

# RALU *News*



## CONTENTS

**LIBRARIES IN CANADA: A PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY** p.1

**RALU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015** p.2

**EVENTS** p. 6

**YOUR THUNDERWOLVES**  
Margot Ponder p. 7

**WHICH WAY IS THE WIND BLOWING?** p. 9

**NATIONAL NEWS: THE CURAC REPORT**  
A.H. Mamoojee p.11

**THE GARDEN** p. 13

**PENSION REPORT** p.15

**DEMOCRACY AT LU: THE STUDENT UNION FIGHTS FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE** p.16

## LIBRARIES IN CANADA: A PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY

Over the past decade, the assault on libraries in Canada threatens to sink our democratic, modern nation. For all we know that point may have already been reached. The twin sources of the assault on the library are the Conservative Party at the federal level particularly and companies like Google and OCLC that want to convince Canadians that “It’s all on Google” – or whatever. Their message is that libraries are a thing of the past. By now everyone is aware the federal government is “streamlining” federal libraries as part of its plan to subvert and otherwise muzzle scientists. This is the latest act in a decade-long campaign to co-opt and destroy libraries as we know them.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/research-library-s-closure-shows-harper-government-targets-science-at-every-turn-union-says-1.3199761>

Their zeal is positively evangelical. The real problem is that we don’t find out about this and other actions with our national library systems till it is too late.

This action is like a lobotomy in that it will be impossible to reverse in future.

As frightening as the destruction of libraries is, the privatization of the records is as dangerous to democracy. Here large private corporations (primarily U.S. based) will sell us back our own information, which in an academic environment is paid for by public money.

The current tide of anti-intellectualism will irreversibly change our ability to research and think if we are not vigilant. To reverse this requires vigorous action beginning immediately. If we do not act... and quickly, we will lose the only tool that can help us to think and conduct research: a free and properly funded system of libraries. The lack of information on events is most acute at our national library, Library and Archives Canada. Rumours abound: Stockwell Day is touted for the post of Czar. Anything is possible.

The body fighting this and other issues that are related to archives and libraries on our behalf is the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

<http://www.caut.ca/issues-and-campaigns/librarians-and-libraries>

The issues related to libraries and public information should be front and centre in the federal election. Go Vote!

**Ian Dew**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Welcome everyone to RALU's 2015 AGM. It is good to see many familiar faces plus a number of new ones. The past year has been a successful one for RALU, in my opinion. Our numbers continue to grow and this year the membership has reached 90. I did a quick calculation, and, not counting members who live outside Thunder Bay, those of you here tonight represent about 38% of our membership, which I think is a good turnout.

The success of organizations such as ours depends on the work of those who volunteer for our various committees. Our Program Committee has continued to provide us with monthly presentations on a variety of interesting topics from climate change to bee-keeping, and will no doubt do this same for the coming year.

The Communications Committee keeps us informed through the Newsletter and the website. The latter has been upgraded, thanks to a grant from the Ontario Seniors Grant Program, and is now much easier to access and use. The Communications Committee has also negotiated a spot for us on the LU Radio station. It also initiated monthly lunch meetings at various venues in the city, which have been well received.

The Nominations Committee has one of the more difficult jobs in the organization. Although we have a growing membership it has been difficult to find volunteers to fill positions on the executive and other committees. However, I know Brian and Les have been hard at it and I am sure they will present us with a full slate of nominees later in the meeting.

Another committee that has a tough job is the Pension and Benefits Committee. As most of you will know they have been grappling with the implications of the changes in our pensions brought about by amendments to the pension plan made unilaterally by the university. As I reported last year, as long ago as June 2013, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario found that Lakehead had contravened the Pension Benefits Act in these amendments. Despite employing a high priced lawyer, the university was unable to disprove this finding, and in April this year was told to rectify the situation. It has been given until October 31 to respond. The P and B Committee has examined the most recent correspondence and has provisionally concluded that there is some good news and some bad news. The good news is that those who retired prior to 2000 can expect to receive a pension adjustment. The bad news is that because of the way the university's financial liabilities are factored into the pension adjustments, those who retired between 2000 and

2008 will not. We still have to find out what the university response will be, however, before we can be sure. Once FSCO has considered the university response and made its decision we will inform the membership via e-mail or Newsletter or both.

