

RALU News



CONTENTS

CURAC/ARUCC Conference & AGM Report 2012

Dave Kemp
p. 1

Notes on RALU General Meeting April 2012. Changes to the Constitution of RALU

p. 4

LU Pension Plan News Notes

Jim Stafford
p. 5

The Garden: The Food Security Research Network (FRSN).

p. 6

Events

p. 6

Our Thunderwolves

Margot Ponder
p. 7

Travellin' goes to Oz. A Journey of Discovery across Western Australia

Bev Stefureak
p. 7

Spring in Thunder Bay

p. 10

A Letter

Abdul Mamoojee
p.12

Message from the COM TEAM

p. 13

Membership. Support RALU, subscribe to RALU News

p. 14

CURAC/ARUCC: 10th CONFERENCE, VICTORIA 2012

The Annual Conference and General Meeting of the College and University Retirees' Associations of Canada took place in Victoria, BC from April 18 to 20, 2012. The conference was held at the University of Victoria, hosted by the UVic Retirees' Association in collaboration with the SFU Retirees' Association and the UBC Association of Professors Emeriti. Some 70 delegates attended from across Canada and several members of AROHE – the US equivalent of CURAC – also participated.

The Conference sessions covered a number of themes, including the sharing of best practices, options for seniors' living arrangements, retirees' health and wellness as well as perennial favourites such as issues in pension plan governance. Given that this was the organization's tenth meeting it was also appropriate to consider past successes and look forward to future activities.

Two sessions considered so-called 'best practices' or the ways in which individual organizations have worked successfully to provide for their membership. The results of a 2011 CURAC survey of best practices were presented by John Meyer (University of Windsor RA) and those from AROHE surveys in 2008 and 2010-12 by Janette Brown (Executive Director of AROHE). The results of the Canadian and US surveys were remarkably similar. The primary purposes of most retirees' organizations include such elements as contributing to the intellectual, social and physical fulfillment of their membership, advocacy in such areas as pensions and benefits, retirement preparation for new retirees and the promotion of university service and teaching. The most common activity at most retirees' organizations is the hosting of social events followed by a mix of other pursuits -

community presentations, topical speakers, raising scholarship funds, for example – that vary from institution to institution depending on local conditions.

The benefits that retirees receive from the institution from which they retired are also similar both sides of the border. They include internet access, the use of library facilities, parking, health benefits and office space. Again, variations occur from place to place. In the CURAC survey, for example, 90% of respondents reported access to the internet and library facilities, while only 38% had office space provided. Ongoing surveys along these lines will provide information on the impact of issues such as economic challenges or demographic change on the practices, planning and programming of retiree associations.

To elaborate on the information provided in the surveys, a number of significant initiatives were described. The University of Victoria Retirees' Association, in collaboration with the university's Centre on Aging has developed an annual Masterminds Lecture series in which retirees present talks on a diversity of topics during the month of April. The series, which has been operating for seven years now, regularly attracts audiences of over 100 people. It has certainly raised the profile of the UVRA and helped the university to reach out to the community. The relationship between UVic and UVRA is strong, so much so that the Association is now included in the university's Strategic Plan.

Given that academics spend their careers researching and writing it is not surprising that retirees have produced histories of their institutions. A recent example is that produced in 2011 by the Wilfrid Laurier University RA to mark the Centennial of the university. It is a book of reminiscences published by WLU Press. The format is popular rather than academic with 37 chapters written by a broad cross-section of retired faculty and staff. For additional information on the book see www.wlupress.wlu.ca

Retirees have always been active in donating to scholarship and bursary funding. In one of the sessions, the success of the McMaster University RA in creating an endowment fund

was described. Donations from faculty, management and staff associations on behalf of their retirees have raised sufficient funds to provide an annual scholarship of \$1000, for a student in Gerontology, plus a \$250 academic prize. As the fund grows, these amounts will be increased. The retiree associations at Regina and Windsor also provide student bursaries.

The role of retirees as volunteers was highlighted in a number of presentations. Volunteerism can take place at the institution from which the volunteer retired or in the local community, with some volunteering as individuals, others as part of a specific volunteer program. Clearly this benefits the volunteer and the recipient, but in some cases it might have wider implications. The retiree association at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, for example, set out to raise its profile in the community, with volunteers as a central element in their campaign. Volunteers became involved in ushering at concerts, serving on mock juries in the Law School and working with the Institute for Aging to develop approaches to work with older people. The willingness of retirees to become involved in these and other university activities has had a positive outcome. It is probably no coincidence that the retirees' association now receives financial support from the university and has two seats on the Faculty Council.

