

RALU NEWS



August 2010

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Report on the 2010 College and University Retirees Association of Canada (CURAC) Annual Conference

The theme of the 2010 CURAC national conference held at York University in May, was "Pensions and Benefits... and Beyond". On the pensions side, Harry Arthurs, former president of York University and author of the Report of the Ontario Expert Commission on Pensions, gave a presentation which helped to fit university pension plans into the broader pension picture and Hrvoje Lakota of Mercer (Canada) Ltd. spoke about the impact of market turmoil on university pension plans. Both seemed to agree that overall the Canadian pension system compares well with those in other parts of the world, while university pensions are generally good compared with plans in private industry. Not everything in the pension garden is rosy, however. Issues that need to be addressed include questions of underfunding, solvency evaluation, the number and size of pension plans, deficiencies in plan administration or design and limits to contribution holidays. As one possible solution to the issue of the large number of university pension plans and their small size it was suggested that universities might try to combine plans up to the provincial level as is done, for example in the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan or the Ontario Colleges Retirees Association. Neither speaker presented easy solutions, but both emphasised that current and future retirees should try to develop some expertise in the provisions and working of their particular plan.

Another area in which pensioners need to educate themselves is in the need for benefits and insurance – find out what you need – find out what is available. As Lakehead retirees who subscribed to the previous university plan know well, that is not always easy, but, as presentations from Waterloo Insurance and the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan emphasised, you must know what you need, obtain reasonable coverage based on such things as health, budget and lifestyle, and, most importantly, make sure you understand that coverage. Apart from what can be purchased through a benefit or insurance plan, it is also important to find out what

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may be available through provincial or other government plans.

The "...and Beyond" part of the conference dealt with such things as keeping active – both mentally and physically. Activities discussed included volunteer work such as student mentoring, working in museums and art galleries, helping at food banks and working overseas with development organizations or NGOs. Many conference participants continued with post-retirement teaching, research and supervision and discussion revealed that more would do so if universities were willing to accept them and provide reasonable remuneration and facilities. Across the country, the relationship between universities and their retirees seems to be quite variable. Some universities obviously see the benefits of a good relationship, beginning with help with retirement planning and followed by the provision of facilities and/or funding for their retirees. A presentation by Janette Brown of the U.S. Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education suggested that the relationship is generally better there, with institutions making good use of the enthusiasm and expertise of their retirees. According to Peter Russell that seems to be the case at the University of Toronto as well where the university has provided facilities and funding for the Academic Retiree Centre. On the other hand there are universities that seem to be quite glad to see the retirees go. However, as John Meyer, a University of Windsor retiree, pointed out, that situation can be changed with hard work and persistence, but, even at institutions with well-established retiree organizations, representatives stressed the need for a high level of pro-activity and constant vigilance.

David Kemp

Message from the President of RALU

It is amazing how quickly the year flies by. Our new year begins on September 1st, and as you will read below, the Program Committee is starting events with a supper meeting on Wednesday September 29th at the Portside Dining Room in the Prince Arthur Hotel. Please join us there. The Nominations Committee has done its work and will present a slate of new officers and committee members, so you will not be press-ganged into working for RALU. It is also membership renewal time, which is stressful for any organization. Since placing a cheque in an envelope and mailing it is quite a rare occurrence in these days of electronic billing, RALU is offering a three (3) year individual membership for \$25, even if dues should for some reason be increased over the next three years (*and if you*

respond within the next 24 hours we will include a surprise gift and a voucher foroh, that sounds familiar). The alternative remains \$10 a year.