Despite the pension issue we do have a reasonably good relationship with the university. The Alumni and Community Relations Office has allowed us to use its boardroom for executive meetings and this year again we have had the offer of seats in the LU VIP box at a Thunderwolves hockey game. Some RALU members have expressed concern that little attempt has been made to involve retirees in the 50th Anniversary celebrations. We did offer to be involved early on in the process, but other than being asked to sell 50/50 tickets or stuff boxes little else has transpired. In addition to the committees, individuals have contributed to RALU in various venues. Brian Phillips represented us at the annual LU Employees Recognition Reception, where he encouraged retirees to join RALU; Ernie Epp continues to represent us on the Pension Board; Abdul Mamoojee was our delegate to the annual conference of the Colleges and Universities Retirees Associations of Canada (CURAC). Bev Stefureak also attended as a member of the CURAC Executive.

Bev has recently relocated to Midland, Ontario, but through the

wonders of electronic communications will continue to be our membership secretary.

Earlier this year Clem Kent resigned from the position of Vice-President for health reasons. Clem was one of the founding members of RALU and has given sterling service over the years. I am sure we all thank him for what he has done for us and wish him well as he deals with his health issues.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who have contributed in various ways to the success of RALU this year. You have certainly made the work of the President that much easier. Thank you.

**Dave Kemp, President**

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Committee Members: Kathy Traynor, Margot Ponder, Ian Dew, and Walter Momot.

The aim of the Communications Committee is to promote RALU by communication in all forms: person to person, using our website, using media, and publishing a newsletter. In terms of person-to-person communication, this past year we added a social element to our association by getting together for lunch or dinner once a month. In some cases this included a sports event. We had supper at the Fort William Curling Club and then went to a Thunderwolves hockey game. On another occasion we

went to Boston Pizza and then to a Border Cats baseball game. We have also had lunch at the DaVinci, the Polish Alliance on Court Street, the Knights of Columbus, and at Tina's. The response to this initiative has been encouraging and we plan to continue this in the upcoming year.

The content and functionality of our RALU's internet presence has continued to improve with a new professionally managed website. Brian Phillips was designated webmaster, and Kathy has uploaded archived newsletters and some pension and benefit information also. A recent occurrence shows the power of improved indexing in Internet search engines: the son of a professor who worked at Lakehead in the early days, David Lewis, was able to locate our association and email us with news of his death. Please start using the site if you don't already. Any ideas on improvements or information we could add would be helpful.

LU Radio. We have had conversations with the manager of CILU, Jason Wellwood, who is enthusiastic about developing a relationship, which could include advertising our events and participating in shows other than the program for retirees, called *Senior Moments*, which is the one we now sponsor. It airs on Saturday at 8.30 am and Monday at 1.30 pm. Tune into FM 102.7 or over the Internet. We hope to develop a good relationship with the

hosts, Jean Armstrong and Jim Ryder. So... if you have a flair for broadcasting please get involved.

We would like to thank members of the Communication Team, this is the wider work group that actually does the work of communicating. It includes Brian Phillips, Bev Stefureak, Bonny Wigmore and Jeanette Momot, as well as members of the Communications Committee. They are valued members of our retiree group without which we could not function.

The Committee publishes the *RALU News*. This past year we distributed four issues. Content included informational articles; CURAC conference reports; pension news; Lakehead Athletic team reports for the sports enthusiasts, travelogues; and a listing of events such as field trips, meetings, and lunches and or dinners, as well as other items of interest to our members. It is also our responsibility to send out Public Service Announcements to inform our members of upcoming events, as well as emailing members directly.

At this point we are not only looking for submissions for the newsletters, such as travelogues with some interesting pictures, or whatever else might be of interest to our readers; we are looking for some enthusiastic new faces to volunteer for our Communications Committee.

Among our goals for the upcoming year, we want to stress recruiting. We would like to build a vibrant association

utilizing the special talents and knowledge of our retirees. We plan to communicate better with our members and with the wider community using media. If you are interested in becoming involved we would look forward your working with us!

**Margot Ponder, Kathy Traynor**

### **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Listed below are nominees proposed for election at the September 23rd, 2015 meeting of RALU. These nominees were elected to serve during the year 2015-2016.

