

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1997, VOLUME 23.4, Robert H. Johnston, EDITOR

President's Report

(delivered at the January 13, 1997 General Meeting)

Tradition has it that the President reports on the activities of the Association on the occasion of general meetings. Previous *Newsletters* have reported on much of our activities and I will be brief in summarizing those here.

The current Executive took over at the end of April just after the last Annual General Meeting. The framework Memorandum of Agreement over remuneration was already in place, but a major component was left to work out over the summer of the benefits agreement. As well, work in the summer was required on implementation of the agreement regarding funding of MUFA and on arrangements for faculty subsidy for the fee modem pool. Many queries also arose regarding retirement arrangements flowing from the Special Early Retirement Program.

As we have already reported, a benefits agreement was negotiated by the end of September (without resort to arbitration) and we believe we have been able to improve our benefit package while easing the financial burden of the University at the same time. Discussions on further benefit changes are continuing and are likely to be incorporated into this next agreement. We are looking at flexible spending accounts and changes to the tuition waiver/bursary arrangements, among other items.

We have been busy on many other fronts as well and it is worth reminding you of a few of these:

■ Much time was spent preparing for the presentation to the Smith Advisory Panel (to the Provincial Government). We worked jointly with the administration and students on this and at the same time had input into the OCUFA response. It is always difficult to judge success in these ventures, but the Smith Report certainly reflected the views of both administrations and faculty associations about the state of underfunding in the university system.

■ OCUFA has continued to be a subject of much discussion both locally and at OCUFA itself. On this, Hank Jacek has carried a major burden as a member of the Review Team (see the October-November *Newsletter*) and as our representative to OCUFA. While this Review won't be complete until later in the spring, it would appear that OCUFA will survive though it will undergo some changes. We invited Michael Piva (President of OCUFA) to attend this meeting to discuss the role of OCUFA, but his schedule prevented a visit at this time. We will have a major discussion of the role of OCUFA at our April meeting and already have arranged for Michael Piva to attend.

■ On the home front here at McMaster, the Executive has been working with the librarian members of MUFA who are attempting to make major changes in the way negotiations are done and in their working arrangements, particularly on issues relating to their academic roles in the University. Discussions have been slow, but are moving steadily forward. Balloting for a remunerations agreement for 1996/97 closes on January 13, 1997 and we expect to have an agreement in place shortly. We will then begin to negotiate academic issues.

■ Much time has also been spent on the CAWAR issue which I have reported on earlier. No short summary can do this issue full justice and those interested in more details should refer to my column in the September *Newsletter*. In brief, the last few years has seen funding disappear for many soft money positions (many of which carried CAWAR

status) at McMaster, particularly in Health Sciences. When the money began to disappear, promises of University positions began to appear. That is, some faculty holding CAWAR positions produced promises (often in writing) that a University-funded position would be provided should their `soft money' dry up. Though these promises were not approved by the Provost or the President, nor made in accord with University procedures, many were clearly legally binding on McMaster. The problem led Provost Heidebrecht (under pressure from MUFA) to freeze hiring of Special appointments (those leading to CAWAR) and CAWAR appointments, pending a sorting out of how promises were to be accommodated (and prevented) in the future. Much of the CAWAR problem now seems to be resolved. All promises have been discovered (we hope) and plans put in place to deal with them. New appointees will now receive letters on appointment that make clearer their Special or CAWAR status and make clear that informal promises will not be binding on the University. While we expect we have not heard the last of the CAWAR problem, we have made considerable progress in the last six months.

It continues to surprise me how much time we spend on retiree issues. Of course, we will all be retirees some day (we hope) so these are not just of interest to current retirees. We have made progress on e-mail access (making it clear it is available to all retirees) and on the termination option at retirement (taking this option does not mean giving up one's rights as a McMaster retiree) in recent months.

The last *Newsletter* reports on our response to Directions II. This was a team effort by interested members of the Executive. We have yet to receive any response to our article, but we do not seem alone in this. Many who attended Town Hall meetings are still waiting to see if there will be any response to the issues they raised.

Finally, let me note that the President of MUFA now has official observer status on Senate. Senate recently decided it would grant such status to organizations (at the request of student organizations) and MUFA subsequently requested and received observer status. MUFA has always benefitted from an overlap of membership between the Executive and Senate, so the voice aspect is not as important as it might be for other organizations. However, the official observer status will, importantly, allow the President to receive in advance information on what is coming to the closed session of Senate which will be an important addition.



