

# RALUT REPORTER

RETIRED ACADEMICS AND LIBRARIANS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*TOM ALLOWAY*

The primary purpose of RALUT is to promote and advocate for the interests of retired faculty members and librarians at the University of Toronto. As we strive to do so, it behooves us to be mindful of our relationship with the University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA).

The pensions and benefits that we receive are financed from investing funds contributed to the pension fund by employees and the administration and administered by the University of Toronto administration in accordance with agreements between the administration and UTFA. Neither RALUT nor any other organization representing retirees is allowed to negotiate formally or informally with the university administration. This fact raises the question of how well UTFA looks after the interests of retirees.

Retirees participate in UTFA in several ways. Retirees are members of several UTFA committees, including the Salary, Benefits and Pensions Committee; and at least one retiree

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## Pension Committee Report

*Lino Grima, Chair*

At its September meeting, the RALUT Board unanimously voted me as the Chair of its Pensions Committee for 2011-2012. Helen Rosenthal had occupied this position for many years with calm assurance and good humour through good times and bad. Thanks, Helen.

The challenges of the RALUT Pensions portfolio are hard to predict for several reasons. First, the UoT Administration and UTFA are currently in negotiations regarding salaries, benefits and pensions as well as substantial changes to the Memorandum of Agreement which was originally signed in 1977. It is too early to guess the outcome and impact of these negotiations on the augmentation of our pensions to the full increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). However, our pension is not in question. Neither is the current indexation to 75% of the increase in the CPI. [The indexation formula changes when the CPI increases by 8% or more; however the current Bank of Canada objective is to keep CPI increases to 2% or less].

The second source of uncertainty is the significant deficit in the University Pension Plan due to the recent downturn in the stock and bond market and

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 President's Report continued

has in recent years been a member of the UTFA Negotiating Team. However, the retired participants in UTFA's activities are appointed by the UTFA Executive and president and do not formally represent a constituency of other retirees.

Four retirees sit as members of the UTFA Council, but they too are appointed by the UTFA Executive. They are not elected by retired members of UTFA or appointed by RALUT. Thus, they do not formally represent other retirees as a constituency. Moreover, there is no formal communication mechanism between RALUT and the retirees who belong to UTFA Council, UTFA committees or the UTFA Negotiating Team. As a result, it is hard for RALUT as an organization or you as individuals to keep abreast of what is going on.

Are the matters that I have outlined above a problem? In theory, I think that they are a serious problem. As retirees, we are seriously limited in our ability to look after our interests either collectively or as individuals. RALUT is the organization whose principal purpose is to represent the interests of retirees, but RALUT is an archetypical "toothless tiger". However, as a practical matter, informal liaisons between RALUT and the retirees who participate in UTFA activities have worked reasonably well, and the current president of UTFA and many of the current members of the UTFA Executive are mindful of issues that affect the welfare of retirees.

Nevertheless, I think that we need to watch what's going on. UTFA will elect a new president in the spring of 2012, and the results of that election will be important for retired faculty members and librarians. One very important privilege which retired members of UTFA possess is the ability to vote in elections for the UTFA president. I strongly recommend that we all closely examine the candidates' platforms and vote in the UTFA presidential election.

## Pension Committee Report continued

also to the lack of contribution to the Plan on the part of the University Administration in the 1980s and 1990s. The lack of contributions amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars over two decades; it is water under the bridge but it is also a cautionary tale. And, of course, it is anybody's guess when the bearish market will turn more bullish. Given the European sovereign debt trouble and the weak U.S. economy, the market is likely to remain volatile for some time.

The third source of uncertainty is the attempt to effect some changes in the governance of our Pension Plan. Following the 2010 Jackman Report, some changes were made to integrate the governance of investment decisions more closely with the top officers in the University Administration. Particularly welcome is a new Governing Council Pension Committee with representation from employee groups, including five representatives from UTFA, one of which is a retired faculty member (Helen Rosenthal). Reporting to the Governing Council, its mandate focuses on governance rather than reviewing investments in detail. This Pension Committee is a most significant step. Time will tell how this exercise will result in more transparency and accountability in Pension matters and we look forward to timely, regular and informative reports.

Given these uncertainties, it seems that the most appropriate operational stance for RALUT at the moment is 'careful watching'. Our pensions are secure and we can afford to remain optimistic. This is also a good time to ask the readers of our *REPORTER* to consider volunteering for membership on the RALUT Pension Committee and other committees. I would also appreciate very much your comments regarding the future activities of the RALUT Pensions Committee.

PS. Many thanks to members of the RALUT Board and its Pension Committee who commented on a first draft of this brief column. I appreciate very much their expressions of support and their very helpful suggestions.

