

# EG



Exempt  
Group

# UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

## EXEMPT EXPRESS

### MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

*Joan Knox*

#### OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW

So how was your 2008? Do you look back on it with joy or regret? Or a little of each? Are you heading into 2009 with anticipation or anxiety? It has been said that an optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in, while the pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves. Whatever your reason for staying up, on behalf of the executive we extend every good wish to each of you.

I realize that a New Year's resolution is typically something that "goes in one year and out the other" (pardon the pun!), but that doesn't stop a great many people from making them. In fact, statistics show that almost half, a full 46 percent of people, say they will make a resolution this year, with the number one goal to lose weight. (And to be honest, after eating all I ate over the holidays that one sounds like a pretty good one to me.) While none of us knows what the future holds - we expect from all the reports we are hearing it is going to be a difficult year. A few of my own thoughts on how to cope more effectively in 2009 would include:

#### EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN!

Learning something new-a different language, topic or skill is a great way to increase those lagging brain cells. So are activities such as reading, and also interacting in positive stimulating conversation. (Try and avoid constant negativity as it will only pull you down.)

#### SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Let go of those activities and relationships that drain too much of your time, energy and resources. De-clutter your surroundings and streamline your activities.

#### DEVELOP A HEALTHY ATTITUDE

Worry less. Don't fret over minor things remember the saying "Don't cry over split milk!" Look for the humorous side of life. Remember to be thankful for ALL that we take for granted-including basic necessities such as clean water, nutritious food, medical care, warm clothes and educational opportunities.

January 2009

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

*Julie Hutchins*

Welcome Back! Hopefully you had a restful, healthy and safe holiday season. It amazes me that people either found the break too long or they could have used another week off. Our lives are just so hectic that even the holidays can be stressful trying to get last minute things done and then visiting family and friends before and after. 23 Exempt staff have been fortunate to receive the latest buyout. If you were able to take advantage of this, congratulations! For those of us left, hopefully there will be buyouts closer to when we want to retire!

I wanted to share some Frequently Asked Questions that came up as a result of our latest negotiations:

## **When I have a problem who should I contact?**

We have two grievance officers, Mike Hollingshead, who is located at Ponsonby Research Station. His phone number is 519-822-2910. The other is Vikki Tremblay located at Alumni Affairs and her extension is 56544. Both are qualified and knowledgeable. The choice is yours as to who you feel most comfortable talking with.

## **How many hours do we get off for Doctor's appointments?**

We now have 2 hours off for Doctor's appointments. Please try to book your appointments as late in the day as possible. These are appointments for YOU, NOT YOUR FAMILY.

## **What is PPL and do I get it?**

If you are a regular full time employee you are entitled to Paid Personal Leave. If you work a 35 hour work week you are entitled to 21 hours per calendar year. If you work a 40 hour work week then you are entitled to 24 hours per calendar year. A few reasons for using PPL would be for taking family members to appointments, emergency situations, appointments other than doctors, religious holidays, funerals other than direct family members. For a complete list please check the HR website.

PPL is also available to temporary full time staff if they have been continuously employed in excess of 36 months without a break in employment, then they are entitled to 7 hours of PPL in a calendar year.

## **Did we receive any extra vacation days?**

We did receive "additional days" off with pay during the December/January Holidays to coincide with the University's closure and to provide employees with uninterrupted time off. For 2008/09 holiday season this day occurred on Jan 2, 2009. You will be notified later in the year as to what day this will be for 2009/10 holiday season.

## **If I am a temporary full time employee and have been doing the same job for 24 months will I automatically get the job?**

When the job is posted (normally within 3 months) the temporary full time incumbent will be given first level of consideration for purposes of that particular posting only.

**If I develop a chronic problem, will I run out of sick time?**

If you provide medical evidence from your physician to Occupational Health confirming that you have a chronic medical illness or disease and it is not a long term disability claim you shall have your 60 paid sick days renewed annually.

**Will any of my benefits be cut?**

During the life of this agreement, May 1, 2008-Apr 30, 2010 there will be no changes to your benefits. They will remain as is.

**What happens if my position is made redundant?**

You may elect to receive an enhanced voluntary termination payment in lieu of notice with 15 days of notification equal to 1 month of pay per year of service to a maximum of 15 months, plus 1 week of pay for each additional year of service beyond 15 years to a maximum of 18 months. Should you elect to receive this payment you relinquish all right under this procedure and are considered terminated. This agreement does not remain available beyond the 15 day period. You may elect to bump into another job instead of taking the buyout if you choose.

**Were there any changes to shift premiums?**

An increase of \$0.05 across all shifts.