The second day of the conference dealt with issues that have an impact on the health and wellness of retirees. Topics covered included, alternative living arrangements for seniors, the maintenance of physical fitness and cognitive functioning, measures of wellness and their geographical distribution, the upcoming Canada Health Accord and issues in pension plan governance.

As retirees age their housing needs tend to change. Some may be lucky and be able, as the researchers say, "to age in place", that is to remain in the family home. In many cases, however, changing health conditions, family issues or financial matters can lead to the need to relocate. A review of alternatives available for seniors' living arrangements indicated that there are in fact many options ranging from institutional care through assisted living to co-op facilities and

multigenerational housing. A growing trend is the development of age friendly communities where affordable housing, transportation facilities, community support and health services are designed with seniors in mind. One comprehensive approach was described by a representative of Tapestry Retirement Communities. These provide condo-style living with all that they feel seniors require – independence, security, medical supervision, good nutrition, exercise, social interaction. They are essentially equivalent to very expensive boutique hotels, with rates ranging from \$4,000 to \$7,000 per month, and probably beyond the reach of many, if not most, academic retirees.

Another type of development that was described in detail was UniverCity, a sustainable residential and commercial community, in which more than 3000 people live, atop Burnaby Mountain, adjacent to Simon Fraser University. It came into being through co-operation between the University and the City of Burnaby. Supporting the residential facilities there are stores, schools and parks. It is an eco-friendly, energy efficient community surrounded by a conservation area which includes a network of walking trails. Being a multi-generational community it would appeal to retirees who prefer to live in the social equivalent of a traditional neighbourhood rather than a community focused entirely on seniors. More information on UniverCity is available at www.univercity.ca

Whatever type of accommodation retirees might prefer, changing health conditions may have a strong influence on their final decisions. Those suffering chronic conditions, for example, may have no choice but some form of institutional care. There is no denying that physical health does decline in old age and as the number of seniors in the population continues to grow many observers have begun to question the ability of society to provide the health care that will be required at a cost that society can afford. Research at the Centre for Aging at UVic suggests that it is possible. It appears that health costs are being driven up by such things as drugs and tests that may be unnecessary and other ancillary services rather than direct medical costs. Savings can

be made through a combination of informal care – provided by family and friends – and home care. The latter has been shown to be cost effective and in combination with services provided by the non-health sector – house cleaning, bathing, for example – could reduce the need for nursing homes and provide a happier environment for seniors. Governments have claimed to recognize the importance and effectiveness of home care, but since the early 2000s have been less willing to invest in it. Health care costs are continuing to rise and in Canada decisions on dealing with that depend upon discussion among the Federal and Provincial governments. The current Health Care Accord is up for renewal in 2014, but the Federal government has already released the percentage increases in funding it is willing to consider, and the nature of other possible revisions to the accord remain to be seen. CURAC is planning to prepare a position paper on the needs of seniors for release in conjunction with the Accord discussions.

For many retirees, decisions on life after retirement depend very much on pension income, which in turn is linked to the financial success of the pension plan in which they were enrolled. A session on pension plan governance provided information on how pension reform might improve their overall efficiency. Pension reform is a hot topic across the country, receiving either specific attention or being considered as part of federal and provincial budget deliberations. In Alberta and BC, for example, a Joint Expert Panel on Pension Standards (JEPPS) has completed a comprehensive review, which provides more than 100 recommendations for better pension plan governance. One of the concerns identified by the JEPPS was the limited training that most pension plan trustees have received and it recommended more or better training for trustees with the suggestion that in the future trustees may be required to obtain certification before sitting on a Pension Board. Similar concerns were expressed by representatives from York University and Dalhousie RAs. At York new trustees receive some training, but generally they need several meetings to get up to speed. To deal with that the Board carried out a self-assessment, which allowed members to

identify issues that needed to be dealt with to allow the more efficient operation of the board. That was followed up by educational sessions to work through the issues that had been identified.

