

# MAFA NEWSLETTER

Mount Allison Faculty Association

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Bob Rosebrugh (left) represented MAFA as a “flying picket” in Antigonish, NS, in support of the striking members of the St. Francis Xavier Association of University Teachers (STFXAUT). He is pictured here with visitors from Dalhousie University and Memorial University of Newfoundland.

## PRESIDENT’S REPORT

I hope your Winter Term has gotten off to a good start. Although we here in Sackville have experienced winter weather in its various forms over the first few weeks of the term, our hearts go

out to our colleagues at St. FX whose experience with winter chill has been more extensive. On February 14<sup>th</sup>, faculty members and the administration at StFX reached a tentative agreement and a ratification vote was scheduled over the weekend to bring an end to a strike of almost three weeks in length. One particularly troubling aspect of the negotiations at StFX was the

apparent willingness of the university administrators to bargain in public, risking a violation of labour law. During the job action at StFX, on your behalf, MAFA sent strike support to the StFX Association of University Teachers in the form of donations (from the strike support line of our budget) and some of our members went to Antigonish to join the picket lines in support of our colleagues there. StFXAUT is a contributor to the Defence Fund of the Canadian Association of University Teachers and their members were assisted by the Fund in their job action. MAFA, too, continues to be a contributor to the CAUT Defence Fund. You can read more about the Fund in the report from our representative later in this newsletter and on-line at the website for the CAUT. Preparations for our own upcoming negotiations are proceeding. Our Collective Agreements expire at the end of June 2013. You will read elsewhere in this newsletter that MAFA has a Chief Negotiator. As many of you know, the Collective Bargaining Committee has prepared a set of initial proposals that will be refined over the next few weeks by the Negotiating Team. During this period, we continue to encourage members to share their views about our Collective Agreements with the members of the Executive, especially with Jane Mullen who is the Collective Bargaining Officer and the Chair of the Collective Bargaining Committee. In the meantime, the regular activities of our Association continue. The Joint Liaison Committee has been very active in the past few months, meeting frequently for discussion with the administration. However, our hopes that there would not be many grievances this year have been dashed. The number of violations of our Collective Agreements this year has been significant and appears to be growing relatively unchecked. Perhaps the greater alertness to the terms of the Collective Agreement that sometimes arises in the minds of administrators at other universities during collective bargaining will arise here, too. There are some upcoming events to tell you about. MAFA will be scheduling its traditional session for probationary (pre-tenure) members. This session will occur in early May and members who will be coming up to the tenure application process over the next few years should be sure to mark this event on their calendars. Over the many years that MAFA has provided these sessions, they have been well-

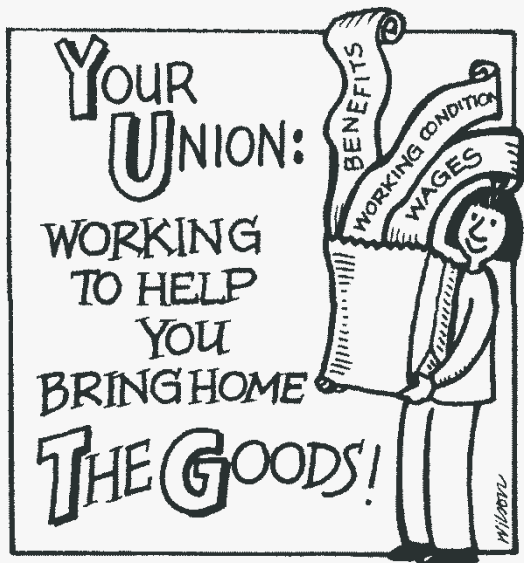
received by tenure applicants who found these sessions very helpful in their preparations. Last year, MAFA folded the activities of the Status of Women Committee into the activities of the Equity Panel and organized a meeting of the Panel to provide an opportunity for our Equity Panel members to carefully share insights gained from their experiences over the year. This meeting generated some valuable discussion. There will be another such meeting at the end of this academic year which will be especially important to the process of finalizing proposals for bargaining. Part of my mission in this newsletter is to invite everyone to our Retiring Members' Party, on Friday, April 12, 2012, starting at 4:30 pm, in the University Club. The Retiring Members' Party follows another important event on Friday April 12<sup>th</sup>, MAFA's Annual General Meeting. At this meeting, one of the items of business will be the election of the members of the Executive Committee for the following year. Consider offering your name to the nominating committee and your services to your colleagues. The nominating committee is headed up by Past-President, Rick Hudson. Also for April, MAFA is arranging a Collective Bargaining Workshop. If you are considering joining a negotiation team for this round or a later round, you will definitely want to attend. Even if not, participants in the Workshop gain valuable insights into the collective bargaining process and the bargaining simulation is always good fun! As always, you have my best wishes for a satisfyingly productive and provocatively interesting year.

