The YUSA Times Volume 1, Issue 3

The YUSA Times

York Story Contest Submissions & Winners

On behalf of the Communications Committee we would like to extend a warm thank you to the membership for their York story article contributions!

As YUSA's 40th anniversary approaches let us not forget the dedication and hard work it took to get us where we are today and the challenges we shall face tomorrow. It is absolutely imperative for the membership at large to get involved, take an active role in shaping YUSAPUY to meet the future goals and challenges. **Let your voices be heard!**

By: Karen Reid & Joy Raymond

First Prize Winner: Laura Tortorelli! ($100)

In honour of YUSA's 40th anniversary, I was thinking back to when I was first hired at York in the late 1980s. I had just completed my BA in Psychology, which I had started in February four years earlier, when the University offered a winter-summer session for incoming first year students. While I was overwhelmed by the size of the campus, I felt at home here right from the start. Between my second and third years as a student, I was hired as a summer vacation replacement in the then Division of Humanities, and in the Department of Maintenance and Utilities the following summer. It was at that time that I decided that this was where I wanted to work on a permanent basis upon graduation.

That first assignment was a contract position with Recreation York, filling in for a staff member away on maternity leave. I was so excited! The contract started in the spring, giving me the opportunity to attend my first YUSA picnic, held at Earl Bales Park at Bathurst and Sheppard. And while I have many good memories about the subsequent years here, attending that event as a newly-minted YUSA member remains one of the fondest recollections I have.

The University has certainly changed over the past almost 30 years that I have been here as both a student and as an employee. The winter-summer session for first year students was phased out, the Temporary Office Building finally lived up to its name and has been replaced by a new state of the art stadium, many new buildings have been added to the landscape, and we now eagerly anticipate the completion of the subway to our campus.

However, some things have not changed. York still feels like a second home to me. And I am grateful for the friendships I have made here over the years, and for the opportunity to work here.

Happy anniversary YUSA and thanks for the memories!

YORK UNIVERSITY STAFF ASSOCIATION
YUSA
ASSOCIATION DU PERSONNEL DE L'UNIVERSITÉ YORK

Coming Down the Line

Important Dates:

- ✓Mindfulness Mediation Location: 103 Behavioural Science Building, Keele campus (Sep. 30th, 2015 to Dec 2nd, 2015)
- ✓Staff Bible Study Location: Scott Religious Centre, 144 Central Square (Oct. 3rd to Dec. 31st, 2015)
- ✓**Annual General Membership Meeting (Oct.29th, 2015)**
- ✓Fall Convocation (October 14th, 15th & 16th, 2015)
- ✓York University Wind Symphony Orchestra Location: Accolade East Building . Admission: $5 (Nov. 5th, 2015) from 7:30pm to 8:30pm
- ✓Understanding & Appreciating Myself & Others Workshop from 1pm-4pm (Nov. 10, 2015.) (Enneagram) (SDENEA) Register online

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Second Prize Winner: Debbie Lee Keltz! ($75)

My name is Debbie Keltz-Wolk and I've been working at York University for over 25 years now. I started working in the York Enquiries Service stuffing envelopes with information for new incoming students. Back then we were called casual workers and we weren't unionized and had very little in the way of rights or protection. Shortly thereafter, I moved to Atkinson College and was welcomed to the Sociology Department where I would stay for many years, first as a casual and then later on as a permanent full-time employee until I was suddenly restructured. The group of us suddenly displaced employees eventually took York University to an arbitrator/court for wrongful dismissal as our jobs and the work had not disappeared as management had claimed. The next casual employees had taken our place with no benefits and lower pay. I, along with my fellow laid off co-workers, helped to lay the framework for what is now YUTA. I guess you could say we were all part of this union's history. We just didn't know it back then.

I want to wish YUSA a very happy Anniversary and am happy to be part of the history of this union. Keep up the good fight!

Third Prize Winner: Patricia A Gagliardi-Ursua! ($25)

I know that my entry is short but I wanted to let people know that even though sometimes we all want to shake someone (but we don't) or we want to throw our computers out the window (but again we don't), this place we all work for has quite possibly had the biggest impact on my adult life (scary I know but in reality oh so incredibly true!!). Please see my entry below:

I have always known that I wanted to work at York since I was a student here back in the '90s. It seems that this place has become such an important part of my life … I met my husband here, earned a degree and have made lasting relationships with some of the most amazing people I could've imagined (and have been lucky enough to maintain those friendships even though people have moved all over the world -- Skype and Facebook are wonderful for keeping in touch!!).