Executive Committee

President: Dave Kemp

Vice President: Vacant

Recording Secretary: Uta Hicken

Membership Secretary: Bev Stefureak

Treasurer: Bonny Wigmore

Immediate Past President: Brian Phillips (ex officio)

Communications Committee

Kathy Traynor (Co-chair), Margot Ponder (Co-Chair), Ian Dew, Walter Momot

Program Committee

Jenny Phillips, Jim Stafford, Mark Nisenholt, Rick Freitag

Nominations Committee

Brian Phillips, Les Miller

Note: Committees choose their own chairs, who then participate in Executive Meetings.

Note: Our Ad Hoc Committee does not require re-election each year and meets only when it has work to address. The members listed have agreed to continue.

Pension & Benefits Ad Hoc Committee  
Clem Kent, Tony Capello, Jim Stafford,  
Abdul Mamoojee, Les Miller, Don  
Watson, Peter Mah, Pentti Paularinne,  
Ernie Epp.

**Les Miller, Brian Phillips**

## EVENTS

### October

Friday 2  
Sixties Nite.  
8 pm to 1 am.  
The Outpost on the Thunder Bay Campus  
More detail TBA

Sunday 4  
Communal Soup Pot/Wrap Up for the  
Garden  
LU Garden  
Noon to 3 pm. Bring a recipe for  
something you grew.

Wednesday 7

All Candidates Debate for the Superior  
North Riding  
The Outpost on the Thunder Bay Campus  
6 pm.

Thursday 8  
All Candidates Debate for Both Thunder  
Bay ridings. Finnish Labour Temple.  
6.30 to 8.30 pm  
Sponsored by Council of Canadians  
Thunder Bay Chapter.

Saturday 17  
RALU Fall Field Trip. Fall Colours  
<http://www.lakeheadretirees.ca/ralu-lunch-buffet-3/>

Monday 19  
Federal Election.

### November

Monday 2  
Blue Dot Committee of the Council of  
Canadians.  
6 pm. Dr. David Suzuki's initiative. City  
Council Chambers.

Sunday 29  
Peoples Climate March.

Events are a moving target at best. Please  
send amendments and corrections to  
[ralu.communications01@gmail.com](mailto:ralu.communications01@gmail.com)

Feel free to confirm details.

**YOUR THUNDERWOLVES****Men's Basketball**

Coach Furtado, who has just signed a two year contract with LU, is happy that a "significant" player, Nick Burke, a 6'0" guard has been recruited to play with the TWolves . Burke is a transfer from the University of Toronto, and in his first year he averaged 5 points, 3 assists and 2 steals per game, and also made the OUA All-Rookie team. Guard, Kache Lopec, a high school graduate from Kelowna, has also signed with the TWolves and joins his former teammate Quincy Johnson. Another high school recruit for the 2015-16 season is 6'4" shooting guard Brandon Persad, of Thornhill, Ontario.

The Thunderwolves, are playing in the Central division with McMaster, Brock, and Guelph, and will play their first six regular season games in the Thunderdome.

In their regular season debut, the Thunderwolves will start where they left off last February, in a double header versus the gritty Guelph Gryphons, on November 6 and 7 at 8:00 PM. They play Carleton on November 13th and Ottawa on November

14th.

**Women's Basketball**

Coach Jon Kreiner has also signed on to continue his term as coach for another five years, after his team

After the departure of the impressive Jylisa Williams, Kreiner has recruited another player from the States. Amanda Miller, a winger from Pontiac, Michigan, has arrived in town. Miller played two years at Colby Community College in Colby, Kansas where she averaged over 10 points and 6 rebounds per game last season. She was team captain and rookie of the year for the Lady Trojans.

Another recruit is shooting guard Maggie Murphy from Thunder Bay. A graduate of St. Ignatius, she has been with the St. Thomas Tommies for the ACAA in Fredericton for the past two years. In her rookie season at St. Thomas University Maggie developed her skills and played an important role on a team that won the ACAA Championship on top of a silver medal at the CCAA National Championships. In her second year Maggie started several games and helped STU achieve a Top 2 national ranking. She has three years of eligibility remaining. She is quite excited at the thought of playing back in her home town!

In late August Kreiner announced another addition to the team, a point guard that he has been watching for some time. Rachel Webber, from Ancaster,

Ontario, says Kreiner, is "a dynamic game changer that we wanted in our program." Webber played for the Blessed Sacrament team in the Junior Elite League (JUEL), Canada's premier youth women's basketball association. As captain of the team she helped them win a bronze medal, a great improvement over the team's 12th place finish the season before.