We in RALU will be working to improve relationships with CURAC and LU under the new president, whom we hope will have a more enlightened attitude towards those who built the institution over the years. Dave has also written a piece on the plant hunters of the province of Yunnan, China. You will find an item on the LU "Relief Funding Package" which all LU pensioners will have received by now. As the item shows, we, as pensioners, have every reasonable interest in seeing the LU Pension Plan fully funded as soon as possible so that our current 'fixed incomes' can be upgraded with an annual increment. However, our numbers are less than one third of those in the plan even should we all choose to return an objection form. I have queried LU Human Resources concerning the scant nineteen days permitted between the date on the letter and the closing date of August 27th since section 5.7 (5).6 of the Pension Benefits Act speaks of 45 days for such a change. Apparently it was the plan actuary who advised LU of the 'three working weeks', and he should know the procedure. However, for LU pensioners abroad, the nineteen days are hardly sufficient for 'snail mail' even should they be at home and respond almost immediately. In any event, the deferment of the full funding of our pension plan for 10 years leaves many of us who are wholly dependent on the pension quietly spiraling down to a lower standard of living in the next decade. That is not at all what we expected when we committed ourselves by signing to remain in the LU pension plan. Of course, there could be a miraculous recovery of the markets, but that can hardly be counted upon. It seems to be a common theme these days that pensioners suffer first and most in tougher times that are no fault of their own.

The RALU year 2010-2011 will be my third and final year as President, and though I was very willing to help get RALU 'off the ground', my prolonged absences from Thunder Bay have not made it easy for the organization despite email. Now that our 'kids' and grandchildren have moved to Edmonton (which is very expensive for them – but they moved without asking our advice, of course. What do parents know?) Jenny and I find ourselves living in our trailer for almost six months of the year. So, it is with pleasure that I see from the nominations list that Dave Kemp has accepted the position of Vice-President, and I will hand over to capable hands in 2011-2012. We are in town long enough to run our now annual RALU Field Trip on Saturday, October 2nd, and I gather from the Program Committee that we are slated to tell you about our winter voluntary work in the Mojave Desert later this year.

A thank you to the members of the Executive and Standing Committees who have worked over the year, and a particular thanks to Clem Kent who has been Vice President since the beginning but has declined to continue after long service to the university and as prime mover in the formation of our association. He will continue to chair our ad hoc committee on supplemental health plans. Editor Ian Dew will continue to produce newsletters in the coming year. He needs everyone's help to present good information... send him a postcard; drop him a line. Well, summer was great if a little humid and signs of fall are already here. I wish you all well.

Brian Phillips

IN MEMORIAM

RALU Member Ken Morrison died peacefully at age 86 on July 29. A memorial service was held on August 10 in the Provincial Room, Prince Arthur Hotel, where three hundred or so of Ken's admirers and friends belonging to several of his communities paid their respects; heard poetry and music and sang a few of Ken's favourites, like *Solidarity Forever*. A life well lived was celebrated. Ken is perhaps best known for his social and political activism. He also helped build Lakehead University extension services in the early days. Just imagine travelling through NW Ontario (An area the size of France) in the 1960's and 1970's, sometimes in a Cessna! Ken touched us all and was a mentor to many. He was an inspiration who will live on in our hearts. The family would appreciate donations to the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, the Northern Cancer Fund or the Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship (Ken Morrison Lecture Series). Send online condolences to clio12@tbaytel.net

Ian Dew

LU Pension Plan Update

All members of the Lakehead University Pension Plan should have by now received a letter that informs members of the intent of LU, the sponsor/administrator of our Plan, to defer special payments it is obliged to make in order to make up the current deficit, and requests that members opposing the intent return an enclosed form by a certain date. Drafted by the Plan actuary, the letter may not be clearly understood by all of us. Below is an explanation provided by Jim Stafford, RALU's resident advisor on pension matters.

"The recent downturn in the markets has left many

*pension plans with significant deficits. The Ontario Pension Benefits Act requires sponsors of these plans in Ontario to make special payments over a five-year period to eliminate these deficits. The plan sponsor is allowed to stretch the period of payment to ten years if it has the tacit support of two-thirds of the members of the plan. The operative word here is 'tacit'. The sponsor cannot have the extension if **more than one-third of the plan membership opposes the extension in a formal letter**. Thus, any member of the Plan who does not submit a letter of opposition is considered to be in support of the extension.*

Lakehead University wants this extension and is mailing letters to all plan members to this effect. The extension will reduce the payments from about \$4 million per year to about \$2 million per year. If the markets recover within that period, the payments will be cancelled.