3 years ago I had a health "wake-up" call and started going to the fitness classes offered by YUSA. I felt so uncoordinated in the first few classes but then I just kept hearing the instructor telling the class "just move … who cares if you mess up the step!!" AND it was in those moments that I realized I was having fun!! Being healthy and fit is something I wanted and the fitness classes (which I am ALLOWED to go to on my lunch because I have such an amazing and supportive team I work with) were one of the first steps in changing my lifestyle. Now I am 50+ lbs lighter and so much stronger in mind and body. I am now the one encouraging the people in my life that want to get healthier – we are all on this fitness journey together.

This awesome helpful environment that I am so lucky to work in, has given me some of the most essential tools I need to maintain this healthy lifestyle. Thank you.

Past YUSA Times Contest Winner

Congratulations Rodney Chan!

Winner of $25 VISA gift card. It was a pleasure to meet and surprise Rodney on Wednesday, June 3rd. Rodney works in the Steacie Science & Engineering Building as an Enterprise Data Warehouse Analyst.
Rodney was quite surprised when he finally came to meet us and was presented with his gift card. He couldn't believe his luck!
Rodney was the selected winner from many correct entries.

Q. What is YUSA's Anniversary Date?
A. December 10, 1975
Q. How old will YUSA be as of January 1, 2016?
A. 40 Years Old

If you don't play you can't win!.

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Honorable Mentions: Edward Fernandez!

A true life story that happened to me during my 2nd year (2006) of work at YorkU and in Canada which I can never forget

It was a cold and dreary winter morning coming into YorkU for work at 7.30am while passing the Winters building when I encountered a group of six Caucasian men who were smoking outside the Founders loading dock. This was my daily route into my workplace in the Founders building at that time. I was a two year old (new) immigrant at that time and from where I come it does not snow but it is Hot, Sunny and Tropical.

Trudging through the snow and lost in thought thinking of my 3 kids having to adjust to a completely different way-of-life in a strange land and my wife jumping from one temp job to another, just so that we could have food on the table, a roof over our heads and a place to call home. I was only thinking of completing my day and going home to comfort my family, when one of the men suddenly called out to me - ***" Hey You - Come here !! "***, I looked up & around me realizing that there was no one else around, but me, in their line of sight. So I very apprehensively trudged across to the group and wished them " A Good morning " with a smile on my face.

I was shocked into complete numbness when the guy who called out to me, told me.....
Hey You - If I punch you in your (f)ining(sic) face - You will become a Black Dot in the snow !!!!!!!

I reacted quickly in the only way I knew, by retorting .....
Hey You - If I sock you in your handsome face - You will not be seen in the snow !!!!!!!

"Time stood still" !!!
The entire group stopped whatever they were doing and there was pin drop silence for a few seconds, no smoke in the air, no inhaling, no puff's..... at which point I went up to the guy who acted smart and asked him if he wished to scale things up a bit and face the repercussions. ***At this point the entire group laughed and apologized for the smart-ass comment and said that he was only joking.....***

The incident ended with me jokingly accepting the apology BUT I did tell them that jokes are never meant to hurt people and that just below our skin color there is Red Blood flowing all-the-way.

My Pan-Am and Para Pan-Am Experience.

Exhilaration! Excitement! Anticipation! Those were the feelings I had when I first received the email that I would be one of the 23,000 volunteers chosen for the Pan American and Para-Pan American Games to be held in Toronto, the summer of 2015.

I signed in to my volunteer portal to see what exactly I was going to be doing for the Games. Then my stomach dropped...I was going to be a T3 systems driver for both Games! What on earth was that all about! I was terrified. I was going to be part of an executive on-demand service where I would pick up and drop off domestic, international and VIP clients at any of the competition or non-competition venues, hotels and airport. WHAT?!? None of this made sense. I wanted to be at a venue, not driving around in a car. I thought about taking my name off of the list but I am not a quitter!

Thankfully, I took this challenge and embraced it. This was going to be a super awesome task, and I was right. Being a driver gave me the freedom to go to venues and see competitions that I normally would not have if I was at one specific venue. I got to see beach volleyball at PAP and goalball (amazing!)at MIS. I saw trampoline and equestrian events. I got to drive around and talk to amazing people from all over the world. I met awesome volunteers; got to explore Pan Am Park and touch both sets of medals; go into the Pan Am Village store and the highlight - meet Pachi! People said to me, "you are crazy to use your vacation to volunteer at the Pan Am & Para Pan Am Games", but I wouldn't trade it for anything. The athletes, coaches, and officials and most importantly the volunteers are what made these games what they were. I had the privilege of working with many people who gave their time, sweat and sometimes tears, and it was all worth it. Thank you, Merci, Gracias!