## ZEN AND RETIREMENT

ROSELYN STONE

When a man has finished childhood, completed his days as a student and fulfilled his responsibilities as a householder, he may finally leave home and enter the forest. So it was understood in the ancient days of the Indian subcontinent when the **Vedas** and **Upanishads** were being written. (The emphasis really *does* seem to have been on men, then. Huh!)

‘Entering the forest’ meant taking up a life of meditation, embarking upon the Way.

Readers of the *Reporter* have arrived at that post-householder period in their lives, meaning that the children are grown, and workplace obligations have been fulfilled. While you may be delightfully busy with continuing encounters with students and involvements in scholarly activity, travel and other passions, you are nonetheless living lives not so rigidly constructed as were your pre-retirement ones. So, ‘entering the forest’ may hold out some interest – perhaps not ‘leaving home’ literally, but making daily excursions into the trees.

Perhaps your forest is literal, you having retired to your winterized cottage or country home. Or, it’s gardening, painting/sketching, handwork, carpentry, swimming, a morning jog or walk.... You lose yourself in what you’re doing and feel refreshed when you stop. For full benefits of your forest, however, you need to cultivate quiet, even breathing and silence – not necessarily in your environment; rather, silence in your mind. Calming the ripples in the pond so that the full moon reflects in all its roundness, as Zen puts it.

These aims, however simply stated, are not so readily achieved. At some point in a lengthening life, you may have tried one or another of the meditation traditions and will have found this to be so.

After you’ve been in your personal forest a while, try putting down the brush, the trowel, the needle, the tool, or interrupting your walk/jog to sit on a bench and just be still with your gaze dropped down for five or ten minutes. In Zen, we speak of regulating the body (spine stretched right up through the neck and relaxed belly), regulating the breath (smooth, unforced), and regulating the mind (letting go of – not sticking to – thoughts as they arise. That’s *any* thoughts!! *Not* trying to stop thoughts; rather, just letting go of them as they arise. To that end, counting breath is a useful focusing technique: each exhalation is counted. At the tenth one, or if the count is interrupted by a thought or attention drifting away, start at One again.

This cultivation of internal silence is always good practice for anyone, whether they are trying deliberately to meditate or not, for it gives rise to clear, moment-to-moment awareness. Awareness, for example, of where one’s body, with its sometimes errant feet, fingers and elbows, is right now is important at any age but especially as vision and balance start to decline. As well, one whose mind is quiet and aware notices more, listens better, and focuses on decision-making more effectively.

If upon reading this you should decide to try a little meditation, a few cautions:

- Keep your spine stretched and your head perched on top of it (not drooping forward). This enables free flowing of breath in and out, in and out;
- The eyes are kept slightly open (*not* closed!) with the gaze dropped down to a point about a metre ahead.
- Keep your jaw and belly relaxed in order to avoid tension and to let the breath flow. Clenching the jaw or abdominal muscles is likely to happen in your effort to concentrate. Tension in the jaw quickly radiates to the

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## Zen and Retirement continued

neck, thence to the upper back muscles, and that's certainly counterproductive. Tension in the belly impedes breath flow. It's also a good indicator of a noisy mind. Letting the belly open (which is also important in T'ai Ch'i) interestingly helps quiet the mind.

- Don't do it too long! You could get 'spacey' and without a teacher monitoring your practice this is not helpful. Five or ten minutes
- Being able to get to ten in counting breath is NOT the goal! Indeed, I tell practitioners who report proudly to me they were able to do that regularly that they weren't paying attention! Relax the need of having to be 'successful'. When (not *if!*) the attention wanders, let go of the thought/dream and go back to one. There are no prizes for getting to ten. Becoming moment-to-moment aware – now, that's a prize!

Some walk the Way, enter the forest, seeking enlightenment – the real fact, one's true self. Others are in quest of a peaceful spirit and the benefits of a quiet mind, and still others are looking for kindred spirits with whom to spend time. ...Well, and some look to it to help lower their blood pressure. And then there's this:

Cry

after cry

after cry of joy –

Not minding

the hair

turning white.

– #52 *A Zen Forest*

### MONTHLY LUNCHEONS

Members of RALUT get together for lunch at the Faculty Club on the first Wednesday of each month. We would love to have you join us for some good conversation.

