

# MAFA NEWSLETTER

**Mount Allison Faculty Association**  
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NOVEMBER 2008

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that all of you are having a good year and that you enjoyed the glorious weather in October.

The past several months have been busy ones. Much of my and the Executive's time was spent taking care of day-to-day business: making sure that terms of the Collective Agreement are respected, speaking and meeting with individual members to discuss their concerns, communicating with other faculty associations and organizations, and so on.

Since the summer, I've spent considerable time working with the FNBFA (the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations). As I told you in September, the FNBFA has been attempting to coordinate a response to the Graham government's *Action Plan* on post-secondary education. Admittedly, it is still too early to know how implementation of the *Action Plan* will affect Mount Allison, but there are reasons to be suspicious of some of the government's goals.

Working with the Employer, MAFA helped to draft a motion respecting university autonomy, and I'm happy to report that this was unanimously passed by the Mount Allison Senate in October. The senates at the other universities in the province have passed or will pass similar resolutions, so a common front is being formed, one that includes faculty associations and university administrators.

MAFA also assisted the FNBFA in its presentation before hearings on the Graham government's proposed legislation on freedom of information and protection of privacy. Our Professional Officer Geoff Martin helped draft the FNBFA's submission.

Finally, as we informed you, MAFA won a grievance at arbitration last summer, but the Employer decided to take the decision to judicial review. The hearing will occur in January, and we are currently preparing for it.

I hope that the rest of the semester goes well and that you have a rejuvenating and much deserved rest in December.

Peter Brown

Please attend the fall General  
Meeting of the

Mount Allison Faculty  
Association

Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm  
Avard Dixon G12

## **TWO PART-TIME MEMBERS WIN FIRST 'RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES' STIPENDS**

Congratulations to Ian Crutchley (Music) and Rob Cupido (History/Continuous Learning), the successful candidates for the first-ever 'research and creativity stipends' available to part-time members of MAFA, created by Article 29.02 of the part-time collective agreement.

Ian was awarded the equivalent of a teaching stipend (currently \$5068) for a creative project in which he will compose his first string quartet. Rob was awarded a stipend to support his research in a project entitled "History on the Move: Reinventing *La Fête Nationale* and Reimagining *La Patrie, 1924-1939.*"

Up to two stipends will be awarded annually to current

part-time members of MAFA by the Provost/Vice-President (Academic and Research), based on recommendations from the Senate Research and Creative Activities Committee. Applications for 2009-10 awards will be due August 31, 2009.

### **2008 WAS A BUSY YEAR FOR STRIKE SUPPORT**

Every year MAFA budgets funds to support academic staff associations on strike, and 2008 was a busy year. Early in 2008 MAFA made three contributions of \$1000 to the St. Thomas University Faculty Association (FAUST), which was locked out during the Christmas season, 2007, and was then on strike for many weeks. MAFA also contributed \$1000 to the striking associations at Wilfried Laurier, University of Sudbury, University of Windsor, and Brandon University.

MAFA has on two occasions benefited from this type of support, and our membership has always known that success elsewhere in the country makes it easier to negotiate good collective agreements here.

sabbaticals should teach the same number of courses over a seven-year cycle as members who take a single, full-year sabbatical.

The arbitrator agreed with MAFA's position, so that a member who teaches 3 three-credit courses during their teaching term when they take their first half-sabbatical, should teach two courses in the teaching term of their second half-sabbatical.

However, the Employer has decided to take this decision to Judicial Review before the Court of Queen's Bench in Moncton, arguing that the arbitrator erred in this decision.

The MAFA Executive is disappointed that this issue is going to court. While the executive is optimistic that the Court will find in our favour, this will be an expensive endeavour. In September, the cost of preparing to defend this arbitration decision for this appeal has cost you, our members, \$3916.58, and the expenditures are not over. This seems like a lot of money, especially when we're in an era in which employers point to their tight budgets and the negative impact of troubled financial markets.