Submitted by: Scarlett Farquhar!

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FROM THE 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT

"Thirty thousand a year was all right, but dyspepsia and inability to be humanly happy robbed such princely income of all its value."— Jack London

The hiring freeze in LA&PS, job closures and the employer's pursuit of "efficiencies" across campus have kept us all extremely busy in the Union office. Giulio with the resulting arbitrations; Mike with the TRT issues and I with a recognizable increase in the number of significant change requests, temporary assignment of duties and changes to employment categories and sessional leaves.

The importance of having a job summary that accurately reflects your duties is paramount. It is only with good job information that the Joint Job Evaluation Committee can properly evaluate your jobs. Many of the new standardized job descriptions use very vague language. The drawback to a vaguely written Job Summary is that it is difficult to demonstrate significant change, especially around duties that have been altered and are now performed at a higher level. This did not happen by accident. It is an effort to minimize the value of our bargaining unit work.

There are a number of steps we can take to ensure our job evaluation system and our work is not devalued.

1. When completing your request for significant change form, ensure there is enough detail to illustrate how your job has changed. Especially, if there is even the smallest reference to the duty in your current job summary. The main arguments managers are using to deny change has taken place is that the task is already in the Job Summary. To counter this objection, explain how the duties have been altered. If your manager says it is only volume, contact the union office. While volume itself cannot be evaluated, it may impact upon other aspects of your job.

2. Include all the relevant information so that the Job-E raters are presented with a clear understanding of what is done and how it is done. Refer to the Glossary of Active Verbs on the Pay Equity Commission website. http://www.payequity.gov.on.ca/en/resources/gloss_verbs.php to help describe your duties and use relevant well-written examples to support your choices.

3. Familiarize yourself with Article 14. This article sets out the procedures for initiating and completing the job evaluation process.

4. If you have any questions or concerns around Job Evaluation, contact the Union Office. Job evaluation is a complicated and time-consuming process and we have highly skilled raters that will be able to help you. We are here to support you through all stages of the process.

In pursuit of "enhanced organizational effectiveness" many departments are now understaffed, resulting in increased workloads, leading to stress, anxiety and poor physical and mental health. I want to emphasize again the importance of taking your breaks and your lunch hours. You are entitled to exercise these rights each and every day. This does not make you a bad employee. This does not diminish the level of commitment to your job, the faculty or to the students. It is an investment in your own health and well-being.

We recognize the uncertainties that many of you are facing, and it is as important now, as it has ever been before, to support each other in all our dealings while at work.

Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a harder battle. (Plato)

Every day, try to help someone who can't reciprocate your kindness. (John Wooden, college basketball coach)

In solidarity,

SANDY BELL

Let Your Voice Be Heard!

The Communications Committee is putting out a call for article submissions for the next newsletter.

Please email your submission to:

yusatimes@gmail.com

YUSAPUY

The Annual General Membership Meeting

Thursday, October 29, 2015

12:00pm to – 2:00pm

Location: Lassonde A521 (B208 overflow)

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From the 2nd Vice-President

The past year has certainly been an exceptionally busy one. There continues to be an ever increasing workload that we have to deal with on a daily basis. Due to this, I feel obligated to remind everyone of the importance of taking their breaks and lunch hour. The extended bargaining and all of the anxiety that went along with that process has, I believe, had an effect on all YUSA unit 1 members. I would like to thank everyone who came out to the open forums and ratification vote to show their support for YUSA and our bargaining team. Note that your Collective Agreement should go off for printing shortly.

As I write this report the summer vacation season is coming to an end. We have had some great days for taking walks and I hope that everyone who has built up their vacation credits has taken the opportunity to use some of that time to relax and recharge before the start of the fall term.