## Ashes of War, Birth of a Nation

### An Event to Commemorate the War of 1812

Presented By

**Senior College of the University of  
Toronto and Fort York Historic Site**

**At Fort York – Wednesday,**

**February 8, 9am to 5pm**

**Learn About the War and Experience its  
Ambience**

- **What Caused the War?**
- **What Were its Major Events?**
- **What Happened When the Americans Attacked Little York?**
- **How Did the War affect the Everyday Life of Families?**
- **How is the War Viewed From the Perspective of Aboriginal Peoples?**
- **How did the War Contribute to Canada's Birth as a Nation**
- **What were its Consequences for the USA?**
- **What was the War's Impact on the International Balance of Power?**

**These and other questions will be discussed by leading historians.**

**Cultural aspects of the War will be depicted through discussions of literature and music inspired by the War.**

**Enjoy an 1812 lunch, listen to the music and view artifacts and dress of the day. For full details of the Program go to: [www.1812event.ca](http://www.1812event.ca)**

**Admission \$25 – For Tickets Go To  
U of T Tix**

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# RALUT AND SENIOR COLLEGE TIME FOR CLOSER COLLABORATION

PETER RUSSELL

HONORARY PRESIDENT OF RALUT, PRINCIPAL OF SENIOR COLLEGE

Senior College was created by members of RALUT who were continuing to pursue their academic and professional interests in retirement and wanted to establish a structure in which this kind of activity could flourish at the University of Toronto.

The College, now in its third year, is flourishing. It has taken over from RALUT responsibility for the annual publication of retiree scholars' awards, publications and community contributions, and for the annual Senior Scholars Symposium. To these activities formerly carried out by RALUT, the College has added a weekly series of meetings at which senior scholars have the opportunity to present their own research, discuss outstanding work by other scholars and engage with major public issues of the day. It also hosts special events, for instance last June's visit to the University's ecological research centre at Joker's Hill and a one day event commemorating the War of 1812, scheduled for Fort York in February 2012. The College has developed an online, digital encyclopaedia/history of the University, maintains a life-writing program and provides teaching and fund-raising support for the Worker Education Association's University-in-Community.

All this is for the good. But there may be a danger that all this activity at Senior College has hollowed out RALUT, leaving RALUT with little program outside of fulfilling its important advocacy role in relation to pensions and benefits. This was certainly not the intention in founding Senior College. If this hollowing out may have occurred, it is high time to reverse the process.

Senior College was organized as a separate institutional structure from RALUT because it

seemed inappropriate for a College which is recognized by the University and supported as a program of the University's Academic Retiree Centre to be operated by an organization that has a major role in advocacy and might at times be in an adversarial relationship with the University administration. But this institutional separation should not translate into a separation of membership.

The College at present has 89 Fellows, many of whom are also among RALUT's nearly 700 members. While there may not be many more RALUT members who want to pay the \$100 annual fee to be full, voting Fellows of the College, there may be quite a few who might consider the \$10 annual fee to be a "registered member" of the College so that they are kept informed of College events and can participate in them. Indeed, I think an effort should be made to ensure that all College events and activities are publicized to the entire RALUT membership.

There is much to be gained by a closer, more systematic association of the RALUT membership with Senior College. Such an association would enlarge the program activities of RALUT and increase participation in College activities. I am confident that all of the activities the College is now carrying on would be of interest to some RALUT members who are not now either Fellows or Registered Members of the College. The College would benefit by increased participation in its programs. RALUT would benefit by being able to offer a richer agenda of activities to its members.

At a recent RALUT Board meeting there was general enthusiasm for building a more

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## RALUT and Senior College

systemic relationship between RALUT and Senior College. Tom Alloway, Elinor Fillion, Pat Doherty and I followed that up with a meeting and decided on the following:

- RALUT members who have not joined the College should be encouraged to become Fellows or Registered Members of the College.
- College events and activities should be publicized in the RALUT Reporter
- When a College event or activity cannot be publicized in the Reporter in a timely way, the appropriate College group will ask the RALUT President to send an email to the RALUT membership about the event or activity.

These strike me as good practical steps for ensuring the fullest possible participation of RALUT members in the life of Senior College.

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## MAKING A DIFFERENCE THE RALUT MEMORIAL FUND

Dear Members and Friends of RALUT,

Once again, we have very positive news to report about the RALUT Endowed Memorial Award, which achieved a book value of \$71,210.00 as of October 11, 2011. This value includes matching funds granted by the Ontario government's Trust for Student Support (OTSS) program.

The OTSS donation-matching program has been renewed until March 2012, which is very encouraging for our endeavours to maximize the effect of donations from our generous donors. We currently expect to receive information about this year's usual award of \$1000, which will go to an academically excellent student with financial need.

Timely financial aid can potentially far exceed the initial financial benefit to awardees, and the need to maintain our ability to respond remains a compelling issue because of the ongoing economic problems. Since 2007 when we established this annual \$1000 undergraduate RALUT Endowed Memorial Award in memory of deceased RALUT members, we have been committed to making a positive difference in the lives of students.