**Did we receive a wage increase?**

All employees at Level 6 (190 Exempt staff) will move to level 7. This is a 4% pay increase retroactive to May 1, 2008. This retroactive pay was paid out on the pay of Dec 24, 2008. All other staff will receive a 3% base increase not to exceed the band maximum with any residual paid as a lump sum. All employees above band maximum will receive a 3% lump sum one time payment. There is no increase to the grid.

Effective May 1, 2009 3% base increase. Employees who are currently above the maximum of their salary band will receive a 3% lump sum one time payment.

**Were there any pension changes?**

For new employees only: 10 year continuous service is required to be eligible for post retirement benefits upon drawing a pension from the university.

**What is the Enrichment Fund and how can I get it?**

If you are a regular full time employee you are eligible to apply for the Enrichment Fund. The maximum amount you can receive is \$500.00 in a fiscal year (May 1-Apr 30). Applications can be found on our website at: [www.uoguelph.ca/~exempt/](http://www.uoguelph.ca/~exempt/) You must fill out the form and submit it to Julie Hutchins, Student Housing Services and include an original receipt for the item you have purchased. Original receipts can be returned if requested at the time of submission for warranty purposes. Some acceptable items are computers and their software and hardware, courses applicable to your job or upgrading skills to get a better job, conference registrations (that are not covered by your department). Digital cameras and cell phones and any other electronic equipment to make your job easier. Large items can be covered over more than one fiscal year if it is within the negotiated term. A new application must be submitted each year. The funds are limited so they are available on a first come first served basis.

**What does a two year term mean?**

In previous years the Exempt Group has always negotiated after Steelworkers 4120 because they are a registered union and therefore have resources available to negotiate a stronger agreement. The University has had substantial budgetary problems over the last several months and therefore we could only negotiate a two year agreement. This means that we will be negotiating again in 2010, one year ahead of Steelworkers. Therefore we will no longer be on the same playing field.

Over the next two years your comments and suggestions will be crucial as to how the Exempt Group functions and negotiates its next agreement. We have already been told that benefits will be on the table. Your current executive is up for election in April 2009. Please think carefully about helping out with your future and electing Exempt staff who you can help pave your way to a healthy and prosperous future.

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**INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS!**  
*On - campus Employees*

|              |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| Liz Snyder   | Agrifood and Partnerships |
| Monica McKay | Integrative Biology       |

*Off - campus Employees*

|                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Nicole Maisonneuve | Alfred College           |
| Keith VanDyk       | Arkell Swine             |
| Thomas McLean      | Kemptville College       |
| Ken St. Denis      | Alfred College           |
| Adriana Vriens     | OMAFRA Research Stations |
| Jason Smith        | Simcoe                   |
| Mary Ashby         | Kemptville College       |

*Welcome Aboard!*

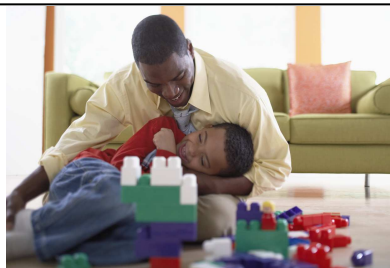
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***Dates to Remember***

**Family Day - February 16, 2009**

**Reading Week - Feb 16 - Feb 20**

**March Break - March 16 - March 20**



## ALL THINGS CONSIDERED....

By Mike Hollingshead

“I heard that you’re retiring....”. It came out more like a question than a statement of fact and seemed to beg for a response. I explained that I had applied under the recent early retirement program and my request had been approved with an exit date next year. Although I have enjoyed my work over the years with my department and been happy to contribute to my fellow employees through work with the pension committee, job evaluations and Exempt Group executive, I felt that it was time to allot more hours to other facets of my life. A study of actuarial tables was indicating to me that while each additional year of work would add about 3% to my pension cheque, it debited my lifespan by a similar amount of time (if the actuaries can be believed). I knew that while my consumption patterns over the years can be controlled to some extent, I couldn’t buy time. I’m of the opinion that if you can leave with an “unreduced” pension (not to be confused with a “full pension”) it represents an opportunity. “But, I love my work”, people respond. I agree and don’t deny their sincerity, but I have a lot of interests and hobbies that are crying out for equity.

Over the next 15 months I plan to continue to give 110% to my work. There are still lots of things I would like to accomplish before handing everything over to those that remain. I am hoping that life doesn’t proceed like those speed-walks at the airport. It’s a little too fast to do a proper job of analysis and solution and that abrupt slowdown at the end can destabilize you if you’re not careful.