### **Women's Volleyball**

Lakehead will begin their OUA campaign with a four-game home stand in the Thunderdome, beginning Oct 23-24 with Nipissing and York, followed two weeks later by a double header versus the Brock Badgers (Nov 7-8).

After missing the playoffs last year the volleyball team has recruited four new players to add to their roster. Catherine Klassen, from Cypress River, Manitoba, has played for the national 18U team, the Shock Volleyball Club out of Winnipeg; Rachel Sweezey, from Ottawa who comes from the nationally accredited Mavericks Volleyball Club, coached by Judi Mousseau, who has produced elite volleyball players for years. She feels, as does Coach Chris Green, that Sweezey is an athletic middle attacker with the ability to play in other positions which is a definite advantage for the TWolves. In early May, coach Green announced another addition to the team, a setter, Haley Mehlhorn from Regina, Saskatchewan. Mehlhorn was a 2014 Senior Girls All-star in Regina, 2013 MVP on her high school team, and is a

Volleyball Canada Center of Excellence athlete in Saskatchewan. The last player to commit to Lakehead is libero Alyssa Genereux. She joins us from the Aurora Storm Volleyball Club and has been coached by one of Canada's best known coaches, Merv Mosher. With the addition of these dedicated players it would seem that the fans are in for an exciting season! For all those interested in sporting events, do come out and support the Thunderwolf teams. You will enjoy the atmosphere and players do respond to enthusiastic fans cheering them on!

### **Hockey**

Fans are in for a new look this year when the team steps on the ice. With several new players joining the ranks this year they will be the youngest team we've had for the last several years. Coach McDonald said at the opening event of the season "I am looking forward to new energy... to new speed and winning more games."

New defensive recruits include the following players: Jake RInguette, a former teammate of Justin Sefton, from the OHL Saginaw Spirits. Justin joined the team part way through the season last year; and Linden Springer, and Tyler Kuntz, both former teammates of sophomore Austin McDonald, who all played for the AHL's Lloydminster Bobcats. These players have their work cut out for them after the departure of veterans Mike Quesnelle, Mitch Fillman, and Nathan Bruyere.

New forwards include: Sam Schutt, who comes from the Kingston Frontenacs; Billy Jenkins, from the Niagara Ice Dogs; and Garick Gray, from the Manitoba Portage Terriers.

Coach McDonald has also added a new goalie, Devin Green, from the Lloydminster Bobcats.

On a sad note, former blue-liner, Shawn Perring, recently passed away at the age of 35. He will be missed by his former teammates and coaches.

The TWolves open their season with an exhibition series against the Manitoba Bison's on Friday, Sept. 25, and Saturday, Sept. 26. Starting time for all games this year has changed to 7:00 PM instead of 7:30 PM.

As Lakehead University is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year, Laurentian Voyageurs will be visiting as part of the celebrations. On October 2 our Thunderwolves Queen's Cup Champion team from 2005-2006 will be honoured during pre-game ceremonies on Friday night and before a special Saturday afternoon game starting at 2:00 PM. That team will be inducted into the Lakehead University Athletic's Wall of Fame.

In the other non-conference schedule, the defending Queen's Cup Champions, the Guelph Gryphons, will come to town for the Crime Stoppers Christmas Challenge.

The team will also travel to Duluth to play the Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs in an exhibition game on Sunday, October 4th,

and then head to Quebec to play the UQTR Patriotes on October 16th and October 17th to open the season. They will return home to play Queens on October 23rd and October 24th.

## **Margot Ponder**

### **WHICH WAY IS THE WIND BLOWING? STAYING ALIVE DURING "INCIDENTS" WITH HAZARDOUS OR EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS**

It is a salutary experience for all members to calculate risks to themselves, family members and neighbours from rail or road accidents involving hazardous or explosive materials. This process comes under the heading of knowing which way the wind is blowing, since that will be among the first questions needing to be answered in order to respond.

A great place to start is the *Emergency Response Guidebook*, published by the transportation departments of Canada, USA, and Mexico. It is a colour-coded handbook designed to speed the process of first response. The subtitle gives the purpose of the book: "A guidebook for first responders during the initial phase of a dangerous goods/hazardous materials incident". The *Guidebook* covers pipelines and road transport as well as rail cars. Intermodal cars have another set of identifiers from tank cars. The book is the reference guide for people first on the scene anywhere in

North America.

