

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1996, VOLUME 23.2, Robert H. Johnston, EDITOR

OCUFA

under review

Since last Spring, some OCUFA directors and local faculty association presidents have been meeting to review the structure and functioning of OCUFA and to suggest major changes to our provincial organization. The Review process was approved by the OCUFA Board in the spring, but has operated quite independently of the OCUFA Board and Executive. Some of the local associations whose officials are involved are currently under severe economic duress. The associations with representatives on the review team include McMaster, Ottawa, Queen's, and Western, with input from Nipissing and Windsor. I am McMaster's representative.

This Committee has met a number of times alone, including in Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto and here at McMaster (August). We have met with the Executive and the Board of Directors of OCUFA. The presidents of member associations were sent questionnaires, mainly designed by me, and also analyzed by me.

Unfortunately, the stress of some local association budgets and the perceived resistance to change by the President of OCUFA, the senior staff and some Executive members and OCUFA directors brought this review process to a halt after a preliminary report was written in September. Failure to reform the organization would appear to mean that Nipissing, Queen's, and Western may leave OCUFA. They will join the Carleton association which left a few years ago. The President of the faculty association at Carleton gave testimony before the Review Group and later sent an extensive letter to the Committee. We were hoping Carleton would rejoin as a consequence of reform brought about by the Review.

The presidents of all the provincial associations met in Toronto on November 1 and their efforts seem to have put the Review back on track. However, it remains to be seen whether reform will actually occur.

The position of the MUFA Executive has been that the main issue is the reform of OCUFA so that it will be a more effective organization. We believe the officers, the staff and directors of OCUFA need to streamline the organization and to mobilize better the local associations and their membership for a public relations and lobbying defense of universities and university professors who deliver the core educational and research services.

What will happen now? Even if more universities leave, OCUFA will likely carry on with reduced services. For example, there would no longer be a provincial Status of Women Committee; its functions would be performed by the CAUT Status of Women Committee. Also a closer coordination of collective bargaining/remunerations information provision will be worked out with CAUT. Hopefully, a more effective OCUFA will emerge even if it will be a downsized one.

*Henry J. Jacek,
Past President and OCUFA Director*

Librarians as Members of the McMaster Academic Community

Academic librarians are partners with faculty members in contributing to the scholarly and intellectual functions of universities. Like faculty, librarians are skilled professionals who play an integral role in the pursuit, dissemination and structuring of knowledge in the university environment. Librarians contribute to the research and teaching activities of universities through their roles in collecting, organizing and disseminating information resources, both printed and electronic and in assisting and training faculty and students in the retrieval and management of information. Many librarians also serve on Faculty and University committees, and are involved in scholarly activities either in the field of library and information science or in other academic disciplines.

The mutual goal of academic excellence has led faculty and librarians at Canadian and American universities to work cooperatively and productively in faculty associations and collective bargaining units. Librarians negotiate along with the faculty in both certified and special plan environments. In Ontario, librarians and faculty negotiate cooperatively at 11 institutions (Carleton, Guelph, Lakehead, Laurentian, Ottawa, Queen's, Toronto, Trent, Wilfrid Laurier, Windsor and York).

In 1968 the McMaster Professional Librarians' Association (MUPLA) was established. The objectives of MUPLA were stated in Section 3 of its constitution:

Section 3.2: "To promote the welfare of the members, and to speak for them, particularly in regard to their status within the University, and to work for the establishment of true academic status, with all the rights and responsibilities thereof, for the professional librarians at this University."

During the late 1980s it became apparent to librarians on this campus that MUPLA did not have the human or financial resources to actively and effectively participate in the growing number of University committees or the increasingly complex salary and benefits negotiations. The University administration was also seeking to negotiate with larger groups.

When MUPLA examined the alternatives, two factors were essential: the ability for all librarians to negotiate together, regardless of supervisory or administrative status; and the capability of working within a community having similar interests. MUFA was chosen as meeting both of these criteria, and after discussions and votes by both parties, librarians became eligible for full membership in June, 1995. Since that time approximately 70% of eligible librarians have joined MUFA.

In June 1996, a brief outlining proposals for "Terms and Conditions of Employment for Librarians at McMaster" was submitted by MUFA to the Provost. The brief proposed a process and a two-year timetable for developing a document on terms and conditions of employment. Since that time discussions between MUFA and the University have centred on the negotiating process.