Since donations to the RALUT Endowed Memorial Award Fund are eligible for matching by the OTSS program, each donation will earn a 100% return, at least until March 2012. Every donation will also receive a university-issued income tax receipt.

The RALUT Endowed Memorial Award Fund welcomes any size of donation made using the accompanying pledge form or on-line on the RALUT or University of Toronto websites (<https://donate.utoronto.ca/> Enter RALUT in the search box).

With your participation, we can continue to make a difference

Yours sincerely,



Tom Alloway  
President

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## ENDOWMENT FUND UPDATE

BEATE LOWENBERG

*Two* \$1000 awards are planned for the current 2011–2012 academic year, marking another milestone in our mission to honour deceased RALUT members by providing timely monetary aid to academically excellent, financially challenged undergraduate students.

These two annual awards will be achieved using the \$1870 earned by our RALUT Endowed Memorial Fund during the past fiscal year May 1st 2010–April 30th 2011, augmented by an additional \$130 RALUT donation. The Endowment Book Value now having reached \$71,210 as of October 11th 2011 (the most recently available information). We anticipate that in subsequent years two annual awards of \$1000 each will be entirely financed by earnings from this RALUT fund.

It is thanks to the generosity of our donors that such remarkable progress has been achieved since the inauguration in April 2007 of the RALUT Endowed Memorial Award. However, we need to maintain our efforts to support our financially disadvantaged yet academically excellent students

due to the ongoing daunting economic situation to which students remain extremely vulnerable. The Ontario government's current Trust for Student Support (OTSS) dollar-for-dollar contribution matching program ends in March 2012 and it is not known whether it will be renewed. **Every dollar donated now has a guaranteed book value return of 100% due to the current OTSS program, thus responding to this appeal is—literally—taking advantage of a golden opportunity!**

Online donations using the University or RALUT websites can be made using this University of Toronto link:

<https://donate.utoronto.ca/>

Enter "RALUT" in the search box. Alternatively, there is a donation pledge form accompanying this Reporter issue.

Either way, every donation will receive a university-issued income tax receipt and all donations are eligible for matching by provincial government funds—at least until March 2012.

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## ONTARIO PHOTO ID CARD

ROSELYN STONE

In case you missed the announcement, the Province of Ontario released a Photo ID card last July that serves as *primary ID* and is for those who never had, or no longer have, an Ontario Driver's License. As one whose eyes are no longer fit for driving, I welcomed it with joy having been very reluctant to cart around my passport together with something attesting to my address.

Called the Ontario Photo Card it has security features, a photo plus name and address and must be renewed every five years.

[ServiceOntario.ca/findservices](http://ServiceOntario.ca/findservices) will give more

information, including where the issuing offices are. Or call 1-800-387-3445

I went to the Government of Ontario building on Sheppard Avenue just west of Yonge to get mine. It cost \$35.00 and took about five weeks to arrive. I went armed with passport and Rogers Cable bill and also had my Health Card, which is one of the picture ones.

The whole procedure was painless — always nice when one can say that of a government department!

## TORONTO ROUND TABLE

PETER LEVITT

The Toronto Round Table (TRT) established in 1905 meets every second Wednesday of the month October to May in Hart House at noon. There is a buffet lunch followed by a presentation for about 30 minutes plus a question period. Everything is very informal and congenial. Usually there are between 35 and 55 people present. Members are mostly retired academics and other interested people.

This year's presenters include John Goddard on "Community and Summer Theatre in Ontario", Peter Russell on "The Elephant in our Democratic Room"

and Warren Clements, Ex Editorial Board of the G & M on "My Experiences in Writing".

The annual membership is \$50 for singles or couples. The charge for lunch is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members collected at the door. Hart House has changed its charging policy resulting in significant higher room rental costs. If you are interested please contact Peter Levitt by e-mail ([levittsp@sympatico.ca](mailto:levittsp@sympatico.ca)) or phone (416-967-5535). Peter Hart, Past- president of the Arts & Letters Club is the current president.

## PUBLICATION NOTICE

The RALUT REPORTER is published by RALUT, (Retired Academics and Librarians of the University of Toronto), a non-profit association of retirees, near retirees, and surviving spouses/partners of the faculty and librarians of the University of Toronto. RALUT or any of its officers can be reached by post at its office at 256 McCaul Street, Toronto ON M5T 1W5.

Those involved in the production of this issue include editing by Fred Wilson (who despite resigning as Editor last spring allowed his arm to be twisted one more time), proofreading by Diane Henderson, and computer setup by Tom Alloway.

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