Stephen Law, MAFA President

### **MAFA NAMES CHIEF NEGOTIATOR**

MAFA has recently appointed Helen Pridmore (Music) as its Chief Negotiator for the upcoming round of collective bargaining.

MAFA's two collective agreements expire on June 30, 2013, and it is expected that collective bargaining will begin this spring.



most important committees and processes for members

- there are continuing issues surrounding workload, in Correspondence courses and in one specific case in a department where a part-time member has been assigned a full-time teaching load. We filed a Union grievance on this matter in January
- Two members filed individual grievances, via MAFA, on the issue of deferred sabbaticals. Both members are approaching normal retirement age and we explained to the Employer that Article 23.18 has been violated (which states very clearly that members approaching retirement should not be deferred)

## GRIEVANCE REPORT

I would like to begin by thanking all those members who have helped me with the various issues surrounding grievances in the last few months. Those who queried procedures from the Employer; those who reported violations of the Collective Agreement; those who agreed to talk with me about issues arising from these violations; and those who pursued grievances – thanks for your participation! It's important to keep communicating about how we work and what problems need to be addressed.

Thanks also to the Grievance Committee (Erin Steuter and Jennifer Tomes) and to Geoff Martin and Steve Law, who provide plenty of good advice as we move through the Grievance procedures.

Here are some of the issues we have been working on in recent months:

- an issue reported in the last newsletter, regarding a hiring in a department which apparently violated Article 16.17 of our Collective Agreement (qualified internal candidates were not interviewed) did not result in a grievance, but the matter was pointed out to the Employer and MAFA intends to keep an eye on this issue for future searches
- MAFA filed a Union grievance regarding changes in procedures for the Tenure and Promotion Committee, surely one of the

## FNBFA REPORT

The Right to Information requests the FNBFA (Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations) filed in September 2012 with the administrations of the four public universities in the province resulted in somewhat slow responses. In December 2012, 90 days after our requests were filed, all four universities released information on their websites.

The FNBFA had requested information on salaries, bonuses, benefits, etc. of senior members of the administration (President, Vice Presidents, Deans, etc.) over the last several years. In other provinces, including Nova Scotia, this information is considered public. Most of the New Brunswick universities, however, decided not to give actual salaries paid, but rather to give ranges of salaries. Mount Allison chose ranges of \$25,000. But the information revealed that the Mount Allison President had changed \$25,000-brackets every year for the last six years, arriving most recently at the \$305,000-\$329,999 bracket, one of the highest in the Maritimes (in 2006-07, the Mount Allison President was in the \$180,000-\$204,999 bracket). The breakdown between actual salary and performance or other bonuses was not revealed.