In order to mitigate the effects of an “incident”, people need to know as a priority, the type of hazardous or explosive goods that are being transported on that line. Having an advanced degree in chemistry would be a definite asset. The guide estimates the resulting radius needed for evacuation for each type of material. Given a strong wind, that could be up to 8 kilometres from the site in the case of some chemicals.

The first responder is warned to “Resist Rushing In!” but to follow the steps for action. Step one is to identify the material involved from a placard or orange panels on the vehicle (like a rail car), or best documents from the cab of the vehicle (truck or locomotive) or bridge of a ship.

Step two is to identify the 3 digit guide number. The Numbered guide contains the action to be taken to assure public safety under headings: Potential Hazards; Public Safety; and Emergency Response. Under Public Safety for this material. Actions include evacuation. For a large spill, “consider downwind evacuation 300 meters (1000 feet)” is sufficient. For a large fire this becomes 800 meters (1/2 mile) in all directions. For fire involving tanks or car/trailer loads, fire-fighting instructions include such things as “Fight fire from maximum distance or use unmanned hose-holders or monitor nozzles... withdraw

immediately in case of rising sound from venting safety devices or discoloration of the tank” and “For massive fire, use unmanned hose-holders or nozzles; if this is impossible withdraw from area and let fire burn”.

A contact close to the railway indicates that in the event of an “incident”, when possible, first responders adopt a much less formal approach and race to look for the manifest in the locomotive or truck cab rather than consult the placards on the cars in order to determine the freight. Otherwise, they let it burn. This is not great news for the folks who live in proximity.

There is a list of acronyms and abbreviations, which is incomplete, leaving out at least two that deserve discussion all on their own. One is “UN”, United Nations, which has critical significance at a number of levels. The first is the UN Number, which is the single number representing a compound or chemical concoction. Another undefined acronym is “BLEVE”. This stands for “Burning Liquid Expanding Vapour Explosion”, which has an entire chapter devoted to it.

A major defect of the work is that many chemicals can be lumped into a given response, for example, Guide 128 (FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS (NON-POLAR/WATER-IMMISCIBLE) includes refined petroleum products (such as gasoline, benzene as well as crude oil.

Another major defect in the work has been highlighted by recent big explosions at Gogama and Edson: that the basic unit may be multiples rather than the single tank car. This would be useful to know in terms of effective blast radius. At which point are you going to be killed or just have your ear drums wrecked?

Establishing whether you are in the zone possibly going to experience fire, explosions and toxic gas in Northwestern Ontario is not easy but it is the first step for survival. Write your council member or reeve.

**Ian Dew**

### **NATIONAL NEWS. THE 2015 CURAC CONFERENCE**

The 2015 CURAC Conference, its 13th since inception in 2003, took place May 20-22 on the campus of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) is a national federation of retiree organizations at post-secondary institutions across the country, with a current affiliation of 40 local member associations representing as of this date a total of 12,573 individuals. Universities bulk large and retired Faculty predominate, although a few of the affiliated institutions are colleges, and some of the associations include librarians as well as a broader spectrum of former staff. LU retirees are affiliated

through both LUFA (Lakehead University Faculty Association), which is inclusive of retired Emeriti, and RALU (Retirees' Association of Lakehead University), which is open to all retirees of this University.

Hosted by the Retirees' Association of Queen's University, this year's event attracted, according to my rough estimate, nearly 100 attendees from coast to coast, a gathering fairly representative of CURAC's assorted constituency. It comprised three sessions featuring six invited speakers, all but one from the Faculty at Queen's, under the general theme "Looking Ahead", one session of small group discussions, a traditional banquet and the annual AGM, all preceded by a preliminary social evening. The first session was on the topic "Health of Seniors". Three medical experts spoke. Dr Chris Simpson, President of the Canadian Medical Association, entitled his address "Toward a National Seniors' Strategy", chronicled the present inadequacies of a doctor and hospital-based system devised in the 1960s and emphasized the urgency for an integrated home and community-based plan equipped to meet more efficiently the needs of a seniors' population expected to double in the next 15-20 years (See the CMA initiative [demandaplan.ca](http://demandaplan.ca)). In a follow-up entitled "Senior Health and Mental Health", Dr Ken Le Clair, Chair of Geriatric Psychiatry, focused on the cluster of ailments associated with

dementia, the prevailing waste in disconnected treatments of these interconnected conditions, and the value of a more coordinated approach in the use of existing resources. Dr Erica Weir concluded the session with “A Public Health Perspective on Elder Care”, a history of the public health system in Ontario combined with thoughts on potential improvements in its application to seniors’ well-being.