The representative from Dalhousie pointed out that for a plan to be successful the relationship between the Pension Board and the university Board of Governors, must be made clear and it should be spelled out that trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to the plan members not the Board of Governors. Otherwise, the viewpoint of the latter tends to prevail. He further suggested that active and pensioner members of any plan should make up the overwhelming majority of the Pension Board.

In looking at future developments in university pension plans, the JEPPS identified smaller plans as those facing the biggest problems and suggested that some degree of amalgamation might be required. A similar conclusion was reached in the Drummond Report in Ontario, which suggested possible consolidation of smaller university plans into a format comparable to that of the Ontario Community College system. There does not seem to be any consensus, however, on what constitutes a “smaller” plan.

After 10 years of Annual CURAC Conferences, there was a feeling among some of the delegates that some benefits might be derived by having regional meetings. Regional structures existed in the early days of CURAC and over the past several years there have been Atlantic Regional conferences. The most recent meeting in October 2011 attracted 45 delegates. Many RAs have only limited finances and are more likely to be able to attend a regional conference. This appears to be particularly true of RAs in the college system. Currently there are 33 university RAs in CURAC, but only 2 from the college system. Regional conferences might help to increase the latter number. In addition, the nature of Canada is such that many issues – benefits and pensions, for example – have a regional base, which might be more effectively covered by a local group. Reports from such meetings could be brought back to general CURAC meetings and/or distributed via the web.

Although no vote was taken, comments from the membership suggested that regional conferences would be an appropriate addition to CURAC’s activities.

The 10th Annual CURAC Conference was very interesting and informative. It ran smoothly and the local organizing committee are to be commended.

Dave Kemp

An augmented version of this paper is published in the latest CURAC Newsletter.

http://www.curac.ca/?page_id=445

(Summer 2012, pp. 3-5)

*Kudos to Dave, this is the second year his notes have been used as the basis for the report on the AGM. BRAVO!!

Ed.

NOTES ON THE GENERAL MEETING APRIL 24, 2012.

The business meeting considered the proposed changes that were approved by the Dec 2011 meeting of RALU Executive. They are intended to make the association more welcoming and accessible to new members, and to make nominations more spontaneous. The motion to adopt the changes was made by Bonny and seconded by George. The changes are as follows.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

...These objectives include, but are not limited to:

Maintaining an association between the University and its academic, administrative and staff retirees, their spouses and others. [removes the term “non-academic staff”]

COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

There shall be an EXECUTIVE of the Association composed of:

1. President
2. Immediate Past President
3. Vice President
4. Corresponding Secretary

5. Membership Secretary
6. Treasurer
7. Chairs of Standing Committees.

NOMINATIONS

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 (7) days before the Annual General Meeting. Nominations from other members shall be accepted at a general meeting, provided they are seconded, and the nominee(s), being present, agree(s) to allow their name(s) to stand.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND ITS MEMBERS

The CORRESPONDING SECRETARY shall send notices of Executive Committee meetings, make Executive Committee meeting arrangements, keep and distribute minutes of Executive meetings, receive and respond to email and postal mail from outside parties on behalf of the Association and be responsible for the archives of the Association.

The MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY shall receive membership applications and maintain records

The TREASURER shall take charge of, keep records of, and provide statements on the finances of the Association. She/he will issue receipts and mail cards to members.

[changes reflect actual evolution of the association's functioning].

REPORT ON A MEETING OF THE LU PENSION COMMITTEE

The two LU pension advisory committees — one for the professional plan and one for university staff — met with various money managers on May 24th and 25th. The first day was spent with three investment firms that were selected as potential replacements for Gluskin Scheff, which was dismissed in June 2011. The candidates were Mawer Investment Management Ltd in Calgary, and Guardian

Capital and CGOV Asset Management, both in Toronto. All three provided impressive presentations but CGOV was eventually chosen as one of our money managers and arrangements will be made to transfer \$25 million to that firm from Jarislowsky Fraser. Its mandate will be to invest in Canadian equities.