### **MAFA MEMBER ATTENDS CAUT STATUS OF WOMEN CONFERENCE**

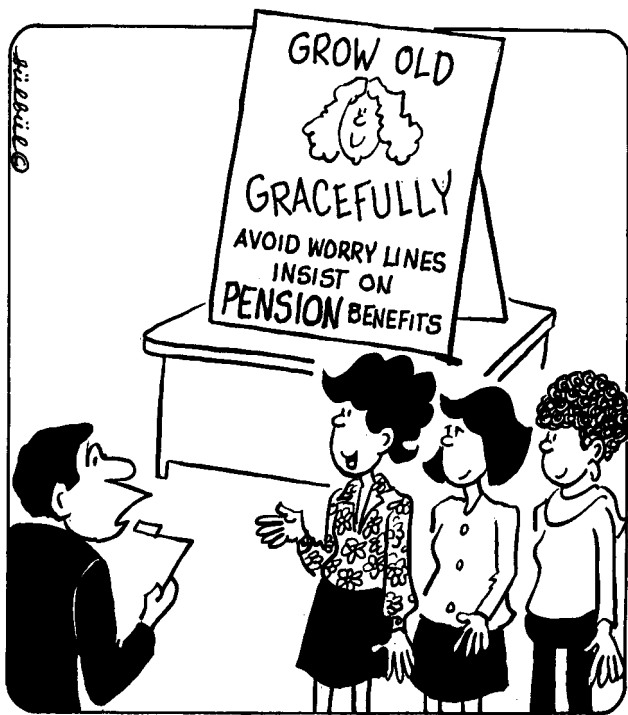
The CAUT Women's Conference—"Mobilizing in an Era of Restructuring"—met in Ottawa, October 16-18. In a series of lectures, round table discussions and break-out groups, participants explored changing trends in university administration and the effects of such on the academic workplace and equity issues.

Here are some points that stand out. There is a growing competitive environment in which pressure to produce more research and/or seek outside funding for research is matched by heavier teaching workloads. In accompaniment, there is a culture of assessment as administrators seek to measure performance through point systems for publications—measurement of quantity but not quality—and to tie internal funding to such measurements. In this process, workplace equity takes a back seat to "excellence."

Further, catch-phrases and hollow policies replace real efforts to achieve equity. Policies which tout "courtesy and respect" as necessary to equitable relations in the workplace—yet effectively bury power differences and eliminate advocacy for victims of sexual harassment, for instance—are increasingly commonplace.

There is pressure for teaching evaluations to be accessible to administrators, and for standardized testing which supposedly will measure academic effectiveness in the classroom. In many universities, administrators seek to control the curriculum and press for practices which, while efficient, limit collegial process and academic autonomy.

In session after session this drive to shift



"We're doing a seminar on growing old gracefully."

### **MAFA AND EMPLOYER WILL BE IN COURT IN JANUARY FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW**

As members may remember, this past summer MAFA won a grievance before arbitration on the teaching duties of members in the social sciences and humanities who take successive half-sabbaticals. MAFA argued that under the current collective agreement, members who take half-

workplace control from academic staff to administrators was the subject of intense discussion and questioning. Indeed, how to mobilize for equity in an era of restructuring was a question we did not satisfactorily answer, although the commitment to equity was certainly renewed.

Elaine Naylor

**REPORT ON THE CAUT DEFENCE FUND,  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of the CAUT Defence Fund was held in Fredericton October 17-18. As usual, almost all of the 38 member associations had their Trustee(s) or alternates present - they represent over 18,000 academic staff.

The agenda was long and only highlights are mentioned. Associations which had been on strike reported on their experience. The Treasurer reported that the Fund's net assets decreased in the 2008 fiscal year for the first time since 1998. This is a result of the unprecedented five strikes at Defence Fund members during 2007-08 and payment of almost \$2M in strike pay. By August 31 2008 net assets actually exceeded \$20M for the first time. However, the recent costly and relatively lengthy strikes at Windsor and Brandon have cost the Fund about \$1.25M in strike

pay already this academic year.

In view of the situation, the Planning and Policy Committee recommended no increase in strike pay despite the goal of making inflationary increases.

The Committee also proposed that its 2008 version undertake a comprehensive review of Defence Fund governing documents and its financial health. A proposal to provide a full course release to the Defence Fund President was passed.

Larry Hale of UPEI was re-elected President for a second two-year term. Your Trustee was re-elected to the Planning and Policy Committee.

Bob Rosebrugh

**MAFA 2008-2009 EXECUTIVE**

- Peter Brown - President (English)*
- Jeff Lilburn - Vice President (Library)*
- Paul Berry - Past President (Commerce)*
- Maritza Fariña - Treasurer (Modern Languages and Literature)*
- Rob Cupido - Unit 2 (History/Continuous Learning)*
- Zoe Finkel - Membership (Geography and Environment)*
- Loralea Michaelis - Grievance (Political Science)*
- Laurie Ricker - Collective Bargaining (Math and CS)*