How should retired plan members respond?

The LU Pension Plan has about 750 members — 425 active, 170 inactive (employed elsewhere but left their money in the Plan) and 150 of whom are pensioners. The active membership will likely support the university's request. This is because the special payments are coming from the operating budget and Union negotiations are imminent. In fact, the LUF executive officially supports the extension.

Inactive members and pensioners may have different interests — the sooner the deficit is eliminated the sooner is the possibility that a surplus can be realized and increments can be added to pensions. However, some may support the extension for various reasons."

The RALU Executive recently discussed the letter and debated how RALU might respond. Clearly, members, who have been on a 'fixed' income for a number of years already, would like to see the deficit eliminated as soon as possible so that their incomes might be increased. However, even if we all registered our objection to the extension, our numbers do not constitute one third of the Plan membership. The Executive decided to issue this Communication and advise RALU members to express their objection or tacit approval individually. Unfortunately, we will not be seeing any increases in our pensions for many more years unless the markets do so well that a surplus is realized before all the special payments by LU are made.

The RALU Executive

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LU PENSION.

The purchasing power of our pensions in 2009 was about 87% of their purchasing power in 2002. This is because:

- for 7 years, no meaningful pension increase had been received by Pensioner members of the Lakehead University Pension Plan, and
- From 2002 to 2009, the Consumer Price Index rose by 15.5% (*Bank of Canada website*).

It now appears possible that pensioners could go without an increase for at least another 10 years, making 17 years in total without an increase. We are all receiving a letter from LU that puts the University's case. It:

- Informs pension plan members of the intent of LU, the sponsor/administrator of our Plan, to defer special payments it is obliged to contribute to make up the current fund deficit:
 - It is currently obliged to pay \$4 million per year for 5 years.
 - It wants to change this to \$2 million per year for 10 years.
 - Until the deficit is made up, there will be no pension increases.
- Requests that members opposing the intent return an enclosed form by 27th of August.

To understand what this means for retirees, we need to compare the effects on our pensions of changing \$4 million per year for 5 years into \$2 million per year for 10 years. To do that, we need to make some assumptions. We will assume, for the moment, that:

- The average Consumer Price Index will be the same from 2009 to 2019 as it has been from 2002 to 2009.
- If the University continues to pay \$4 million for 5 years, we have the same purchasing power in 2019 as we have in 2014 – because the pension increases we get from 2015 – 2019 exactly match the increases in the Consumer Price Index over the same time period.
- The market does not rise to fill some of the gap before 2019

The first two assumptions are reasonable, but projections are notoriously inaccurate, and so many variable factors are ignored in the model, but it's all we've got. Nevertheless, it is possible to demonstrate general directions and the order of the result. This report is only to aid comprehension, not

accuracy. We will address what happens if the market increases to fill some of the gap below. A model with these assumptions shows that:

- With \$4 million per year for 5 years, the purchasing power of our pensions in 2019 would be about 78% of what they were in 2002.
- With \$2 million per year for 10 years, the purchasing power of our pensions in 2019 would be about 70% of what they were in 2002.
- If our purchasing power drops from 78% to 70% of its 2002 value from 2014 to 2019, that is a drop over 5 years, **entirely due to the change the University wants to make**, of:
 - 8% of our 2002 purchasing power, but
 - 10% of our 2014 purchasing power.

If the market does increase, let's assume that the market adds an extra \$1 million per year, towards filling a \$20 million gap. Then:

- If the University continues paying \$4 million per year, the gap closes at \$5 million per year and is filled in 4 years,
- If the University cuts back to \$2 million per year, the gap closes at \$3 million per year and is filled in 7 years.

Under this assumption, reducing the University's payment to \$2 million per year therefore delays our pension increases for 3 extra years. In this case, the percentage of purchasing power we would lose would probably be less (*the sooner the gap is filled, the better for us*), but still significant.