The information revealed by the Mount Allison administration can be found at:

<http://www.mta.ca/administration/financial/other.html>

The FNBFA held its second “Meet Your MLA Day” in December in Fredericton. Participating from MAFA were Rick Hudson (FNBFA President), Christina Ionescu, Anita Cannon, Mario Levesque, and Renata Schellenberg. We met with the Minister of Postsecondary Education, Training and Labour, the Hon. Danny Soucy; the Liberal critic, Roger Melanson; the leader of the opposition, Victor Boudreau; and several other MLAs and ministers. There were over 25 faculty and librarians from the six member-associations of the FNBFA participating in the event.

FNBFA members made clear the Federation’s support of greater transparency in universities, the need for adequate financing of our institutions, and the need to address the student debt crisis.

The FNBFA Board met in December and will be meeting again later this month. In May, the Board will meet and will elect the next Executive committee: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Expressions of interest in these positions from MAFA members are encouraged and can be sent to Elisabeth Hans, Executive Director of the FNBFA, at [elisabeth.hans@fnbfa.ca](mailto:elisabeth.hans@fnbfa.ca)

Rick Hudson  
President, FNBFA

**CAUT DEFENCE FUND REPORT**

The CAUT Defence Fund is an independent non-profit corporation whose members are unionized Canadian Academic Staff Unions. The Fund's main purpose is to provide strike pay for striking or locked out academic staff. In the past five years the Fund has provided well over \$5 million to support our colleagues on picket lines. Nevertheless, the Fund has assets of nearly \$25 million which are maintained by dues and investment income.

Another crucial activity of the Defence Fund is organizing and funding the weekly national solidarity visits to striking campuses. Most recently

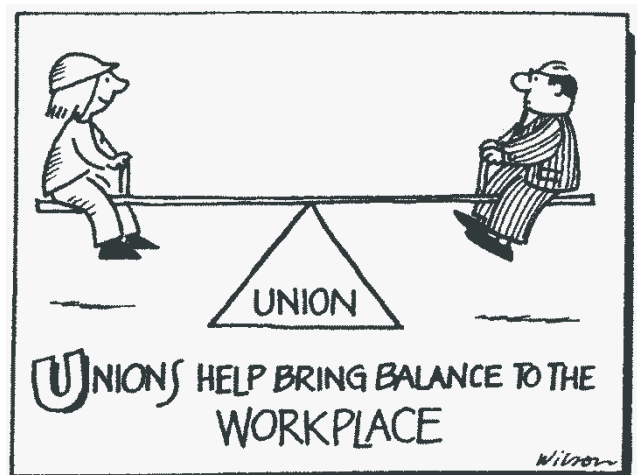
this has involved St F-X, but Defence Fund "Flying Pickets" attend every strike, including those at Mount Allison. Something close to 20 campuses have been visited, including all but UNB in New Brunswick, UPEI and most Nova Scotia universities.

In addition, the Defence Fund lends money to striking or locked out unions to ensure that benefit coverage is not interrupted, and each union gets access to a \$1 million strike support loan.

The Fund has an annual general meeting in October. Last year its most important decision was to raise strike pay to nearly \$600 per week (and that's tax free) for each striker. Most unions are also able to supplement what is already probably the highest strike benefit in Canada. The rise in strike pay also triggered an automatic increase in the monthly dues per member from \$5.00 to \$5.25 - a 5% increase in the dues for the first time since 1992(!) when that was equivalent to about \$7.00 today. It's still about the price of a latte (for our urban colleagues).

This year MAFA returns to the bargaining table. As you follow the progress of negotiations, remember that there is \$25 million in your war chest. We have access to every penny.

Robert Rosebrugh  
CAUT Defence Fund Trustee



**PART-TIME MEMBERS AWARDED  
RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY  
STIPENDS**

Creative artists did well in the 2012-13 Mount Allison Part-Time Research and Creativity Stipend competition.

Dan Steeves (Fine Arts) received a stipend for his artistic proposal on “The Memory of Pain.” Karen Stentaford (Fine Arts) received a stipend for “A Sense of Place,” and Decima Mitchell (Drama) will participate in intensive, advanced training in furniture making next summer in Ontario.