In the second session, Dr John Smol, Professor of Biology and Research Chair in Environmental Change, speaking on a different matter, one of greater concern to the younger generations, posed the question “What is Natural? Living Downwind of the Alberta Oil Sands”. He answered the question with a review of evidence from paleolimnology or the analysis of lake sediments pointing to a relation between tar sand oil extraction and non-natural environmental pollution in the neighboring eco-system.

“The Future of Post-secondary Education” was the subject of the third session. Glenn Vollebregt, President and CEO of St Lawrence College, presented a view on college education: current issues of marketability, accreditation, credit transfer, cooperation with universities and application of new technologies in learning. Dr Brian Frank, Dupont Canada Chair in Engineering Education, Research and Development, gave a view on today’s university learning: factors impacting on its quality, employers’ foremost

expectations and the challenges facing institutions committed to meet the desired goals.

The traditional banquet, held on the grounds of historic Fort Henry, showcased an additional speech delivered by Jim Leech, former President and CEO of Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan: “Does anyone have the guts to change our pension system?” Drawing on his 2013 co-authored book “The Third Rail: Confronting our Pension Failures”, Leech prescribed the creation of a reformed pension system that would ensure for pensioners the security of DB (Defined Benefit) while minimizing the risks of DC (Defined Contribution), a third option designed for sustainability in a changed environment of higher life expectancy and lower interest rates. The festive evening ended with a ceremony of awards for long track record of dedicated service to CURAC and/or local retiree associations. The 2015 honorees were George Brandie (Queen’s), Sandra Pyke (York), Orville Scott (UNB) and John Stager (UBC), not to mention The Retirees’ Association of Queen’s for hosting the conference. In the small group discussions of the final session, participants exchanged views on a variety of specific topics. My own group focused on “University Pension Plans in Ontario”. The crux of the discussion so far as I could participate (I had to leave early owing to my travel schedule) was the feasibility and potential implications of an initiative under current study, a multi-

employer jointly sponsored pension plan for the university sector in Ontario (JSPP), a province-wide plan analogous to Ontario Teachers', OMERS and the like in other public sectors. LU's present and future pensioners can expect to receive news of this important project in the months ahead and they will have to consider carefully the pros and cons of participation in this endeavor. LU retirees had two representatives at this year's event. Happily, Beverley Stefureak is at present on CURAC's Board of Directors. I attended as LU Emeriti's delegate thanks to financial support from LUFA secured out of Emeriti's annual dues (CURAC added a very small subvention). I found the experience extremely informative and stimulating, as I did on an earlier occasion when in 2008 I attended the convention held at Concordia in Montreal. LU retirees' other past delegates have concurred in expressing the same sentiment. CURAC's annual conference provides the only national face-to-face interaction among post-secondary retirees and serves as a unique forum for the exchange of experiences and ideas and their conveyance to the home bases. It is our hope that support for attendance will continue to be possible in the coming years. In spring 2016 the venue will be the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. In 2017 it will be Carleton University in Ottawa. For a more extended coverage of the conference proceedings and further

information on CURAC, its work, policy statements, benefits, newsletters and more, please go to the website [curac.ca](http://curac.ca).

**A. H. Mamoojee**

[amamooje@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:amamooje@lakeheadu.ca)

## **THE GARDEN**

This past year, beginning with the first seeds planted on 12<sup>th</sup> of April, has been a busy time. It is the most productive ever with an amazing amount of learning about the plants and animals; so much so, that it has become an extremely humbling experience.

As for plants that work, the three sisters are having a stellar year right now. The flowers were out of this world with invasive and native species flourishing. In addition we grew, with varying degrees of success, arugula, basil, Brussel sprouts, cabbages, cilantro, onions, peppers, raspberries, rhubarb, spinach, and tomatoes.

As for animals, there are chipmunks, groundhogs, bears, birds and bees. There are new potato bugs and some very small winged creatures that ate arugula ... twice. The bees were late because of the cold and losses from mites and also apparently from nicotinoid chemicals, which are used on farms in the Slate River Valley. The usual relentless lawn-cutting schedule in the vicinity has put the finishing touches, I suspect. There seemed to be many bumble bees late in

the summer, but the only honey bees I saw were walking. Surely this is a bad sign? Speaking of the birds and the bees, the birds had a fine summer all over. The piece below was sent by Dr. Klaus Jericho, formerly a researcher with Health Canada.