CGOV will be one of seven firms that invest our pension money. Our advisors, Proteus Performance Management Inc. reported on their respective performances in the first quarter of 2012. I will summarize by listing key numbers in the following paragraph. The format is: Company, investment type, percentage of pension fund, returns in the first quarter, benchmark returns in first quarter:

Jarislowsky Fraser, Canadian equities and bonds, 46%, 3.3%, 2.8%;

Letko Brosseau, Canadian and international equities and Canadian bonds, 22%, 6.7%, 4.9%;

Addenda, Canadian bonds, 16%, 0.3%, - 0.2%;

Advisory, US small caps, 4%, 6.8%, 9.5%;

State Street, global equities, 9%, 9.6%, 9.5%;

Dimensional, international small cap, 3%, 14.6%, 13.0%.

After CGOV enters the fold, it will hold about 13% of our fund and Jarislowsky Fraser will hold about 33%. The overall return for the fund in the first quarter was 4.4 % but this has slipped to 3.6% in April and will very likely have declined further in May.

The first day was also taken up with a business meeting. Some noteworthy items include the announcement from the Pension Officer, Clint Mason, that the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) has not yet ruled on the validity of the infamous Amendment 2000/1. The final decision was promised for the second quarter of 2012 so we should expect it by the end of June.

Another item on the agenda was the

submission of a draft of the auditor's report by BDO Canada. The key number, among many, in the report was the difference between the real gains in the market value of the fund and the projected gains in the year 2011: -\$12.6 million.

A note in the draft that is of interest to LU pensioners is the reference to potential liabilities arising from the issue surrounding Amendment 2000/1. The auditors report that the actuary has calculated that a liability of \$12 million will be added to the fund if the Amendment is declared void by the FSCO. This is the amount that will be added to the pension payments of those who retired before February 25, 2000. If the FSCO rules that the Amendment is also void for all those who retired after the year 2000 but before January 1, 2008, the total added liability becomes \$29 million that would be required to top up past and future pension payments.

Another item on the agenda that generated a lot of discussion was the performance of Letko Brosseau. Although its record for 2012 has been acceptable, it has not met expectations over the long run. Special concerns were voiced about its bond selection and its extensive holdings of European equities. The committees agreed to keep a close watch on that particular money manager.

On the second day we were visited by three of our existing money managers: Letko Brosseau, Jarislowsky Fraser, and Addenda. All three were up-beat when discussing their own performance and down-beat about the world economy in general. The Addenda presenter was none other than our own Mark Warywoda, HBA (Economics, Lakehead University) and MA (Economics, McMaster University). His was an erudite presentation and impressed many of those who were present even though his views were quite pessimistic. His words reminded me that economics has been labeled "the dismal science" for good reason.

Jim Stafford

THE GARDEN

A little bird told us that there are still a few garden plots. Food Security Research Network

(FRSN).

<http://www.foodsecurityresearch.ca/index.php?pid=89> You can watch as your garden grows; eat wonderful, healthful food; enjoy the serenity of the garden; discover your neighbor gardeners and learn, learn, learn about growing things and sharing.

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

EVENTS

July 23 Monday THUNDER BAY INTERNATIONAL FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION: A LITERARY CONTEST FOR THE SUMMERTIME

A poetry contest; a major literary event for the Lakehead and Northwestern Ontario. Visit the association's website for details

<https://sites.google.com/site/tbifaa/Home/natu-su-haiku-summer>

Preview

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLID_J7V7xM

September 26 Wednesday RALU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER

Prince Arthur Hotel, Portside Room
Symposium: 6:00 p.m.
Dinner: 6:30 p.m. (individual orders from menu, individually billed)
Meeting: 8:00 p.m.

Invitation will follow in mid August. All members, retirees, past employees of Lakehead and spouses/guests are very welcome.

October 15 Monday CURAC/ARUCC ONTARIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The first CURAC Ontario regional conference to be held in Toronto will focus on issues of interest to postsecondary education retirees in Ontario; for example, the concerns that arise from the Drummond Commission Report. Information on registration will be announced later in the summer.

***October 20 Date still tentative
Annual Field Conference and Road Show.**

This year an adventure is planned to Minnesota. So bring your passports and expect to have an opportunity to hear some of the great brains of our region giving what they know on diverse topics as geology and geomorphology, ichthyology, paleontology, ecology, forestry, and inevitably history... The tour will be followed coffee and cake at a local eatery and inevitably a lively conversation including a lot of different guesses about and things came to be.

**May 2013
CURAC/ARUCC AGM**

The conference to be held in Saint John's, Newfoundland.

