copyright issues, maintaining a working knowledge of the latest technological developments and maintaining a dynamic programming structure, she works with about 70 volunteers, which brings its own unique challenges.

Immediately upon assuming the position of Manager, she discovered that the Station was not in compliance with CRTC, nor was it in compliance with Industry Canada regulations regarding its broadcast tower site, both of which put its broadcast licence at risk. But, after a herculean effort, a full, seven year broadcast licence was restored the following year. In short, Doreen has worked tirelessly to maintain the historic and cultural treasure that is VOWR.

Doreen also has maintained a connection with the University community. Immediately upon retirement, Doreen joined the MUNPA Board of Directors, serving as Vice-President and President. And 11 years into retirement, she continues to teach sessionally with the Faculty of Business Administration.

President's Message

Jane Foltz and Steve Wolinetz

Time is going by much too quickly. It's several months into 2019 already with spring fast approaching. But it is never too late into the year, on behalf of all members of the Board, to wish you good health and happiness into the future. We do not have a crystal ball to know what is in store for us. However, personally, we can look back to gain some insight, or ahead for direction, but we live in the present, so enjoy each day to the extent possible.

This message has been written by both Jane and Steve. For family reasons, Jane was out of the Province for some of the time and Steve filled in, meaning that at some events only one of us was present.

Jane attended the Annual Ceremony of Remembrance at Memorial University, November 8, 2018. This ceremony is held to honour, remember and pay respects to those Newfoundlanders who fought in World War I, many of whom never returned home again. Jane had the privilege of laying a wreath at this ceremony, on behalf of MUNPA, accompanied by wreath bearer, MWO Spencer Barnes of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment and an employee of Marine Institute. The theme was "How We Remember", with very touching and very moving stories told by members of the Cabot Quilters Guild of St. John's.

Early December was to be a busy time. Our colleagues on the west coast held their annual turkey dinner at the Blow-Me-Down ski chalet.

In St. John's, a gentle snow threatened but did not delay our annual Christmas Social at the Fluvarium. Although the turnout was smaller than usual, a healthy number of retirees and their partners enjoyed good food, cheer, and a chance to meet old friends and colleagues. Karyn Butler, Donna Jackman, and Robert Helleur baked Christmas cakes for the silent auction. Their efforts raised \$220.00 for the Campus Food Bank and members donated an additional \$656.00. Out west, colleagues raised \$280.00 for the Grenfell Campus Student Food Bank. In a better world, there would be no need for food banks on or off campus. Thanks to everyone who helped, either by bidding on Christmas cakes or contributing directly.

Snow did delay the presentation of the MUNPA Tribute Awards. Originally scheduled for December 7th, these were postponed until January 17th. As usual, Memorial's President, Dr. Gary Kachanoski, hosted the awards. Jane Foltz and Karyn Butler, a member of our awards committee, presented Tribute Awards to Edgar Williams (Mathematics), and Doreen Whalen, (Lifelong Learning). Congratulations to both for awards that are well deserved and thanks to President Kachanoski for hosting the ceremony.

In late January, the MUNPA Executive sent out an advertisement to all members of the Association to fill the vacant position of Office Assistant. Seven excellent applications were received from our retirees, with one withdrawal prior to our conducting any interviews. Jackie Collins, a retiree from the Gardiner Centre in the Faculty of Business Administration, was the successful applicant. She accepted the contractual position for 30 hours per month, and started her new employment on March 4, 2019. As we welcome Jackie, we also recognize and offer a very special thank you to Audrey Power, who graciously and admirably filled in as the Office Assistant since the beginning of October.

The Department of Human Resources held its annual retiree seminar on February 21st on the St. John's Campus for employees, including their spouse or partner, on the main campus

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continued on page 4

Upcoming Events

St. John's Programme Committee

"Time Sensitive"

2:00-4:00pm Thursday, April 18th
Signal Hill Campus, room B1013

A presentation by Ed O'Reilly on the resettled communities from Great Harbour Deep to Petites and how time is impacting these once vibrant outports. Talk will include videos and photos. Links to Ed's work are on our website.

Native Plants of the Boreal Forest around St. John's, by Todd Boland

2:00-4:00pm, Thursday, May 2nd
MUN Botanical Garden

Visit includes a talk by Todd and viewing of the garden.

PARKING AT SIGNAL HILL CAMPUS

If you wish us to pay your parking, your licence plate number must be listed with your registration.

Full details on all these events, plus our Group activity pages, are on our website http://www.mun.ca/munpa/activities/st_johns. Pre-register by email at munpaevents@mun.ca. Just name the event in the your subject line.