At the same time, the University pays:

1. 4 times 4 = \$16 million when it pays \$4 million per year
2. 7 times 2 = \$14 million when it pays \$2 million per year

However, the University also gains in another way. Not only would it pay \$2 million less, inflation would decrease the value of the money at its later payments. For example, in the 3 extra years, the last payment of \$2 million will be worth only \$1.9 million in 2013 dollars.

Here are some other relevant facts that demonstrate unfairness:

- Over a third of the plan members must object for the change to be denied.

- This change seems to be in the interests of the working members and they support it.
- Of the pension plan membership, less than a third is retired.
- Therefore, any objection from the retirees is unlikely to succeed.
- We only know the addresses of about 70 retirees, so could not organize anything in time.
- Even if all retirees objected, we do not know how many forms are actually received, since the forms are not signed or named.

Thus, this change results in all pensioners making a significant contribution (*in the millions*) from our pensions to the University budget. The University owes us more time, a fair process to explain what is happening and a proposal on what it might offer us in return for our generosity before we are asked to vote.

Don Watson

*Ed: The move by LU is called by outraged retirees a "sordid money grab" and the objection process described as a blatant railroad job, which has been designed to confuse and divert. The President of RALU is attempting to persuade LU to follow the 45 day period specified in the *Pension Benefits Act*. In the meantime, if you wish to object, send the green form as per instructions, but also feel free to send letters to the plan administrator and cc your MPP, (given experience with mail being diverted at LU, send registered). There are major legal issues raised by other members, such as conflict of interest on the part of LUFA. Retirees have subsisted on no information at all during the past four years from LU. There was another unadvertised, impromptu meeting of the Pension Board on August 11th, (the fourth in a year) which leaves RALU members picking up clues on behalf of all retirees.

Another member who attended the latest impromptu meeting said that there will be no increases after that time either: The V-P said that first amount that was paid in by the University must be paid back before increases may happen. The same member also wonders whether this is legal. None of the questions from previous meetings over the years have so far been answered. These questions include such as why pensioners have not received a report on their pension in the past years?

RALU executive will endeavour to communicate developments as they occur.

Travellin' A regular column devoted to the travels of our members. In this issue **IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PLANT HUNTERS**

In south-west China, in the province of Yunnan, three of the world's greatest rivers – the Yangtze, Mekong and Salween – flow southwards in deeply eroded valleys within 80 kilometres of each other. It is a place of massive landscapes and a variety of plant communities with few rivals anywhere else in the world. It was there in 2005 and 2008 that Lakehead's Geography Department held an International Field Studies course. The account that follows is based on these trips.



Almost a century ago Yunnan was a magnet for plant hunters who searched for ornamental plant species to meet a growing demand for exotic flowers and shrubs in the west. Plants such as rhododendrons, primulae and peonies that now brighten western gardens owe their presence to the efforts of the plant hunters.

The town of Lijiang, often visited by the plant collectors is an ideal centre from which to follow in their footsteps. Lijiang is a very cosmopolitan town. It is the main centre for the Naxi people and also home to the Tibetan, Yi and Lisu people, with whom the Naxi share this part of Yunnan. With its narrow flagstone streets and alleyways twisting between buildings that retain their centuries-old form, Lijiang has been deservedly designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. A large part of its charm comes from the way in which it has grown up along a number of streams that have been incorporated into the townscape.

The plant hunters did not come to Lijiang for its scenic charms, of course. They came in search of the primulae, rhododendrons, irises and poppies that grew in the area, particularly on the slopes of

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Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, a 5500m high massif that rises above the town to the north. Our trip took us on a day-long hike through the open forest on the lower slopes of the mountain to Wenhai, a Naxi village that until a few years ago had no road access to the outside.

From Wenhai there are spectacular views of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Day trips on foot from the village included a hike to a Yi farm to the north then down to Lashihai to the south, where we spent a few days at our guide's family farm.

Following in the footsteps of the plant hunters we next headed north to town of Zhongdian by way of Tiger Leaping Gorge, a 3,900m deep gorge cut through the Hengduan Mountains by the Yangtze River. The gorge is more than 20 kilometres long and can be driven, but the track we hiked, high along its western side, allows a better appreciation of the splendour and physical grandeur of the gorge. From the northern end of the gorge the road leads north-west to Zhongdian through small farming villages and forests of pine, spruce, larch and birch with patches of rhododendrons or azaleas and yellow stelleria in more open areas.