OUR THUNDERWOLVES



Lakehead University

Thunderwolves

Coaches for the various Lakehead University teams are busy recruiting for the coming season. Joel Scherban's contract has been renewed as coach for the men's hockey team for three more years. No word yet on whether all his assistants will be staying for next season. Coach Scherban announced recently that five new additions to the ice hockey team will make their debut in the Fall. James Delory, who was redshirted last season due to his playing in the pros for two years, will join the defence. Forwards Luke Judson (Emo), Michael MacDonald (Thunder Bay), Carson Dubchak (Kenora), and Luke Cain (Thunder Bay) have also joined the team. Judson, MacDonald, and Dubchak were all captains of their former OHL teams and Scherban feels that these new additions to the team will provide character, commitment and leadership qualities.

Scott Morrison, the coach of the men's basketball team, has been selected as

assistant coach for the upcoming 2012 Junior Men's National Team in the FIBA Americas Under 18 Championship to be held in Brazil June 16-20th. The top four finishers in this event will qualify for the 2013 FIBA U19 World Championships. Congratulations on his appointment!

The men's basketball team will be adding "up tempo" guard Dwayne Harvey, a Hamilton product, who has been on the recruitment list starting in 2007 and again since leaving Alabama State University. Jamar Coke, from the Medicine Hat Rattlers, has also committed to the LU team. According to his coach, Ben Julius, a 2000 graduate from Hammarskjold High School, "he is one of the most dynamic players I have ever seen."

Jon Kreiner, coach of the women's basketball team has revealed that they have recruited three new players: Rachael Bland (Washington, U.K.), Gabrielle Robin (Riverview, NB) and Jessica de Haan (Thunder Bay).

It is always interesting to read about the new additions to the various teams. I am looking forward to seeing the teams in action when the new school year starts!

Margot Ponder

*Sports women and men among our members appreciate our wolves and all the gifts they bring us. Amateur athletics is an uplifting experience for everyone concerned. The fact that our athletes are pure amateurs gives us a lifeline to sport; real sport without the distractions of greed and just plain bad officiating inherent in the spectacle of professional sport. Which watching you can also brush up on your own technique and generally get your heart rate up and otherwise be exhilarated.

So give yourself a treat today: find out which of the wolves you can follow. Take your pick of a whole spectrum from Nordic Skiing and wrestling, two specialties, to volleyball, ice hockey and basketball, and enjoy!!

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

Once again thanks to the team members: trainers, managers, athletes, coaches, and administrators. Thank you!!

Ed

TRAVELLIN' GOES TO OZ

Part III of Bev and Matt's voyage of discovery to Western Australia.

The road from Albany back to Perth took us through agricultural land where we saw, in addition to kangaroo and emu, vast landscapes of yellow that we confirmed to be the same crop with which we are familiar on the Canadian prairie – canola.



We drove through areas of fruit orchards, primarily apple and peach, to spend our final night of the motoring trip in the historic Ford House B & B in Bridgetown. This was not your typical bed and breakfast; rather it was a cluster of five or six old buildings, each serving one of a multitude of purposes. The primary building, which we believe was originally a gorgeous country mansion, sported six bedrooms/suites for guests. Its common rooms suggested that it is, today, likely used as a small banquet facility for bridal showers, small family parties and the like. Its dining room and kitchen were stocked with good china and crystal service for 20 to 30 people. All rooms were decorated with period furniture which, lamentably, did not include heating devices. (By now, we'd learned to make good use of the electric blankets.) A short walk across the gardens, in an old barn of grey weathered boards inside and out, the breakfast "room" was a table set for 10 with antique dishes, crystal and silver, in the midst of a combination emporium/cannery.



The repast consisted of home-grown (laid) eggs, home-cured bacon from pigs butchered at a nearby farm, freshly squeezed orange juice, home-preserved fruit (that morning it was pears, plums and peaches) from orchards on the property, home preserved jam also from their home-grown produce and fresh bread made only hours before in a 2-lb bread machine. All of this appeared to be managed by a husband and wife with a staff of about six. The emporium offered Christmas ornaments, novelty candle ware, glassware, dolls, teddy bears, games, books – you name it, they probably had it. One wall, floor-to-ceiling, was packed tight with their preserves; all others were shelved with articles for sale that exploded out to tumble over the floor area. It speaks to the tourism of Western Australia that this kind of establishment in an extremely small town, off the beaten track, can be full and busy in the off-season.