President's Report, continued

and Marine Institute, and February 23rd on the Grenfell Campus. Jane attended the St. John's seminar and advised the attendees of the many benefits that MUNPA provides them, our advocacy in terms of benefits and pensions, as well as the many activities and events that are offered at a very modest cost. The importance of all retirees providing us with their contact information was greatly emphasized, as this is our only way to reach them. Lois Bateman, our west coast representative on the the Board, represented MUNPA at the Grenfell seminar.

Our events and activities in both St. John's and Corner Brook scheduled for the remainder of winter and into the spring season have been made known to you, with information available as well on our website. Our Annual General Meeting has been scheduled for June 6th, at the Fluvarium. Please note the date on your calendar. Details will follow.

West Coast Christmas Social

It was a blustery, snowy day on November 22, 2018 but forty-five people attended the west coast Christmas Social to enjoy a traditional turkey dinner at the Blow Me Down Cross Country Ski Chalet hosted by MUNPA. This was the largest gathering the west coast MUN retirees have had so far, even though the weather was reminiscent of some of those early heavy winters in Grenfell's history!



Draws were made for small door prizes throughout the evening (everything from a bag of Newfoundland Blue Potatoes to a pot of locally made Syrian hummus). Rose Russell won the main door prize of a large basket of edible and drinkable goodies. A total of \$280 was collected for the Grenfell Student Food Bank.

St. John's Christmas Social

The St. John's Christmas Social took place on December 6th. The gentle snow that was falling -- enough to delay the Tribute Awards the next day -- deterred a few, but those who turned out not only shared holiday cheer, but also donated \$636.00 to the Campus Food Bank. Christmas cakes baked by Karyn Butler, Donna Jackman, and Bob Helleur netted an additional \$220.00.

Save the Date

**MUNPA'S AGM WILL TAKE PLACE ON
THURSDAY, JUNE 6TH AT THE
FLUVARIUM**

WW1 How we remember

The Quilters' Stories

By Bernadette Power

To mark the centenary of the First World War, the Cabot Quilters' Guild created a collection of quilts titled **Peace by Piece: Quilted Memories of Newfoundland in the Great War**. The quilt titled, "A Living Memorial," may be of particular interest to MUNPA. This quilt was designed by a group of Memorial's staff and friends, spearheaded by Ingrid Verbree-Barnes, a staff member in the Department of Computer Science.

What started out as a request to 100 guild members to provide one quilt block in commemoration of Newfoundland and Labrador's role in WWI, emerged into a province wide enthusiasm resulting in 246 quilt blocks, creating 17 individually named quilts. The Quilters'

Guild generously donated all 17 beautiful quilts to Memorial University. The quilt titled A Living Memorial, now hangs just outside the President's Office. All quilts will be displayed permanently across Memorial's campuses as a living memorial of how we remember. In the

coming months the WWI Steering Committee will invite applications from Deans and Building Managers to have the remaining quilts displayed in various sites around Memorial campuses. Decisions confirming the sites will be made by early spring.



In addition to the quilts, the Cabot Quilters' Guild created and published a truly moving book: **Peace by Piece: Quilted Memories of Newfoundland in the Great War**. This book shares how this project got started and the magic of how it grew to be the magnificent tribute that it is. The book beautifully depicts the story of each quilt with wonderful photographs and tributes along the way.

This project is very special to me personally since it hosts a block in the Forget-Me-Not quilt, prepared by my sister, in memory of my father, James Hepditch, who was a proud member of the Newfoundland Regiment. We will remember them!

West Coast News

We seem to be hitting snowstorm days this winter with MUNPA events. However, once a group of us got onto the snowshoe trail in Pasadena on February 27, it was very calm and peaceful. Henry Mann led us along a nice route through the woods. The soup lunch at the ski chalet was excellent afterward.

L to R: Marie Iams, Sherry Bussey, Henry Mann, Sharon Noftall-Bennett, Bruce Bussey, Jim Duffy, Phyllis Mann, Lois Bateman



What's up with pensions?

Pension Discounting

By Jim Wyse

Don't discount your pension payments . . . someone regularly does that for you.

Determining whether a pension plan has a deficit (an all too frequent occurrence) or a surplus (an occurrence to which a simile about the rarity of hen's teeth readily applies) requires a "discount rate." Every year or so, the University's Pensions Advisory Committee is convened and tasked with recommending an appropriate pension plan discount rate. Currently, our plan's discount rate is 5.8%.

You might ask: now what does that even mean? Why would you discount our pension plan? Doesn't it have enough trouble already? Well, unfortunately yes, but we need the discount rate to tell us when it's in trouble and by how much.