I have enjoyed my term of office so far. It has been a most interesting experience. The President of MUFA meets regularly with the President and the Provost and, when things are working well, as I believe they now are, MUFA is consulted on all matters which might affect the terms and conditions of employment of faculty. In an organization as decentralized as McMaster, initiatives can start in all sorts of places so it still is the case that our input is sometimes overlooked. However, I must report that for the most part the relationship is currently working very well. In fact, talking with those involved in faculty association affairs at other institutions makes it clear we are involved in university affairs in ways most other faculty associations are not and most other faculty associations would envy. I hope this continues at least to the end of my term.

Les Robb

Librarians Unanimously Accept Salary & Benefits Offer

On December 9, 1996, the librarians at McMaster were offered a remunerations package for the year July 1, 1996 to June 30, 1997, retroactive to July 1, 1996. The offer included:

 a 2% merit pool to be allocated according to the grid scale and performance evaluations used in previous years, with resultant salary increases to take effect on December 15, 1996;

 the choice of the MUSA/Exempt Group or the MUFA benefits package;

 and, in recognition of their contribution to the academic mission of the University, a one-time cash payment of \$250 to be added to the January 15, 1997 pay period.

The recommendation from the MUFA Librarians' Remunerations Committee was acceptance of the salary offer and acceptance of the MUFA benefits package, in order to set the precedent of bargaining with the faculty for benefits. An information package and a ballot went out to the 22 MUFA librarian members on January 6, 1997, with a follow-up meeting of the Remunerations Committee and the librarians on January 8. 20 of the 22 ballots mailed were returned. All who voted were in favour of accepting the salary offer and the MUFA benefits package (see Returning Officer's report below).

The next step will be to begin the negotiations of the Terms and Conditions of Employment for Librarians at McMaster as outlined in a brief submitted to the Provost in June 1996, and described in the October-November MUFA *Newsletter*. The Negotiating Team consists of Les Robb as President of MUFA, Bernadette Lynn as Chair of the MUFA Remunerations Committee, and Liz Bayley and Carl Spadoni as librarian representatives. They will meet with the administration team consisting of Jim Johnson (Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Graham Hill (University Librarian), David Wartman (Director of Human Resources), and Michael Ouellette (Human Resources Administrator, Libraries).

1997 promises to be an exciting and productive year for the MUFA librarians!

L. Bayley, Health Sciences Library



I have counted the ballots which were distributed on January 6, 1997 to all professional librarians who are members of the Faculty Association. Two questions were asked:

1. I approve acceptance of items 3(i) and 3(iii) of the remunerations package for professional librarians for the year July 1, 1996 to June 30, 1997, as stated on p. 2 of the memo from H. P. Weingarten to A. L. Robb dated December 9, 1996

**RESPONSES
YES 20 NO 0 SPOILED 0
TOTAL BALLOTS CAST 20**

2. I approve acceptance of the following benefits package:

**RESPONSES
MUSA/Exempt Group 0 MUFA 20 SPOILED 0
TOTAL BALLOTS CAST 20**

D. P. Santry, Returning Officer



Life in The Ruins

BOOK REVIEW



Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996; x + 238 pp.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY? What is its purpose? Sebastian Flyte's decadent club is very different from Raskolnikov's centre of nihilism or Lucky Jim Dixon's post-WW2 red brick career factory, and none of these are like Cardinal Newman's centre of reason and culture. They all, however, now share a common feature þ they have fallen on hard times and, in Bill Reading's words *"We have to recognize that the University is a ruined institution, while thinking what it means to dwell in these ruins without recourse to romantic nostalgia"* (p.169)

From the Université de Montréal, before his untimely death, Bill Readings has reviewed the history and purpose of the University over the last three centuries in an articulate, readable and idiosyncratic text, that attempts to come to terms with the sense of that quotation.

Beginning in Chapter 2 with a spirited review of the current preoccupation of Universities with excellence, which he rejects as an integrating principle having *"the singular advantage of being entirely meaningless"* (p.22), he finds as a consequence that the University *"now serves nothing but itself, another corporation in a world of transnationally exchanged capital"* (p.43). In successive chapters the decline of the nation-state under the globalization of economies is shown to be no longer able to accommodate the Kantian University of reason, the culture-based University of Humboldt and Newman or the literature-based University of XIXth and XXth century Britain and North America. The decline of the University's capacity *"to realize the essence of a nation-state or its people"* (p.51) is found to have *"effectively voided the social mission of the modern University"* (p.89), although not all of us might see its former purpose in these terms.

The abandonment of culture as an essential function of the nation-state is claimed in Chapter 7 to have led to the emergence of programmes of "cultural studies" as a substitute for traditional disciplines such as philosophy, literature, history; Readings' preoccupation is, of course, with the humanities and he gives little attention to the natural sciences as components of culture. Because excellence is no ideology, and has no external referent, the decline of the University is characterized as "dereferralization" in which the *"administrative logic of evaluation replaces the interplay of teaching and research as central to the functioning of the University"* (p.126).