We returned to Perth thankful for the informative and picturesque motor trip, having seen much more of the State than we had anticipated and realizing that if we return during spring to that coastal region of Australia we might consider adding thermal underwear to our wardrobe to ward off the evening shivers.

On our first day back in Perth, Jim and Judy finished off their self-imposed appointment as tour guides *extraordinaire* by doing a one-day tour of the highlights of downtown Perth. We strolled through the Royal Botanical Gardens and around the War Memorial towering over the Swan River. By now, we'd learned enough to recognize species among the hundreds of wildflowers

more easily spotted in plots dedicated to their abundance. The park was elegantly dressed up to greet the Queen who was arriving about ten days later for the Commonwealth conference hosted in Perth. The flowers, domestic and wild, were cooperating nicely in coming to full bloom somewhat earlier than usual, and predictions were that the weather would be cooperative as well, promising day after day of sunny, warm spring for Her Majesty.

We toured the downtown and learned why the main thoroughfare (Adelaide Terrace), in mid-stride, jogs significantly to the right before correcting in a few hundred meters to continue its objective of a wide avenue crossing the central business district. The story goes that Sir Septimus Roe, main town planner of the young developing city of Perth was a chook (chicken) farmer. His farm happened to be in what would become downtown Perth and his chookyard just happened to be in the path of what was planned to be the central street of the city. So, chooks being more important to him than a straight line, he simply planned the main street to dodge in a semicircle around the perimeter of his chookyard. His farm is long gone but the story is passed on to youngsters and visitors to illustrate how urban planning can respect and harmonize with rural reality.

We bid *auf weidersehn* to our wonderful hosts to spend the weekend visiting another friend, originally from Britain, with whom we had been colleagues while teaching in Singapore in 1991. She and her husband now own and operate a thriving eco-dredging company (www.apexenvirocare.com.au) in the suburbs of Freemantle, Perth's port. It was a treat to fold into their family life for the weekend, tagging along to their service dog's training classes for the morning, relishing the family custom of a fish-and-chips lunch thereafter on the waterfront and then a refreshing and relaxing stop for an organic beer in a micro-brewery also on the Freemantle waterfront. We were able to visit the "grand bazaar" of Freemantle, a huge covered market full of specialty vendors, artisans, objets d'arte, and hawkers of whatever the mind could conjure, tour the port facility and hang out in their beautiful suburban neighbourhood of luxury homes situated along the ocean. Our final

night in Western Australia was celebrated with a spectacular Sunday night roast beef and Yorkshire pudding dinner prefaced with a five-minute stroll to the endless beach of the Indian Ocean for a pre-dinner picnic of apples and a toast to the sunset with sparkling wine.



We can't think of a more perfect memory for our goodbye to Western Australia and the start of our final two weeks exploring Melbourne, Tasmania, and Sydney.

Footnote: On what side of a tree does moss grow in the southern hemisphere? Wouldn't take long to figure that out if one thought about it, but we had not. So, leaving Sydney sun on our right, we waited for the plane to bank so the sun would be on our left as we headed westward to Perth. (What? Doesn't everyone check the direction of their outbound flights by orienting with the sun?) When the plane did not bank, we deduced quickly why not, but felt somewhat silly that we had never considered this directional reverse before. We felt better after learning from our Australian friends that they had the same "awakening" when they discovered, on their first trip to Europe, that the noonday shadow points north instead of south.

Bev Stefureak

Read previous episodes in RALU News http://epe.iac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ralu_news/2011/index.html

SPRING AT LU. PHOTO ESSAY

It has been a long, cold winter; a challenging winter as anyone who reads this newsletter will know. At the time of writing, we only now finally through a stormy spring here in the northwest.

Late winter was sedate with too-warm periods. The stone towers of the Port Arthur Campus, which houses the law school (formerly Port Arthur Collegiate Institute) shows its winter aspect after a heavy snowfall.



LU Law School from Red River Road

Spring is a time of awakening hope. In the meantime, getting to the big weekend of convocation has not been easy. Wild weather has been upon us for the past weeks. The changeover from winter to summer is always dramatic, with fog and storms, but the past week has been described as a “fifty year” flood. A downpour throughout northwestern Ontario of 100 millimetres of water in a short period of time on the night of the 28th overwhelmed the city’s storm sewer system and quickly flooded the sewage treatment plant on Atlantic Ave. It was not quite a disaster: there was no loss of life and no call for the naval detachment, HMCS Griffon. Yet it has been and continues to be more than an

inconvenience.