In terms of my Exempt Group duties, I am open for business! If you are experiencing “personality” problems in your workplace, if you feel that you may be missing things that others are receiving, if you feel that you didn’t receive consideration for job enhancement or if you are doing much more than your current job fact sheet describes, I need to hear from you. Maybe you’re not one of those that loves their work? I am pleased to say that, in my opinion, the Exempt Group’s ability to work with Employee Relations has rarely been better. My hat goes off to the folks in HR that have been stretched by workloads resulting from all the agreements recently signed with the employee groups. Perhaps in tough economic times it becomes even more important to try to attain a higher morale among employees. I like to think that our major contribution to the University of Guelph is to ensure the happiness and well-being of its workforce. Please feel free to call when you need assistance.

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### *Enrichment Funds Available*

Please see our website at: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~exempt/> for the criteria and application forms to apply for the enrichment fund.

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*Wrinkled was not one of the things I wanted to be when I grew up.*

**The Stress Management  
and  
High Performance Clinic  
Presents  
the  
Following Programs !**

**Relaxation “BOOSTER”**

4 refresher classes  
for former participants  
**begins January 21**  
Call the Stress Management Clinic  
at 519 824-4120, ext. 52662 or visit  
[www.uoguelph.ca/~ksomers](http://www.uoguelph.ca/~ksomers)

*Being “over the hill”  
is much better than  
being under it.*

**STOP Worrying !**

**Learn how to curb unproductive worries**

**February 25**

Call the Stress Management Clinic  
at 519 824-4120, ext. 52662 or visit  
[www.uoguelph.ca/~ksomers](http://www.uoguelph.ca/~ksomers)

*Ham and eggs....  
a day’s work  
for a chicken,  
a lifetime  
commitment  
for a pig.*

**Managing Headaches**

A 4 session program  
for decreasing stress-related  
tension and migraine headaches  
**begins March 4**  
Call the Stress Management Clinic  
at 519 824-4120, ext. 52662 or visit  
[www.uoguelph.ca/~ksomers](http://www.uoguelph.ca/~ksomers)

## **Our first “Festive Season” luncheon for the Exempt Group!**

December 16<sup>th</sup> was our first annual “Festive Season” luncheon held in the University Centre Room 103. It was well attended. This was open to “dues-paying members” only.

We were able to provide some music – a jazz quartet headed by Steve Sladkowski (guitar), Andrew Liorti (keyboard), Dan Monich (drums and percussion) and Dylan White (bass). This group hails from the School of Fine Art and Music. Our thanks to all of them for entertaining us.

We also had a visitor from the North Pole who helped us pick out some door prize winners.

Many people complimented us for this new initiative and hoped that we would continue to do this in the future.

On the same day as our luncheon, we also provided to the regional campuses of Alfred, New Liskeard, Kemptville, Vineland, Simcoe and Ridgetown, a basket of goodies, since they were not able to join us due to distance. This too, was well received.

We truly hope that we can continue to provide our members with this type of event in order for people to socialize and get to know one another.

We appreciate your feedback on this event and we thank you for attending.

Our very best wishes to all members in 2009!

Submitted by Toni Pellizzari, Treasurer and Vice-Chair  
Exempt Group

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## **FOR YOUR READING ENJOYMENT**

Over the holiday's I read a great little book titled Who Moved My Cheese? written by Spencer Johnson, M.D. author of The One Minute Manager.

It is a short, humorous look at ways to deal with change at work and in our lives. It is a story of four characters who live in a maze and look for cheese to nourish them and make them happy. Two are mice named Sniff and Scurry and two are little people the size of mice named Hem and Haw. Cheese is a metaphor for what we want to have in life and the maze is where we look for it.

In the story, the characters are faced with unexpected change.....  
It is available at Chapters, maybe even at the library.

If you have read a good book send your comments along and I will include it in the next newsletter

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## EXEMPT EXPRESS

### NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

**February 4, 12:00 noon**  
at Alumni House

**Exempt Office**  
Room 208, Federal Building,  
620 Gordon Street  
Ext. 52982

**E-mail: [exempt@uoguelph.ca](mailto:exempt@uoguelph.ca)**

If you have any concerns or comments that you would like brought forward, please contact one of the Executive members.

Exempt members are invited to attend and view any Executive meeting but they will not have speaking privileges.

**Check out our website at:**  
<http://www.uoguelph.ca/~exempt/>

**Our Memorandum of Agreement (January 2006), Constitution (February 2006)  
and  
Enrichment Fund details/Application Form are located on this website.**

**The Exempt Express is available on our website, after dues-paying members have received their copy.**

#### **Secretarial:**

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#### **NEWSLETTER**

Only dues-paying members receive a copy of the Newsletter. Important messages will be sent out via e-mail/mail to all of our members.



**Ext. 52982**

*Your calls are important*