Central to the brief is the recognition of academic status: the rights, duties and responsibilities of librarians which derive from the academic, professional and collegial nature of their work in the Library and in the University, and from their position as members of the academic community. Other major issues to be negotiated include a review of the classification and ranking system for librarians, changes to the paid development leave programme, workload, and a professional development allowance.

The majority of universities in Canada already officially recognize the academic status of librarians, with the rights and responsibilities outlined in the "CAUT/CACUL Guidelines on Terms and Conditions of Employment for University Librarians". The process is now underway for McMaster, a major research University, to do the same.

*L. Bayley and E. Hayton
Librarians Negotiating Committee*

Public Opinion Supports Increased Government Spending on University Education

Extensive public opinion research conducted for the federal government indicates that Canadians want increased government support for health services and university education. This research was carried out for the Department of Finance in November and December of last year. Indeed, the random sample of Canadians told the researchers, Ekos Research and Associates Inc., that they preferred a budget deficit and/or higher taxes rather than cutting health care (73%) or university education (59%). In other major programme areas such as defense, welfare and social assistance, a majority favour a spending reduction instead.

Why do Canadians see spending on universities as such a high priority? Canadians believe that university education is critical in our ability to cope with economic restructuring and global competitiveness. The public believes that a well-educated populace is necessary for our economy to prosper now and in the future. On a personal level, ordinary Canadians see a direct link between university education and their children's life chances. The researchers say it is important for the public support of governments that they not be seen as hurting university education. The public does not distinguish between federal or provincial responsibilities in this area. Both governmental levels are seen as responsible for the provision of a highly accessible, first-class quality university system.

Although a strong majority support for university funding **over** deficit reduction and not raising taxes exists across Canada, support for this principle is, if anything, higher in Ontario despite the massive provincial cuts to university education over the past year and a half. People out west in Alberta and B.C. gave universities the least support (low 50s). The strong support for universities cut across income, gender, employment status, education and age categories.

It is clear, despite what the federal and Ontario governments have done to universities, we have strong, solid support from the general public. Of course, the results show that health services still remain the public's top priority -- no surprises there. But the lesson for us is that we must go out and tell the public how badly we are being treated by the Canadian and Ontario governments. The survey results indicate the public will not be forgiving to federal Liberals and Ontario Conservatives when the truth of the severe government cutbacks is placed before the people.

Henry J. Jacek
Past President

John E. Thomas

Professor Emeritus, Philosophy

A Personal Tribute

On October 14, 1996 John Thomas, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Philosophy, died of a sudden and unexpected heart attack in Parry Sound, while spending Thanksgiving weekend with his family. All those who had the good fortune of knowing this remarkable man, will miss him greatly. But we can all take comfort in the fact that John's life was by any measure a full and happy one, and in the fact that John "went out" as he often said he wanted to go out: quickly, with a minimum of fuss, and with "no heroics."

John Thomas was born in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales in 1926. Following moves to England and Scotland, where he met his

wife and best friend Mo, John emigrated to Canada in 1947 to assume the role of student minister at St. Andrew's Church in St. Catharines. In 1948, John began his long association with McMaster University by enrolling as an undergraduate student in philosophy and divinity. Upon receiving both his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Divinity degrees, John made his way to Duke University where he earned, in 1958, his MA in philosophy and in 1964 his PhD. John joined McMaster's Philosophy Department in 1959 and served as its Chair from 1966-72. For two decades he taught McMaster's largest and most popular course, Moral Issues, which dealt with a wide range of topics in biomedical ethics. It has been estimated that John Thomas taught more students than any other professor in the history of McMaster University.

From 1985 till his "retirement" in 1991 John was an Associate Member of the Department of Medicine, where he helped develop ethics curricula, and routinely conducted workshops and seminars on biomedical ethics; he also served on a variety of important committees, most notably, the Clinical Ethics Committee. Following his retirement, John continued as a part-time consultant in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

John Thomas's scholarly career was long and distinguished and his interests were wide-ranging, extending from fundamental questions of theology and metaphysics to thorny issues of applied ethics. He was as much at home asking whether we can ever prove that God exists as he was asking questions about the morality of abortion or the morality of using foetal tissue implants in the treatment of patients with Parkinson's Disease. John published four books, three in medical ethics, and one in Ancient Greek philosophy entitled *Musings on the Meno*. At the time of his death, John and I had begun working on the third edition of our *Well and Good: Case Studies in Biomedical Ethics*.