*SHE built this nest in 2 days, without a manual. Every cell in her body has the manual. HE did not help. She was very trusting more so than he was. She used mud from the garden to line the nest (two feet away from me, while I was watering), and made a mattress using dry grass. The last week was very crowded.*



*As soon as it was finished she accepted fertilization, and a second male tried to expel the original male chosen. There was a fight. Three to four days after mating she laid 3 eggs.*

*14 days later three young ones appeared*

*and needed feeding by both parents. They never fly directly to the nest. They sit in vicinity and check for enemies before delivering food to the nest.*

*While she was incubating the eggs he was seen to bring her worms: empathy or just programmed to bring food for anything in the nest?*

*I saw one young the next day in the garden. One was much bigger than the other two. How do parents know which one has been fed? or do they know? They leave their nest not to return. One may come back next year, to our tree 2 feet from the patio, if they survive the flight to Arizona or California. Two and a half weeks later all three fled on the early morning of July 14. I removed the nest. They never reuse a nest, for hygienic and safety reasons.*

*The nest was free of any excrement on the inside and outside. Parents eat it or remove it, not to attract enemies (cats, crows, magpies). Are our homes that clean????*

*They can have as many as three clutches in one summer. How many survive the many enemies and dangers? Now the adults are in molt before using the new feathers to fly south.*

*An amazing DNA manual.*

*Klaus*

This is courtesy of Dr. Klaus Jericho, ex researcher at Health Canada, Lethbridge Animal Disease Research Station, Alberta.

By August the crickets were adding to the bird song, providing a sleepy chirruping. Sometimes gardeners could be seen in lawn chairs sitting in contemplation after exertions. A major mystery in September was the appearance of an impressive pile of scat. Its location, just inside the gate on the south side, raises questions that would tax the deductive powers of Hercule Poirot.

We are into the end game now in the garden. We have more work to do learning about harvesting, sharing and preserving as a community of gardeners.

**Ian Dew****PENSION NEWS SUMMER/FALL 2015**

Despite the listless game of charades that seems to have settled over LU Pension Board meetings in matters related to the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) since 2011, it has been a busy summer for the members of the P&B Committee, culminating with meetings of that committee on September 18 and of the LU Pension Board on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

The summer was devoted to deciphering a morass of changing terminology presented in a letter from the lawyer representing the LU Board and another from the FSCO to LU that reiterates the demand for LU to pay the amount owing pensioners. It also grants LU's request for a delay until late October for the required response.

The meeting of the P&B Committee raised more questions than it answered concerning liability and the definition of a retiree (pensioner). When does one "retire" at LU exactly? Another cogent question asked at this meeting (after being raised at Board meetings over a number of years): what is being done to ascertain that people receiving the pension are actually still alive?

The main conclusion on the part of many pensioners is that is that we have no information on which to base decisions as to who will be paid or how. Perhaps LU Board's lawyer really can stall until more of the pensioners cease to become eligible to receive by dying or the law changes, a win-win situation for LU. Members of one of the groups created in the "finalization", i.e., amendment 2007/1, which divided pensioners into three "Groups". That introduced the complication of one group of pensioners identifying their interests as being different from those of other groups of pensioners. LU Pension Board's strategy of sub-divide and conquer appears to be working perfectly. There is even confusion

as to who is in which group. Overall it appears that the issue will be a replay of the June 2009 Google decision, whereby the original documents were found to be written in a shifting and overly complex terminology, generally impossible to understand. The meeting became bogged down on the matter of liability.

At the LU Board Meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup>, there was a crowd jammed into BSGB 3004 to hear news of the FSCO. It was explained that LU was forced to ask for an extension to the deadline set by FSCO, because there was nobody around during the summer to answer the letter. Even the lawyer for LU was unavailable, according to the spokesperson for the board.

Spreading confusion and general obfuscation seem to be have been a successful MO of the current LUFA leadership during their long tenure over the past decade. In the last issue the concept of fairness was raised. Will we see ever this again? Preliminary indications have not been encouraging, in that in LU's scheme of things, holidays for lawyers and administrators have a higher priority than the pleas of a dwindling number of troublesome pensioners. We will need to wait until LU Pension Board responds.