Student activism and the events of 1968 (Chapter 9) mark a renewed interaction between the University and the public sphere, which led to *"The replacement of culture by the discourse of excellence"* (p.150).

The following (and last) three chapters attempt to find a way for the future. The necessity of re-evaluating the role and purpose of teaching is examined in a language which is relentlessly convoluted and opaque; we are told, for example, that *"A belief that we know what teaching is or should be is actually a major impediment to just teaching"* (p.154). The goal of pedagogy is to replace the empty idea of excellence with the "empty name of Thought", and it is necessary to replace the "magister" who instructs, by the "rhetor" who takes account of the audience (not a particularly innovative concept). We are warned that dwelling in the ruins necessitates that we choose *"something other than offer ourselves up for tourism: the humanities as cultural manicure, the social sciences as travelogue, the natural sciences as the frisson of real knowledge and large toys"* (p.172). The book ends with a bleak prospect of our becoming a community of dissensus, where *"the attempt is made to think the social bond without recourse to a unifying idea"* (p.191).

The text is exhaustively referenced and complemented with 43 pages of footnotes. The book is well-made and typographical errors are virtually non-existent.

Although the theme is the decay of one of the major achievements of Western civilization, the book is not overtly

pessimistic. I would have been happy to find Bill Readings full of proposals to rebuild the ruins, but the pervasive social climate of the late XXth century eschews great expectations. Whether every argument is convincing, or even comprehensible, is immaterial. It is a book for our time.

*Denis M. Shaw,
Professor Emeritus, Geology*

Antony Derek Hammond

**Professor, School of Art, Drama & Music
1938-1996**

McMaster University lost a valued scholar, teacher, administrator and colleague when Tony Hammond succumbed to cancer on Friday, December 13, 1996. At the time he was in Pittsburg, preparing to undergo further experimental treatment in his courageous and dignified battle with the disease.

Tony was born and educated in New Zealand, receiving his PhD from Auckland in 1970. His academic career in Canada began at York University in 1966, and he came to McMaster as Lecturer in English in 1969. In 1989 he became Professor of Drama and English, reflecting his association with both disciplines.

He was Chair of the Department of Drama from 1989 to 1992, and Founding Director of the School of Art, Drama & Music at its inception in 1995. His broad background in and love for the arts, combined with his enthusiasm for the innovative direction heralded by the new School, made him the ideal choice to lead the three amalgamated Departments.

Tony's scholarship was focused on Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and he was working, right up until his death, as Textual Editor for *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of John Webster*, Volume I of which was published in 1995. He had a lifelong love of music, and as a boy even contemplated a career as a professional singer. This interest manifested itself in his later activities as critic and expert in the field of opera. Indeed, Hugh Fraser, in an article in *The Hamilton Spectator* published shortly after Tony's death, referred to him as "one of my greatest teachers".

Those of us fortunate enough to have known Tony well remember him as a warm and loving individual, brilliant in his analysis of the human condition, exceptionally disciplined and hard-working, and always willing to help and encourage his colleagues in their endeavours.

A memorial service was held on December 21, 1996 at All Saints Anglican Church, where Tony had been a member of the choir. It was attended by a broad spectrum of friends from the academic and local community; one could not fail to notice both the large number and the diversity of the people that had been affected by Tony Hammond during his tragically short life.

*Hugh Hartwell, Director
School of Art, Drama & Music*



Announcements



Modem Pool Funding

[circulated previously on e-mail]

If you have logged on to your computer through the fee modem pool since January 9, you might have noticed an increase in your paid funding (account balance). This is because another \$40 (80 hours) was added to the account of each faculty member (for a total of \$80 or 160 connect time).

As you may recall, in our last round of negotiations, we negotiated that a pool of money (\$20,000) would be set aside to provide financial help to faculty members using the modem pool. We began with a very conservative estimate of how much we could allow per faculty member and not exhaust the \$20,000. A review of the first three months of use indicated that we could easily increase the amount and, through the Joint Committee, have now done so.

Those of you who spent more than \$40 since September, when the first contribution was put into your account, might be wondering about a rebate. I am sorry to say that we have not negotiated any rebates because it is administratively complex and we agreed when we first negotiated these funds to keep the administration as simple as possible. Instead, we have worked on the assumption that if someone has already spent more than \$40, that person will surely use all of the next \$40 by June 30, 1997 as well.