In the Fall of 1991, the Department of Philosophy celebrated the distinguished career of John Thomas by hosting a retirement party in his honour. The event took place in Convocation Hall and was attended by well over a hundred people. I was among those who were asked to speak briefly about John Thomas. As a final tribute to my dear friend and colleague, I here reiterate the words that I used on that earlier occasion:

Today we honour an extraordinary man who has enriched the lives of countless people. I mean the thousands of people who have heard John Thomas lecture or who had read his many writings, as well as those privileged enough to have known John personally. I consider myself fortunate in being a member of all of these groups. There is much I could tell you about this wonderful man, but I thought I'd focus on a few of the things he has taught me during the eight years we have known each other.

*John taught me a good deal about philosophy. I have, for example, learned to be more tolerant of competing views, to see that each side in a philosophical dispute usually has something valuable to contribute and that the truth often lies somewhere in between. I already knew this, but came to appreciate it more fully during my many conversations with John about philosophy, especially during the long hours we spent together writing **Well and Good**. Co-authoring that book with John was one of the most pleasurable experiences of my academic career. His energy, dedication, perseverance and insight were a wonder to behold. John made what could have been a drudgery into an immensely rewarding experience.*

*The most important things John taught me, however, have nothing at all to do with philosophy. They have to do with life and the things that really matter. As you all know, John is a tireless individual whose plate is always more than full. If he isn't off to a speaking engagement, he's off to work on a paper, see a student, or attend a committee meeting. Yet John always has time for people. He has time to help someone sort through a personal problem, or just to sit and chat about the state of the world, the university, medicine, or whatever else a person might be interested in talking about. I have never in my life seen a person any busier than John. I have also never seen a person as giving with his time and energies. John has taught me that one **can** combine a career with a genuine concern for other people.*

Another thing I have learned from John is the value it's possible to find in one's family. To hear John talk about his beloved Mo, or about Ian and his "hoser" brother Dave, "the boys" as he affectionately calls them, is to observe a man who epitomizes all that's good about family life. I have never known a person more in love with his spouse, or prouder of his children's accomplishments and of the persons they have become. When I think of what a husband and father should be like, I think of John Thomas. As in so many

other areas, he sets the standard to which most of us can only aspire.

I could go on embarrassing this exceptional man with further reflections on his outstanding qualities. But by now I'm sure John is squirming in his seat so I'll leave it at that. Let me close by adding only one thing. I consider myself truly fortunate to count John Thomas among my valued colleagues and teachers. I consider myself even more fortunate to count him among my dearest of friends. Thanks John.

W. J. Waluchow
Chair, Department of Philosophy



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ballot Results

We hereby confirm the ballots to the question:

I hereby approve the Agreement regarding Benefits (dated September 26, 1996) agreed to by the Faculty Benefits Review Committee on behalf of the Joint Administration/Faculty Association Committee on Faculty Remuneration.

Yes -- 166 No -- 15 Spoiled -- 1
Total Ballots -- 182

Richard A. Hoecht, C.A.

House for Rent

Westdale. Fully furnished house with 1 bedroom and 2 studies, piano, woodstove, hardwood floors, very bright and quiet, 20-minute walk to McMaster, available for rent December 15, 1996 to July 1, 1997 (negotiable). Suit visiting faculty. \$950 per month, plus utilities. Contact: Dr. G. Slade, ext. 27079; home -- 905-526-8240; slade@mcmaster.ca

OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards

NOMINATIONS are invited from individuals, informal groups of faculty or students, or both, and such organizations

as local faculty associations, faculty or college councils, university committees concerned with teaching and learning, librarians, local student councils, departments, alumni, etc.

GUIDELINES to assist in organizing a nomination should be consulted by prospective nominators and are available on request from your Faculty Association Office or the Provincial Office of OCUFA.

Nominations must include a covering nomination form, a nominator's brief, and sufficient evidence, from as many sources as possible, to make it clear that outstanding work deserving of recognition has been done.

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

The original and six copies of the submission should be sent to:

OCUFA Teaching & Academic Librarianship Awards Committee

27 Carlton Street, Suite 400

Toronto, Ontario M5B 1L2

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

Retirement Options

FOUR SEMINARS beginning at 11:30 a.m.

: Tuesday, November 19
Wednesday, November 20
Tuesday, December 3
Wednesday, December 4

PLACE: The West Room of the Faculty Club (Lunch will be served)

REGISTER: by calling Bick Financial Security Corporation, 648-9559 or 1-800-268-1886

A Humid Recital Stirs Bangkok

[This review by Kenneth Langbell appeared in the English language Bangkok Post. It was made available by Martin Bernheimer of the Los Angeles Times.]