Rivers and creeks have been filled to overflowing with flooding evident across the region.



Stretch of McIntyre Creek south from the bridge to the Fieldhouse

The breakdown of the city’s sewage treatment plant on Atlantic Avenue has led to sewage backups common in Northwood, Intercity, and the East End. The fact that Thunder Bay’s storm sewer and waste system use the same pipes caused immense pressure to build up in the system that made the effects much worse. Other questions about the design of the pumping station, which are reported to have been 50 feet underwater will have to wait till after the cleanup. There is a major logistical effort underway to recover structures and people after the disaster. The residences house refugees from the worst damaged area. The residence parking lots have been turned into a marshalling area for restoration companies.

Everyone is catching their breath, although at the time of writing the weather was still unsettled and cool with storms in the area, mostly missing the city. A characteristic of wild weather is unpredictability: weather forecasts are now less frequently accurate. Where does a shower become a deluge? Where can we find a climate change specialist?

On the positive side volunteers from within and outside the city have pulled together to help with the cleanup and to ease the shock of people losing a lifetime of precious belongings. A lot of things have changed drastically since the flood. Vacancy rates at local hotels are zero; real estate dealers have cranked up the price for properties not flooded and rents are reported to have risen overnight.



A small turtle taking a breather

Here is a view looking along the bottom of the MacIntyre Floodway showing the effects of flooding on the channel. The floodway, which is the city’s major water diversion channel was evidently filled to capacity at the height of the flood.



Thunder Bay looking toward Pie Island from the Downtown Port Arthur Campus, May 31st 2012

Photo shows extent of the discharge from the storm of May 28th. Impromptu construction work on basements is in evidence throughout the city, even in areas adjacent to the campus and other places heretofore considered immune to flooding.

As of time of writing, a \$300 million class action law suit has been filed on behalf of 300 claims. The City’s Secretary reported that 800 people have picked up forms for claiming losses for people without or with insufficient insurance coverage.

We are clearly at the beginning of a long, painful journey. Hopefully we will have learned something useful when we get there. On the bright side...



Walkway to the Faculty Lounge

The photo shows the shine on the floor and the wild water beyond the weir. At the main campus all is in readiness, the shine is put on the floor for the one and only time in a calendar year. Convocation.

In the meantime there are few signs that the floods are abating. It seems after living a charmed life and dry weather in a years long drought, now we are having storms every few days to add to the supersaturated soil.

On the academic front there are continuing storms also: many basic issues of interest to the entire academic community need to be addressed on a priority basis at LU.

They range from academic freedom and freedom of speech to pensions and the position of Google Inc. on campus. The specific question is our institution's membership in the CAUT Academic Freedom Fund. To be or not to be.



A sign of the times.

Dr. R-G

LETTER

Thanks for the current membership list which will be useful to the Nominations Committee. As for the "correct" spelling of my name, it is a sleeping dog that is best left alone. 'Abdul' will do for RALU and 'Abdool' to those who write it thus. Originally Arabic 'Abd-al' or 'Abd-el' as in the Egyptian President's Gamal Abd-al Nasser, first component of two constituents, as in Abd-Allah (Creation of Allah), Abd-Al Kader (Creation of the Almighty), Abd-Al Rahman (Creation of the Merciful), Abd-Al Haq or Hack (Creation of the Truthful) -which is mine- and a few dozen others, it became generally Abdul in the Indian subcontinent, as in Abdul Kalam Azad, the colleague of Gandhi and Nehru in Congress who famously opposed partition. In Mauritius, where I was born, the Indian derived spelling usually adopted was Abdool. So it is in my birth certificate and always was, until venturing overseas, in a foolish inclination to conform with the more widespread Indian spelling, I began to use Abdul. More recently, in another foolish move to resume my own original identity, I began again to use Abdool. There was no problem until the advent of the personal computer which often demands consistency. I have learned my lesson: let sleeping dogs die. I am reminded of an unhelpful retort of T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) to the editor of his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, when the latter complained about the author's inconsistency in the spelling of Arabic names. Far from selecting one out of two or three versions which he had used, he infuriated the editor by adding another half dozen alternatives. As you see, I am not as uncooperative.