Every year, salary support in the amount of the part-time stipend (currently \$5808) is granted to three part-time members in pursuit of projects in research and creative activity. Applications are due August 31 for the coming year.

“I am very pleased not only that we have negotiated these awards, but that we increased the number to three in this contract,” says MAFA President Stephen Law. “It really does help these members undertake the full range of activities that we expect in academia.”

**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 11th, 2013, and the prize will be awarded at the upcoming MAFA Annual General

Meeting.

**CAUT LIBRARIANS CONFERENCE**

The biennial CAUT Librarians Conference was held in Ottawa from 25 – 27 October. This year’s conference, entitled “Contested Terrain: Shaping the Future of Academic Librarianship,” focused largely on threats to academic librarianship posed by corporate-style management practices. CAUT President Wayne Peters set the stage for the two-day conference by noting that the neoliberal corporatization of universities is nowhere more evident than in the library, where librarian work is being assigned to non-librarians, where students and other library users are often viewed and treated as customers, and where an emphasis on technology and tools is often seen as a way to save money, not necessarily as a way to provide better services or to better contribute to student learning. CAUT Executive Director James Turk noted that library professional associations have been anything but an ally on these issues, giving as one example the failure of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) to take a strong stand against budgetary and service cuts at Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

Opening keynote speaker and former American Libraries Association President Mitch Freedman followed up on these opening remarks by offering a critique of what he described as CLA’s “moderate response” to the cuts at LAC. Mr. Freedman questioned how an association that includes as members the vendors who profit from library commercialization can be counted on to advocate on behalf of librarian concerns. He presented two alternatives: a strategy aimed at changing the process for electing members to the CLA executive, and the creation of a new association to serve as a vigorous, critical and outspoken voice. Other speakers continued this discussion by examining recent CLA actions in the context of neoliberal incursion into the public sector. One presenter shared her experience of being “bounced” from the CLA Conference site for distributing material aimed at raising awareness of the situation at LAC.



Another speaker identified concerns with regards to a high-profile librarian leadership institute which exemplifies, in her view, the shift away from an emphasis on the notion of the public good to an emphasis on individual advancement and a move to express value using the language of neoliberalism.

Later sessions included discussion of two of the most sustained and egregious attacks on academic librarians (at McGill and McMaster) and of the progress made by academic staff associations to defend and advance librarian work; a panel discussion examining the role that research, scholarship, service and teaching play in academic librarianship; and a discussion of curriculum changes at library schools. The latter included a report from a recent graduate of the MLIS program at Western who co-founded the London, Ontario chapter of the Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG), a group devoted to cultivating spaces for critical dialogue and collaborative action on issues affecting information workers. There are now three active PLG groups in Canada.

The final session consisted of reports from the small group discussions on the impact that corporate management styles have had on libraries and what librarians can do to resist and reverse these trends. Dr. Toni Samek (School of Library & Information Studies, University of Alberta) delivered the concluding keynote address, discussing issues and themes addressed at the conference within the context of the digital labour movement.

Jeff Lilburn, Public Services Librarian



**MAFA 2012-2013 EXECUTIVE**

- Stephen Law - President (Economics)**
- Leah Garnett - Vice-President (Fine Arts)**
- Richard Hudson - Past President (Commerce)**
- Jane Mullen - Collective Bargaining (Commerce)**
- Helen Pridmore - Grievance (Music)**
- Lori Ann Roness - Part-time/Unit 2 (Geography and Environment)**
- Robert Rosebrugh - Treasurer (Math and CS)**
- Renata Schellenberg - Membership (Modern Languages and Literatures)**

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, 2012-13**

Please mark these dates on your calendar:

2013

Friday 12 April (Time: 3 pm) (Room: Avarad Dixon G12), MAFA Annual General Meeting and Election of Executive for 2013 2014

Friday 12 April 4:30pm University Club, Retiring Members' Party