The road also passes two alpine lakes Shudu Hai and Bitu Hai around which the vegetation ranges from huge, old growth spruce and fir trees, to dwarf rhododendrons and primulae, with large patches of alpine grassland around the lakes grazed by yaks. Zhongdian is refurbishing its old town in traditional Tibetan style as it tries to emulate Lijiang, but one of the main tourist attractions remains the Songzhangling Monastery northeast of the town. It houses some 800 Buddhist monks, and with its gilded roofs and imposing presence it is reminiscent of the Potala Palace in Lhasa.

The wealth of flora that attracted the plant hunters

to Zhongdian can be seen in the dwarf irises, asters, daphne, lilies, orchids, lilies and gentians of the Shangri-la Alpine Botanical Gardens near the town. North of Zhongdian we followed the route of the plant hunters across the 4292 m high Baimang Pass through the Baima Shan, then down through rhododendron and spruce forests towards Deqin and the valley of the Mekong. Next morning a 5.30 wake-up call allowed us to see the spectacular sunrise on the Meili Snow Mountains, which form the divide between the Mekong and Salween River valleys. Crossing the Mekong, we headed into the mountains and Ming Yong glacier, where significant retreat over the three years between our visits suggests global warming is here to stay.

From Ming Yong our route took us down the Mekong valley with stops at Cizhong, to visit the Tibetan Catholic church there, and at Tongle Lisu village. At Weixi we crossed back into the Yangtze valley and took a side trip to LaoJun Shan with its turtle-shaped rocks formed by the erosion of the sandstone bedrock of the area. From there it was a short drive through Shigu, over the "First Bend of the Yangtze" and back home to Lijiang.

David Kemp

What's New on Campus:

A Strike at the Medical School.

Ontario Public Service Employees Union Local 677 are striking for a first contract. 97% voted for hours, wages, and a little respect. The last resonates. LU Faculty Union unlike Laurentian's are notable by their absence because "It's in their contract", so said a picketer Wednesday.

The Campus Garden.

Not strictly new, being the second year, The Campus Garden has been a wonderful addition in the form of learning and community. It has also helped people to eat very healthy food at a small charge. After a learning experience in the first year and a cold, wet year, the Campus Garden staff has built on the lessons of the first year efficiently and effectively. They have managed the logistics of water supply in a dry year. Incorporation of observations regarding bees near the garden led to modification of the lawn cutting schedule with savings to the university and better pollination of the garden. (Thanks to member Walter Momot 's talented spouse, Jeanette Momot, internationally renowned apiarist) There are also classes given on needed topics like soil building and pests. Next is preservation of the harvest and avoiding wastage through donations to others.

<http://www.foodsecurityresearch.ca/>

For more information contact Campus Garden Coordinator Lee-Ann Chevrette at leeann@foodsecurityresearch.ca

The Great Fire.

On July 4th, 2008 there was a fire in the venerable Braun Building. Anyone who looked closely at the main campus could have predicted such an event.

The *Source* fills in the gaps on July 18, 2008 with the headline "Blaze hits Braun: No one hurt in Monday night's fire at near-vacant Lakehead University". Leith Dunick, the editor of the *Source* reported "an insider reported that work had begun on the building's roof, but there's no indication it had anything to do with the fire." Acting platoon chief of the fire service John Mill reported that the fire burned so hot and long because they could not get near the place. "We had to hit it from outside because we couldn't get close to the building. There are gates all over the place."

Time went by with the extent of damage becoming clear with the centrality of the old building: it housed pieces of the Computer Centre, classrooms, labs and faculty offices that contained the priceless records of long careers. So questions were asked as to their survival and the nitty gritty of insurance. During that period there was no action, other than the removal of giant rocks and obstructions that were set like dragon's teeth or a tank trap presumably intended to prevent Al Queda operatives or whoever from reaching the campus nerve centre.