THE RECITAL, last evening in the chamber music room of the Erawan Hotel by U.S. pianist Myron Kropp, the first appearance of Mr. Kropp in Bangkok, can only be described by this reviewer and those who witnessed Mr. Kropp's performance as one of the most interesting experiences in a very long time.

A hush fell over the room as Mr. Kropp appeared from the right of the stage, attired in black formal evening-wear with a small white poppy in his lapel. With sparse, sandy hair, a sallow complexion and a deceptively frail looking frame, the man who has repopularized Johann Sebastian Bach approached the Baldwin Concert Grand, bowed to the audience and placed himself upon the stool.

It might be appropriate to insert at this juncture that many pianists, including Mr. Kropp, prefer a bench, maintaining that on a screw-type stool they sometimes find themselves turning sideways during a particularly expressive strain. There was a slight delay, in fact, as Mr. Kropp left the stage briefly, apparently in search of a bench, but returned when informed that there was none.

AS I HAVE mentioned on several other occasions, the Baldwin Concert Grand, while basically a fine instrument, needs constant attention, particularly in a climate such as Bangkok. This is even more true when the instrument is as old as the one provided in the chamber music room of the Erawan Hotel. In this humidity the felts which separate the white keys from the black tend to swell, causing an occasional key to stick, which apparently was the case last evening with the D in the second octave.

During the "raging storm" section of the D-Minor Toccata and Fugue, Mr. Kropp must be complimented for putting up with the awkward D. However, by the time the "storm" was past and he had gotten into the Prelude and Fugue in D Major, in which the second octave D plays a major role, Mr. Kropp's patience was wearing thin.

Some who attended the performance later questioned whether the awkward key justified some of the language which was heard coming from the stage during softer passages of the Fugue. However, one member of the audience, who had sent his children out of the room by the midway point of the Fugue, had a valid point when he commented over the music and extemporaneous remarks of Mr. Kropp that the workman who had greased the stool might have done better to use some of the grease on the second octave D. Indeed, Mr. Kropp's stool had more than enough grease and during one passage in which the music and lyrics were both particularly violent, Mr. Kropp was turned completely around.

Whereas before his remarks had been aimed largely at the piano and were therefore somewhat muted, to his surprise and that of those in the chamber music room he found himself addressing himself directly to the audience.

BUT SUCH THINGS do happen, and the person who began to laugh deserves to be severely reprimanded for this undignified behaviour. Unfortunately, laughter is contagious, and by the time it had subsided and the audience had regained its composure Mr. Kropp appeared somewhat shaken. Nevertheless, he swivelled himself back into position facing the piano and, leaving the D Major Fugue unfinished commenced on the Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor.

Why the concert grand piano's G key in the third octave chose that particular time to begin sticking I hesitate to guess. However, it is certainly safe to say that Mr. Kropp himself did nothing to help matters when he began using his feet to kick the lower portion of the piano instead of operating the pedals as is generally done.

Possibly it was this jarring or the un-Bach-like hammering to which the sticking keyboard was being subjected. Something caused the right front leg of the piano to buckle slightly inward, leaving the entire instrument listing at approximately a 35-degree angle from that which is normal. A gasp went up from the audience, for if the piano had actually fallen several of Mr. Kropp's toes if not both his feet, would surely have been broken.

It was with a sigh of relief therefore, that the audience saw Mr. Kropp slowly rise from his stool and leave the stage. A few men in the back of the room began clapping and when Mr. Kropp reappeared a moment later it seemed he was responding to the ovation.

Apparently, however he had left to get a red-handled fire ax which was hung back stage in case of fire, for that was what was in his hand.

MY FIRST REACTION at seeing Mr. Kropp begin to chop at the left leg of the grand piano was that he was attempting to make it tilt at the same angle as the right leg and thereby correct the list. However, when the weakened legs finally collapsed altogether with a great crash and Mr.Kropp continued to chop, it became obvious to all that he had no intention of going on with the concert.

The ushers, who had heard the snapping of piano wires and splintering of sounding board from the dining room, came rushing in and, with the help of the hotel manager, two Indian watchmen and a passing police corporal, finally succeeded in disarming Mr. Kropp and dragging him off the stage. 



General Meeting

Monday, January 13, 1997

2:00 p.m.

Council Chambers (GH 111)