Les Robb

Policy on Electronic Mail Accounts for Retired Faculty

It is agreed that provision of e-mail computer accounts for retired faculty members is to be treated similarly to the provision of mail boxes or library cards. All retired faculty should have access to an e-mail account on the same terms as active faculty. Like the mail box or library card, the e-mail account is to be used for University or academic business. The account may be accessed from University computers or by modem. In the latter case, if the retired faculty member wishes a fee modem account, this is also available and can be arranged (for example, through the purchase of vouchers at the Bookstore or by provision of a research account number).

Given past experience with illegitimate use of computer accounts by "hackers", it is recognized that for management purposes it might be necessary to require retired faculty to renew the e-mail computer account from time to time, or for CIS to remove accounts that are inactive over a long period of time.

This policy shall be reviewed no later than five years after its implementation.

Approved by the Joint Committee

December 9, 1996

ATTENTION

RETIRED FACULTY

If you would like to be included on the Faculty Association's e-mail Distribution List, "g-mufa", and/or the Association's chat line, "g-mufagab", please send an e-mail to that effect to "mufa@mcmaster.ca".

OCUFA Teaching & Academic Librarianship Awards

LAST REMINDER:

DEADLINE for receipt of nominations: **February 14, 1997.**

INQUIRIES TO: 416-979-2117 or your Faculty Association Office (ext. 24682; mufa@mcmaster.ca)

House for Sale

Beautiful 1883 brick Victorian house located on Best Street in Dundas. Formal living and dining rooms, large country kitchen, main floor family room modern bath, 3+1 bedrooms, large attic, and central air. Architectural gem in move-in condition. Private Sale þ \$325,000. For more information, please call 627-2142.

McMaster Student Opportunity Fund

As many of you already know, McMaster has launched the McMaster Student Opportunity Fund, a new program under which the Government of Ontario will match, dollar for dollar until March 31, 1997, all donations and pledges committed to student financial aid. The Executive of the Faculty Association passed a motion at its December 18 meeting supporting this initiative in principle and agreeing to encourage MUFA members to contribute to the Fund.

At the General Meeting on January 13, 1997, members discussed whether the Association, itself, should contribute to the Fund. The consensus of those members present was that MUFA should contribute \$2500 to the Fund, thus establishing a McMaster University Faculty Association award or bursary.

We would like your input. Please let us know if you agree or disagree with those at the General Meeting. Drop us a line (HH 103A, e-mail: mufa@mcmaster.ca) or give us a call (ext. 24682) as soon as possible as the Executive will be considering this issue in early February.



Dear Faculty Colleagues:

Members of the Selection Committee for the **McMaster University Distinguished Alumni/Alumnae Award** meet on an annual basis to consider nominees for this award. Two awards are granted each year; one in the Arts (comprising Humanities, Performing and Fine Arts, Social Sciences, and Business), and the other in the Sciences (comprising Science, Engineering and Health Sciences). For the 1996 award, the Committee selected the following recipients:

(Science category)

Dr. Clifford M. Will, Professor of Physics, Washington University

(Arts category)

Dr. Marianne Abeles Ferber, Professor of Economics, U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

I invite you to consider recommending a candidate to the Selection Committee for the 1997 award. Each entry is valid for three years, and therefore, nominees nominated in 1995 and 1996 will be re-considered along with those who will be nominated for the first time in 1997

Nominations must be received by **MARCH 14, 1997**. Nomination forms are available through Roger Trull, Chair of the Selection Committee. Please contact his office in GH 110, Ext. 24677.

These awards are an extremely important element in our program for recognition of outstanding alumni, and I hope you will encourage participation in this competition.

Yours sincerely,
Peter George



Actual Newspaper Headlines

(collected by actual journalists)

-  Hospitals Are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors
-  New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group
-  Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
-  British Union Finds Dwarfs in Short Supply
-  Man Minus Ear Waives Hearing
-  Typhoon Rips through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead
-  Old School Pillars Are Replaced by Alumni
-  Man Struck by Lightning Faces Battery Charge
-  Red Tape Holds Up New Bridge
-  Survivor of Siamese Twins Joins Parents
-  Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case
-  Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
-  Iraqi Head Seeks Arms
-  If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last A While
-  Cold Wave Linked To Temperatures
-  Sex Education Delayed, Teachers Request Training
-  Eye Drops Off Shelf
-  Two Sisters Reunited after 18 Years in Checkout Counter

1997/98 Executive

If you are interested in serving on the Faculty Association Executive or know of someone who would make an excellent candidate, please give us a call (ext. 24682) or drop us an e-mail note (mufa@mcmaster.ca). DEADLINE - FEBRUARY 15, 1997.

If you wish to email a comment now, click here -- [MUFA](#)