

# MAFA NEWSLETTER

## Mount Allison Faculty Association

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It's been **213** days since the expiration of our two collective agreements...

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Negotiations have been taking up a huge amount of time this year. As you can read below, MAFA expects that with the release of the Conciliation Board report, we will be at the end of the conciliation period. If there is still no agreement between the two parties, we will be nearer to job action. There are, however, still a few steps prior to job action, and we still hope that it will be possible to reach a collective agreement without a strike.

Rick Hudson  
President

### NEGOTIATIONS

We had a good Members' meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Steve Law went over the state of negotiations, the meetings of the Conciliation Board (January 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> in Moncton), and the issues remaining on the table.

The Conciliation Board started its meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup> after a slight delay: due to the storm, the Board members were stuck in Halifax on the 12<sup>th</sup> and the start of the meeting was pushed off to the afternoon of the 13<sup>th</sup>. The following day, the Board determined that no agreement was likely during the time allocated, so the two sides were asked to prepare final presentations, which were delivered on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup>. Originally, the Board had considered continuing with the two sides until Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>, but given the

distance between the parties on key issues, it abandoned this plan.

It appears that the Board will present its report to the Minister by the deadline she set of January 31<sup>st</sup>. In the meantime, the two chief negotiators had a brief scheduling meeting on Friday January 21<sup>st</sup>, and then on Wednesday (the 26<sup>th</sup>) the teams had a short negotiating meeting.

### THE NEXT STEPS

Since the government started imposing Conciliation Boards in university labour disputes in 2008, no Conciliation Board has filed a non-binding report with the Minister dealing with all the issues in dispute. At the Université de Moncton, agreement was reached by the two parties before the Board had finished its work.

At UNB, the Board called in February 2010 finally reported in mid-January of this year, but in that case, the two sides had agreed to accept the Board's report as binding, and they limited the scope of the report to salaries. Thus, the circumstances in which we find ourselves are new, and we have no past practice to help us form our expectations.

The *Industrial Relations Act* seems to indicate that the Minister will release the report to the two parties when she receives it. This would constitute the end of the conciliation process. Seven days after the end of the conciliation process, the Employer can lock out the employees, and the union can call a strike vote. Assuming the report is released on January 31<sup>st</sup>,

February 7<sup>th</sup> would be the seventh day after the end of the conciliation process.

While the Employer might be in a position to lock out faculty and professional librarians as early as February 7<sup>th</sup>, we think this is unlikely. Only twice in recent history have university employers locked out faculty and librarians, and in both instances lock-outs occurred when classes were not in session (in summer at Bishop's and during Christmas break at St. Thomas). The Employer would have to give 24 hours notice of a lockout.

While the union may be able to hold a strike vote as early as February 7<sup>th</sup>, it is not obligated to hold the vote immediately.

During the time leading up to the receipt of the Conciliation Board's report, negotiations are continuing. They can also continue between the time the report is received and the strike vote, and they can continue after a strike vote. Negotiations, naturally, will occur during a strike. At the end, there will be an agreement, and work shall resume at Mount Allison.



## CAUT PRESIDENT'S FORUM

Rick Hudson attended the CAUT Presidents' Forum in Ottawa, January 14-16. There were many interesting topics discussed, and, of course, there was an opportunity to meet with faculty association

presidents from many universities including Maritime universities such as Saint Thomas, UNB, Moncton, Acadia, Dalhousie, Saint Francis Xavier, Mount Saint Vincent, Saint Mary's, and other universities from outside the region including Concordia, Windsor (whose union president is also president of the CAUT Defence Fund), Laurier (whose president is former MtA professor Judy Bates), Huron University College, etc.

Rick also got to talk extensively with CAUT officials, particularly with Peter Simpson, the Associate Executive Director whose responsibilities include the CAUT Defence Fund (but they discussed mainly Hegel and early Heidegger).

Some of the principal topics the Forum dealt with were: Analyzing University/College Budgets, Academic Governance, Corporatization of Universities and Colleges, and Funding for Post-Secondary Education. From the data presented by David Robinson (CAUT Associate Executive Director), it was clear that a lot more money has come into the sector in the last decade, spent mainly on buildings, as we can see at Mount Allison.

Academic salaries as a percentage of the total budget have declined, while administration costs have risen. University presidents cry poverty when speaking to potential donors, government, and academic staff unions, but proclaim everything is in great shape when speaking to others. One interesting metric discussed was debt per student.

There was a discussion of how much is OK, with the notion that \$9,000 or \$10,000 is probably OK, but more is risky. Rick had some trouble following the discussion since Mount Allison has no external debt. It appeared that universities get into trouble when presidents and boards build buildings without raising the funds first and without identifying the funds needed to run the buildings later.

## FNBFA REPORT

The FNBFA has its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reception scheduled for Friday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, in Fredericton where the Prix Nicole Raymond Award will be presented.

The following day, the Board will meet and discuss

various important items, including new policies, the renewal of the Executive Director's contract, and potential bylaw changes. Gina Grandy is MAFA's representative on the Board, and Rick Hudson serves on the Executive as Past President.

### **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS, GEORGE J. DE BENEDETTI BOOK PRIZE**

Do you know any students who are excelling in social activism, advocacy work, or student, university-wide and/or broader community issues?

If so, why not nominate them for the George J. de Benedetti Book prize, awarded annually to a student who best embodies these commitments. The prize, which includes a book and \$200 cash prize, is given in recognition of the many years of outstanding service to the Mount Allison Faculty Association, Mount Allison University, and Canadian university academic staff, by George J. De Benedetti, retired professor of Economics (1968-2000).

Nominations must arrive in the MAFA office by Monday, March 7th, 2011, and the prize will be awarded at the upcoming MAFA Annual General Meeting.



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

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

MAFA has received a request from the Minister of Postsecondary Education, Training, and Labour (PETL) informing us that she is dealing with a request

under the Right to Information Act asking that she "grant access to all documents pertaining to the decision to appoint a conciliation Board at Mount Allison University." The purpose of her letter is to ask us whether the two documents she has from MAFA (our letter of Oct 27<sup>th</sup> opposing the calling of the Conciliation Board and our letter of Nov 8<sup>th</sup> appointing Chris Ferns to the Board) are confidential or should be suppressed under the terms of the Act. We have responded that these letters are not confidential, and we are quite happy to have them released.

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, 2010-11**

**Spring Annual General Meeting**, Friday, April 8th, 3 pm, Avard Dixon G12

**Retiring Members' Party**, Friday, April 8th, 4:30 pm University Club

### **MAFA 2010-2011 EXECUTIVE**

**Richard Hudson - President (Commerce)**  
**Gina Grandy - Vice-President (Commerce)**  
**Peter Brown - Past President (English)**  
**Robert Rosebrugh - Treasurer (Math and CS)**  
**Jeff Lilburn - Collective Bargaining (Library)**  
**Loralea Michaelis - Grievance (Political Science)**  
**San Patten - Unit 2 (Continuous Learning)**  
**David Thomas - Membership (Political Science/  
International Relations)**