Abdul a.k.a Abdool Mamoojee

*This concise letter teaches us about communication and diversity. It shows an unexpected side-effect of technology In the next issue Abdul promises a more complete look at names to extend our understanding on some complexities of that most personal artifact – the name.

Ed.

A MESSAGE FROM THE COM TEAM

It is the summer holiday season and time to relax and “recreate”. Time for walking, running, biking, canoeing. It is time to consider; to celebrate, to look back and to look forward. This is the also beginning of our membership drive. Help us achieve our potential in looking after your interests.

In May 2012 our President, David Kemp, spoke to the prospective retirees outlining the benefits of membership. Communication is a therapeutic exercise in community building. Come join the COM Team. RALU is in its fifth year and can look back to some accomplishments and, with united action, having an impact in our conditions in future. We hope to grow and fulfil the promise to provide a strong community for retirees. This newsletter provides a forum for members to speak and exercise their right and duty to speak out. Feel free to encourage individuals and libraries with whom you are associated to buy a current subscription to better serve their members. This will improve access to the newsletter and also add to the Association’s

coffer. A link to back issues, which is housed by Library and Archives Canada is available from the RALU site <http://ralu.la>

Members are asked to find and recruit people who are eligible. We are under-represented in staff, sessional lecturers, and administrators. Help us to find courageous people who can make our organization a true community. **Strong writers are needed to improve our newsletter**

Take time to celebrate the accomplishments of illustrious members like founding member Clem Kent, Sher Ali Mirza and Ruth Kajander, who bring glory with their honours. The latter are members of the Order of Ontario and Canada, respectively. We say Thank you and three cheers!! Feel free to congratulate them personally. Our association is something to celebrate. The orders includes the highest awards given to civilians in our country.

As you can see, there’s a lot of reason for celebration and excitement... so stay tuned!

In the meantime. Mark your calendars for the premiere event to kick off the new academic year. See you at the Prince Arthur September 26

Benefits of Membership in RALU

- *Intellectual stimulation. Smart people like to talk to other smart people.**
- *Social support. Be informed and active in a group of like minded people who share the same interests and background.**
- *Economic fairness. RALU Pensions and Benefits Committee represents retirees and aims to be a consultancy for all members.**
- *High FP Rating. RALU members have a higher than average Fun Potential rating. Get yours today!**

Membership is \$10 annually or \$25 per individual per three years, with equal status of membership for retirees, spouses and partners. Annual membership is from Sept 1st to Aug 31st. You are encouraged to support the association by joining us, even if you live far from Northwestern Ontario. Complete the membership form and return with a money order or cheque made out to the Retirees’ Association of Lakehead University to Membership Secretary, 2717 Government Road, Thunder Bay, ON P7G 1V4. For further information please contact RALU President David Kemp, panddkemp@shaw.ca Please note that there is a new area for expertise, contribution. Tell us how you want to assist RALU, for example, by contributing to the newsletter, giving us a presentation on your expertise, and so on. The Association is inclusive and its membership is open to all retirees of the university.

----- Cut here -----

**RETIREES’ ASSOCIATION OF LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
Membership Form – Sept 1st 2012 to Aug. 31st, 2015**

First Name _____

Surname _____

Email address _____

Postal address _____

Postal code _____ **Tel. #** (_____)

Expertise, contribution

----- Cut here -----

Office use only

Paid _____ as Cash _____ or Cheque _____ _____/_____/_____	Date dd/mm/yy

RALU News



ISSN: 1918-4581

Subscription free with membership

Individual non member \$20 including postage; Corporate rate: print: \$69.99 including postage;

© Retirees’ Association of Lakehead University

To order, send to a travellers cheque, money order, or cheque to
Secretary RALU,

#3 – 400 Red River Road,

Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada, P7B 1B3

ian@nextlib.com,

Published by the Retirees’ Association of Lakehead University

Back issues of the newsletter are available free from Library and Archives Canada

http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ralu_news/index.html

----- Cut here -----

RALU News Order Form

First Name _____ **Surname** _____

Mailing address _____

Post code _____ **Tel. # ()** _____

Copies ___ **Date** _____

Company or organization _____

Total _____