In regards to your vacation and other credits, there have been many YUSA members who have contacted me about their ongoing TRT (Time Reporting Tool) issues. Often we have been able to help sort out these issues with the employer making manual manipulations of the TRT. I did inform the employer last year that all part-time unit 1 members accruals were not being calculated properly. These incorrect calculations went back to August 2012 with the inception of the TRT. The employer had to reprogram sections of the TRT over many months to fix these errors. I also know that there are other issues in the TRT separate from the part-time issue. I suggest that all members keep track of their balances and time off independent of the TRT. To help with this, I have included on the YUSA website an Excel spreadsheet and a document on 'How to Use the Automated Time Sheet'. See the following webpage:

http://yusapuy.ca/members/

This spreadsheet is similar to what YUSA members used prior to the implementation of the TRT. I further suggest that all members print out or take screen shots of their balances on a regular basis. You should ensure that the TRT balances are the same as the balances you track using the above spreadsheet or other means. If you believe that the TRT might not be calculating your vacation, personal, or sick credits properly or if you have other TRT issues please contact me at the Union office.

Finally, if you can, try and attend some of the many exciting attractions and events available in and around the GTA. Whether it be attending a Blue Jays game or by taking advantage of a discount for an attraction through the YUSA website rewards program, I hope everyone is having a great summer! Enjoy!

Michael Belanger

Ten reasons to be a YUSA Steward

It gives you the tools you need to help your co-workers and yourself.
It allows you to build a healthier and more democratic workplace.
It gives you the ability to protect and defend your rights in the workplace.
It is healthier than complaining.
It is a good way to learn more and gain confidence
It can be a lot of fun.
It is one of the best ways of staying informed.
It is an opportunity to build new skills and practice old ones.
It is an opportunity to work with others on a whole range of work related issues – pensions, job evaluation, pay equity, social engagement, bargaining, health and safety, etc.
It is an opportunity to make a difference

If you are interested in becoming a YUSA Steward, send an email to Sylvia Bosch-Karas the Steward Coordinator at:
sbkaras@yorku.ca

Contributions & Comments

If you want to have your say, or have questions, contact us.
Si vous voulez avoir votre mot à dire, ou avez des ques- tions, contactez-nous!

Email/Courriel: yusatimes@gmail.com

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Reflection!

Many years ago when Jim Streb was YUSA President, I helped coordinate a fund raising event for the United Way. Our goal was to raise $4000. If we were successful, Jim Streb agreed to have his head shaved bald, in front of everyone, in the Ross Bear Pit.

To advertise the event, we made posters showing Streb with and without hair, similar to the FBI type "FUGITIVE WANTED" posters (before Photoshop, but still looked pretty good). We plastered the campus with the posters to advertise the event.

On the day of, I presented Streb with a ceremonial toque - it was all good fun, tongue in cheek humour!
Things were going along pretty good, we were raising money, but we had a time limit, and we were getting down to the wire. We were all starting to get worried that we would not reach our goal, or get to rub Jim's bald head for luck!!

When, in the last few minutes of the "show", Gary Brewer strolls in and asks how much money is needed to get to $4000? It was a few years ago, I cannot remember the amount, but whatever it was, he paid it!! We could not believe it! We were elated! Everyone was clapping and cheering.

Jim looked a bit nervous!! I believe he thought we would never raise that much money??

Then we had one of the hair stylists from the salon on campus come in with her clippers and shave off Jim's hair, much to his chagrin! It was a great moment for YUSA and the United Way!!

Submitted by: Dawn Burns

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet... He held up a sign which said: '**I am blind, please help**.' There were only a few coins in the hat.

A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, 'Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?'

The man said, 'I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way.'
What he had written was: '**Today is a beautiful day and I cannot see it.**'

Do you think the first sign and the second sign were saying the same thing?

Of course both signs told people the boy was blind. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people they were so lucky that they were not blind. Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective?

Moral of the story: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative . Be innovative . Think differently and positively.

Invite others towards good with wisdom. Live life with no excuse and love with no regrets. When life gives you a 100 reasons to cry, show life that you have 1000 reasons to smile. Face your past without regret. Handle your present with confidence. Prepare for the future without fear. Keep the faith and drop the fear.

Great men say, 'Life has to be an incessant process of repair and reconstruction, of discarding evil and developing goodness…. In the journey of life, if you want to travel without fear, you must have the ticket of a good conscience.'

The most beautiful thing is to see a person smiling…
And even more beautiful is, knowing that you are the reason behind it!!!

Submitted by: Joylyn Bogle

YUSA Life Lessons

"Do not Let the Behavior of others destroy our inner peace"

Dalai Lama

"Don't be afraid of change. You may end up losing something good but you will probably end up gaining something better"

Unknown