Everybody got into the act of commenting on the fire. In his regular column in *The Argus* from October 27th, 2008, Dr X sort of alludes to and otherwise accuses in a very round about way the oldest members with ... well just about everything.

"Last week we heard the press release regarding the interest the administration has in funding to replace, rather than renovate, the Braun Building. Anyone who really knows this building and its occupants is probably breathing a sigh of relief, provided they have a strong and objective view of the world named for Harold Braun. Chances are good that anyone griping is a Braun occupant actually afraid of being discovered during a housecleaning...

Now the personnel issues. What else happened in the big expansion of the 1960s? Professors were hired and some weren't worth hiring, I'm sure. They mentored another generation of professors who often took up their sloppy

habits. They are still here. Maybe first on the minds of the sloppiest and boldest was finding huge space to waste within the confines of their new (or inherited old) buildings. They spread out and their successors spread out into little empires of the past, while learning and research technology moved way ahead of them. They don't publish anything, they don't read anything, they just take out yellowed notepaper and look to bore students so that they go away. There are a few of those around the Braun. Listen to these folks complain when they get discovered during the housecleaning. I have my fingers crossed that the new building replaces the old quickly. Renewal is fun".

Despite the sign that says the building will reopen soon (2009/2010), the result is evident.



August 2010

In *The Source* April 23, 2010 Mr. Pawlowsky is reported that "certainly the majority of the first and second floor" will be open this fall.

Active Transportation Update.

I recently commiserated with Adam Krupper of the City of Thunder about the task of making motorists and folks at the city aware of the lot of the people who practice active transportation. Through necessity as well as preference this includes many of our members and other seniors. Members who attended Adam's excellent presentation opined that motorists had a lot more attention as far as snow clearing was concerned than sidewalks, with poor results for pedestrians and even worse for disabled people. The winter at the Lakehead had been very trying; leaving most people housebound since January with a snap cold spell, following an unseasonably warm spell and rain. Many members

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found their “active transportation” and recreation plans on ice. Biking became impossible for a period and then a near death experience. Even walking in the downtown North Ward where I live downtown remained treacherous. Active transportation for pedestrians and worse yet for disabled people on scooters is not a rosy picture.

Biking on the new lanes on Court Street is an exercise in survival with the number of oversized pickup trucks and the sudden fashion for tinted windows. Adam is to be commended on the experiment. It is an observation that largest new vehicles (pickup trucks, crossovers, and SUVs) have exhaust pipes which empty onto the curb (right hand side) and those persons actively transporting themselves!

The Thunderwolves

It has been a fantastic year for athletics in Thunder Bay (World Junior Baseball Championship earlier this month) and at Lakehead over the past year: basketball, hockey, Nordic skiing and wrestling.

Thunderwolves Nordic Ski Team took the seventh straight national title. Thunderwolves Basketball reached the national final. Thunderwolves Wrestling Team as always shone. Thunderwolves Hockey played wonderfully during the OUA final against McGill, but the hockey gods gave the decision to the visitors. But what a game. Truly soaring play!

The university community said a sad farewell to those athlete’s whose life will take them elsewhere. You have given us something wonderful to cherish until next season.

Events

October 2. Field Tour. Third annual tour of geological and historical sites. This year’s tour will include a component for walking, cycling, and scooting. Bring your exploring clothes and lunch. Following session, cake and too.

September 14. Thunder Area of Concern. Remedial Action Plan. Regular meeting. Venue not set. If you want to lend your knowledge and assistance to the task of finding out about our water and cleaning up our harbour, stay tuned to the Remedial Action Plan website:
<http://northshorerap.ca>

September 29. RALU Supper. This is an invitation to everyone who has previously been in the employment of Lakehead University and who has an interest in this Association.

The Retirees’ Association of Lakehead University (RALU) is starting the 2010-11 year with a supper.

Wednesday, September 29, 2010
6:00 p.m.

Portside Dining Room of the
Prince Arthur Hotel

Guests are welcome.

Each person orders and pays for his/her own meal and refreshments. There will be a short business meeting following supper. The Nominations Committee will present its nominees for the executive positions and the committee members.