In fact, a pension plan's discount rate serves many purposes: pension actuaries require it to assess the adequacy of the plan's funding; employee contributions are set using it; and, any extra employer payments to the pension fund are based on it. The discount rate is front and centre in the determination of those all-too-frequent deficits as well as the rare-as-hen's-teeth surpluses. This writer is somewhat challenged to explain it but please permit me to try.

It will be helpful, and not all that strange, to think of the pensions paid to a plan's beneficiaries and their survivors as a huge collection of payment obligations spread over many decades into the future. Pension administrators often want to know if there's enough money in the current pension "kitty" to make good on all those future obligations.

To illustrate how the oddly named discount rate helps them with this, let's examine a very simple 'micro pension plan' with just one future obligation consisting of a single \$1,000 pension payment that must be made to a pensioner two years from now. Let's assume there's \$870 currently tucked away in the plan's kitty. Is the

\$870 adequate to meet the plan's obligation to its pensioner? Or, is the plan in deficit and in need of extra funding? Or, is there a surplus and maybe we can respond to an employee demand for extra benefits, perhaps (my personal favorite) full cost-of-living indexing? Unsurprisingly we'll need to invest the \$870.

The micro pension plan advisory committee is convened to determine what the financial resources of the plan could be expected to earn if placed in a collection of very safe investments. Let's say the committee's thoughtful deliberations result in a determination of 6%. In its report the committee notes that rates above 6% are possible but only arise for investments that are much too risky for the pension plan. Will the 6% be adequate? Will the plan show a deficit or a surplus?

Let's do some "discounting." Refer to the "Discounting Diagram" on the next page. Note the \$1,000.00 pension payment in "Year Two." Let's work (right to left) through the upper path of connected boxes shown on the Discounting Diagram. Recalling your high school consumer math you eagerly discount the \$1000 by 6% to give \$943.40 for 'Year One' and then you discount the \$943.40 by 6% to give \$890.00 for 'Year Now'. So, if we invest \$890.00 at the committee's recommended 6% we should safely obtain \$1,000.00 just in time to make the \$1000.00 payment to our pensioner. But wait, we only have \$870.00 in our pension kitty and not the \$890 that must be invested. We need to add another \$20.00 to bring it up to \$890. Our micro pension plan has a deficit! And the amount of the deficit is \$20.00.

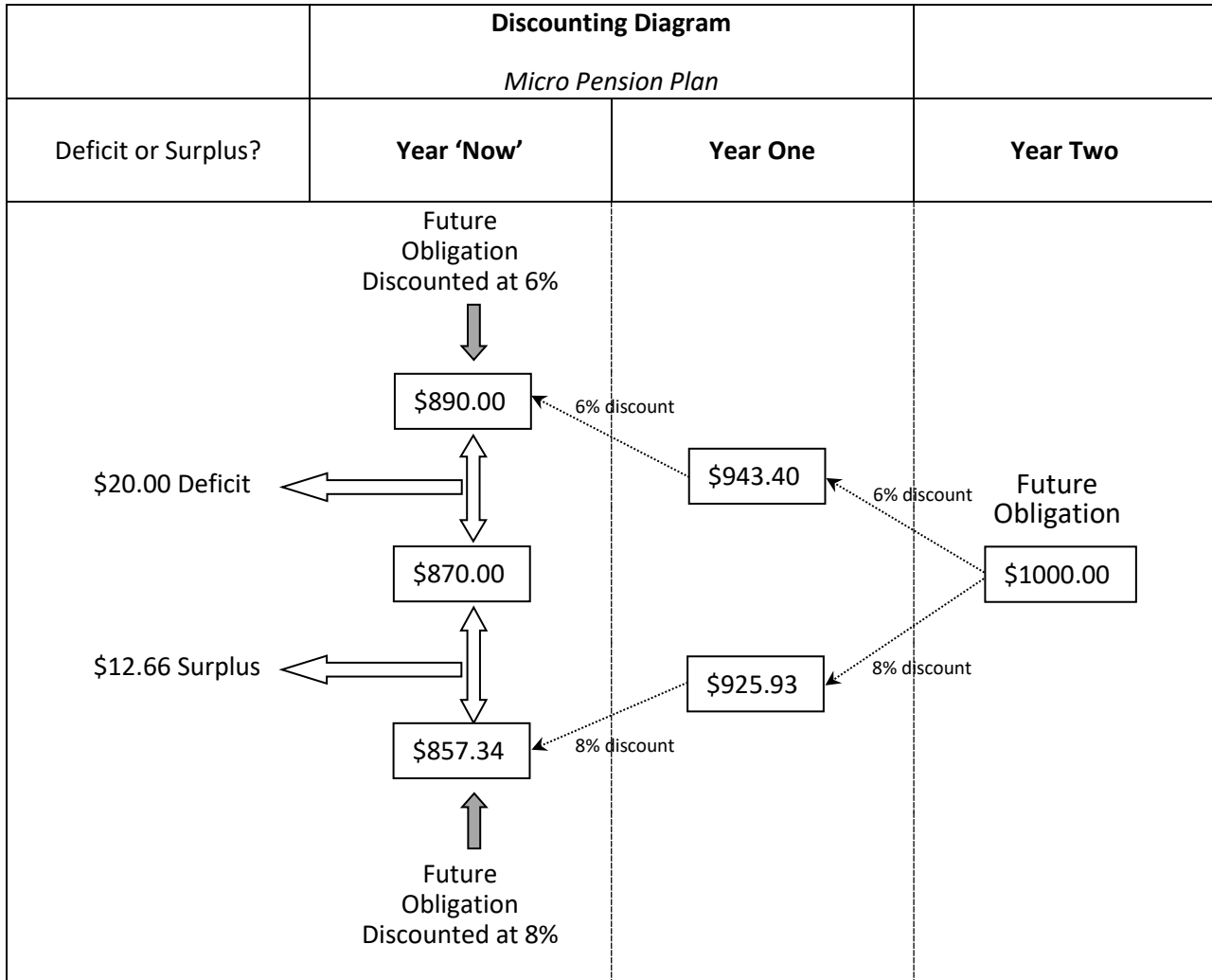
Had our advisory committee concluded that an 8% return could be safely realized from investing the plan's funds then (as seen in the lower path of the "Discounting Diagram") a very different, much happier, outcome would have resulted: a \$12.66 surplus and along with that could come the prospect of benefit improvements.