**Ian Dew**

## **DEMOCRACY ON CAMPUS: ACADEMIC FREEDOM AT LU**

A story that is unfolding as the days count down to the federal election is the challenge to the "Fair Elections Act". The Student Union, LUSU, recently signalled focus and tenacity in this fight down to the wire to open voting in the upcoming federal election to individuals otherwise ruled out by under the act.

Roman Jakubowski, President of the Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU) said that LUSU, as an affiliate of CFS, supports the attempt and is ready to fight hard to give every eligible student what they need in order to vote on October 19. The Council of Canadians Thunder Bay Chapter echoes and supports this struggle as a key to empowering all Canadians, especially young and marginalized people. What is unique is that the Council has teamed up with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) on the national scene to launch a court challenge. The latest move on the part of the coalition was to appeal the court's refusal to allow an injunction, which would permit voters to use the Voter Information Card as proof of identity. Keep up with this story minute-by-minute:

<http://canadians.org/democracy>

The central, most important issue in academia in the western world, academic freedom, is dead at LU: dead

and buried. Nobody, but nobody, wants to talk about it and certainly not LUFA. They think they have no need or interest in the concept, and that much is not news. They are more interested in maintaining their own hegemony, which is now over a decade old.

In the academic context democracy is assured by the tenets of academic freedom. Academic freedom is the *sine qua non* of the university. In our institution, the hide-bound faculty union LUFA is the rear-guard of the old guard. Fighting year by year, they have steadfastly refused to even answer the question as to why they have not so far joined colleagues coast-to-coast in the CAUT Academic Freedom Fund. Lack of oversight means locals rule.

LU's strategy of hiring contract workers is good for the short-term bottom line, but it erodes the solid core of academic attributes that define a university. It has released a flood of academic and support workers into the professoriate at LU who have no grounding in the concepts academia or the absolute requirement for academic freedom. RALU is now the only group now even raising the issue at LU. New faculty urgently need a grounding in the Canadian academic tradition.

**Ian Dew**

## **Editor's Message**

### **A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR BEGINS**

How time flies when you are having fun! Year Eight (That's 8) looks to the best and busiest so far. As Shakespeare said, "What's past is prologue". There is much to look forward to. Our association with LUSU gives vitality and a new definition of our university community going forward.

This issue is all business. There no jokes or puzzles to divert. There are no condolences to raise emotion or memory. There is much to be done in the here and now to build our community.

I live in hope that this will finally be the year LU embraces the concept of academic freedom. There is hope that LUFA will finally join the struggle on the side of academics in Canada by joining the CAUT Academic Freedom Fund. Students deserve to know that their degree is respected in the academic world.

**Newsletters. Copyright**

The newsletter is copyright by RALU. Regular readers who are not members are reminded to order a subscription to receive the current issue.

**All issues back to v. 1, number 2 (2008) are available on the RALU site. Issues from prior to this are also available from Library and Archives Canada. [http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ralu\\_news/index.html](http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ralu_news/index.html)**

*RALU News* is published by the Retirees' Association of Lakehead University.

**Contact Us**

Your website is a work in progress. Help us make it useful – visit the site and tell us what could be done better or when something is not working for you. Send comments, content and use it to communicate. Better yet, hop right in: join the Communications Team and give us your ideas and energy.

[ralu.communications01@gmail.com](mailto:ralu.communications01@gmail.com)

**RETIREES' ASSOCIATION OF LAKEHEAD**

**Membership Form – Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 to Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018**

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postal code \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. # ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

**Office use only**

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

**Membership is \$10 annually per individual, with equal status of membership for retirees, spouses and partners. Multi year memberships are available. Annual membership is from Sept 1<sup>st</sup> to Aug 31<sup>st</sup>.** 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 102 Ibbetson Street, Thunder Bay, ON P7A 7J9 . For further information please contact RALU President, David Kemp, [panddkemp@shaw.ca](mailto: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 needs your contribution.

**Benefits of Membership in RALU**

**\*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!**

ISSN: 1918-4581

Subscription free with membership

Individual non member \$20 per issue

© Retirees' Association of Lakehead University

Editor Ian F. Dew

Published by the Retirees' Association of Lakehead University

Back issues of the newsletter to v. 5, no. 4 (2013) are available free from Library and Archives Canada

[http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ralu\\_news/index.html](http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ralu_news/index.html)