We will be glad to receive suggestions for program activities for the coming year.

RALU memberships will be available at \$10 for one year or \$25 for three years.

WE NEED TO MAKE SURE WE HAVE ENOUGH SEATING FOR SUPPER. LET ME KNOW HOW MANY ARE COMING WITH YOU. E-MAIL ME NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 5.00 pm
gwhite@tbaytel.net. I hope to see you there!

Geraldine White, Co-Chair of the Program Committee.

December 2010 to August 2011. THUNDER BAY INTERNATIONAL FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION

Watch for a classic film series this winter and a new art contest *Paint Thunder Bay*. Visit the association’s website for details

<http://sites.google.com/site/tbifaa/>

Nominations

The Nominations Committee will present the following nominees for election at the forthcoming September meeting of RALU. These nominees have agreed to serve during the year 2010-2011.

Executive Committee

President: Brian Phillips

Vice President: Dave Kemp

Secretary: Ian Dew

Corresponding Secretary: Beverley Stefureak

Treasurer: Bonny Wigmore

Communications Committee

Ian Dew

Walter Momot

Joe Stewart

Don Watson

Program Committee

Archie Colosimo

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Jim Stafford

Bev Stefureak

One vacancy remains to be filled.

Please be mindful of the following provision of the Constitution: "Nominations from other members shall be accepted at a general meeting provided they are nominated and seconded, agreed upon by the nominee, and are submitted to the Secretary at least seven days before the Annual General Meeting".

Therefore the present report of the Nominations Committee is being circulated to the membership in time for this due process to take place.

Mail to nominations to RALU Secretary, c/o, #3-400 Red River Road, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7B 1B3.

Respectfully submitted.

Abdul Mamoojee, Chair, Nominations Committee.

EDITORIAL: Message from the Newsletter Editor: Happy New (Academic) Year!

Despite the alarms and excursions the past academic year has been a good one for our university and its community. *The Argus*, under the editorship of Brandi Cameron showed us that the students have courage even if their instructors are wanting. It is safe to say with no fear of contradiction that the faculty is "hunkered down" in the idiom of Dr. John Whitfield. In pulling the plug on the anti intellectual Prof. X she has struck a blow in the war for academic freedom and for all beleaguered academics in Northwest Ontario and everywhere. Bravo! If you have followed her columns you will know that she left her successor, the legacy of a soapbox. HURRAH!! This is the primary tool of the debater. Long marginalized and generally buried, a new light is dawning on academia at LU. Or is it merely the headlamp of an oncoming freight as previously? We will no doubt find out in time. Three cheers for Pam Wakewich and the others who had the guts to stand up and be counted! Let us take up the debate publicly to accept its responsibility as academics for turning LU into a bona fide university as its charter says and we all who live here need so badly. So thanks to you at *The Argus* for giving us all hope.

That's the good news. The bad news is that Prof X did not go anywhere. He/she is still of the dominant

ethos: that of silence, fear, and intimidation. We have a new president, but so far it's business as usual at LU.

It's getting to be that time again... RALU members will be preparing for fall with the excitement of a new beginning: a new academic year and a new administration. Like a first year student opening their books for the first time, we are full of anticipation. RALU Greets our new president with the fervent wish that he help us to achieve our potential as a university and that retirees and older members receive the respect they deserve.

In the meanwhile for all those suffering from the heat this year, here is Thunder Bay as beautiful as ever



Here is a photo taken across Thunder Bay with Pie Island on the horizon on a cold winter evening. Ah. Isn't that cooler already? As Bonny reminds us "Nowhere but in Thunder Bay!" As the outgoing president is quoted as saying in his swan song in the *Source*, LU is very "special". He was not just whistling Dixie. Let us count the ways.

The absence of the newsletter was caused by a gag order on the editor. In case anyone was worried, the LUFAs Lawyer has launched a fatwa against me personally, so I am watching my ps and qs closely and finishing off a new book that features LU prominently. Watch for it.

Ian Dew
807 344-3831

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