continued on page 7

Pension Discounting, continued

Some of you may wonder if there's a discount rate that balances what's currently in the pension kitty with the future obligation to our pensioner. There is! It's 7.2% which, somewhat

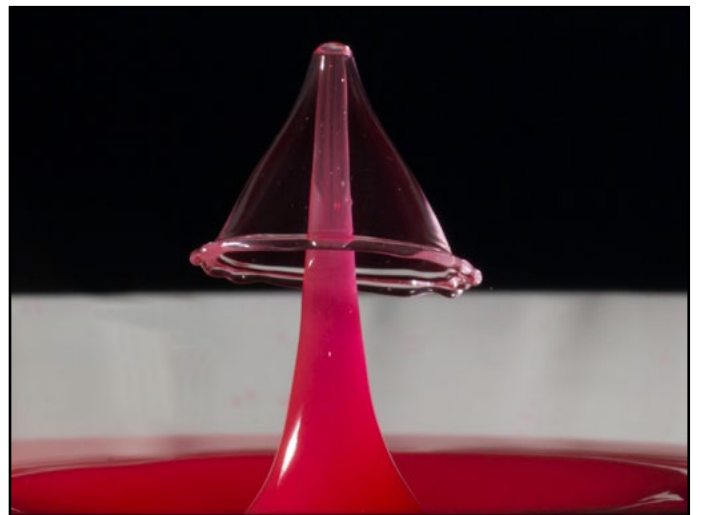
coincidentally, is approximately the rate of return needed on the \$1.6 billion currently held by the MUN Pension Plan (the kitty) to eliminate its \$250-ish million deficit and meet all its financial obligations to our 2,400 or so pensioners and survivors every year into the foreseeable future.



From the Shutterbug Club

A shot taken with a flash duration of 1/25,000th of a second. It shows what happens when a drop of water falls into a liquid, makes a splash, and rebounds, forming a column. As the column reaches its peak, another drop falls and collides with the top of the column. This shot shows the column punching its way through the second drop, just before it pierces it. An example of the camera catching something that is invisible to the naked eye.

Photo: Mike Wilshire



Activities

MUNPA's Craft Group Going Strong

MUNPA's Craft Group is getting bigger. We have 23 registered. Not everyone makes it every week; some only make it a couple of times a year. The ladies enjoy the two hour get together for whatever they would like to do -- crochet, knit, rugs, quilts or sewing. A couple of times a year we make cards or do other projects. If someone has an idea of something they would like to try, we are always up for the challenge. Sometimes it's just a two-hour talk session with coffee and great friends. As one would say, the door is always open to anyone who wants to join us. If you have questions, just drop us an email to Liz Stanford (stanford@mun.ca) or Linda Kirby (Linda.Kirby@med.mun.ca). No obligation. Here are some photos of work our members have produced.

Barb Cox's rug



Our pots



Doreen Kane's quilt

