

NEWS FROM UWFA

Volume 7 Issue 2

February 2001

EDITOR: GEOFFREY SCOTT

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PAST-PRESIDENT:

Allen Mills, Political Science

OFFICE - Room 302 Sparling Hall

Kim Best (9430)

uwfa@uwinnipeg.ca

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the snow flies outside my window this afternoon, I realize that we are approaching the last six weeks of the winter term, and it has been some time since I let you know what has been going on inside UWFA. So here is a snapshot of major issues before us currently.

In the fall term we struggled through the intricacies of pension reform, and I know that this was a stressful time for us all. I appreciated your patience and counsel as we proceeded through this difficult issue. As it turned out, a considerable number of you (about 150 of 600 active plan members) opted for the new defined contribution plan, many stayed in the defined contribution plan, and many took advantage of the cash payout as part of the initial actuarial surplus distribution. Now that individual decisions have been made, there is still much structural work to be done within the pension plan. As you will recall, part of the overall agreement with respect to pension plan reform requires that a trust agreement be drawn up, that a further surplus allocation for the remaining DB plan members be determined, and that the investment options for the DC plan members be designed as soon as possible. Elsewhere in this newsletter I have summarized the way in which these changes are being managed.

A major focus for the current UWFA Executive Council is to prepare for the negotiating of a new collective agreement (the current agreement expires on March 31, 2001). You will have received (and hopefully responded to) a survey of the UWFA membership designed to assess your priorities in this round of bargaining. We have established a Salary and Benefits Committee, made up of ten members of UWFA, which is currently preparing a package of revisions to our salary and benefits articles to be taken to the negotiating table. As well, I am compiling a package of revisions to non-salary articles, many of which will be developed as a result of the outcome of the UWFA survey results, as well as from suggestions that I have received from members, and the UWFA grievance officer. I would anticipate that much of this preliminary work will be completed by the end of March, at which point we would need to appoint a Chief Negotiator and negotiating team to begin actual table negotiations with the Board negotiating team.

Many members have asked me, "What is the climate for negotiations?". From my perspective, I think that the climate is good—after all, on the revenue side, the employee groups agreed to bail out the University with a substantial pension plan surplus which will see about \$1.5 million a year go into the operating account until 2006, and it is a reasonably safe assumption that the government will increase the funding to post-secondary education at about the

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same rate as they have done to the public school sector—at least a 2.6% increase overall. And yet we have seen essentially a constant expenditure on salaries for UWFA members and other employee groups since 1997. It seems an obvious conclusion that all employees, including AESES, IUOE, and UWFA members should benefit from the improved bottom line that the University is enjoying at the moment.

But is the negotiating climate as fine as I think it should be? I wonder. On the one hand, the money is there, on the other, the administration of the University seems to have other plans for it—expanding Continuing Education, renovating buildings or putting up new ones, putting up student housing, hiring more administrators. Some of these expenditures are worthy of support, but I don't hear very loudly in any of the open forums, or at Board meetings an acknowledgment that most of what the University has accomplished in its history has been a result of the hard work and dedication of its faculty and staff, and that better compensation for them should be a high priority. Perhaps the conviction is there, but it is muted out of a fear of revealing a negotiating stance or negotiating in public.

Well, no fear from me: here is my position. The only way in which the university is going to continue to attract and retain good faculty and staff is to address fundamental issues of workload and compensation. If the Board and administration does not recognize this essential fact, we are in for very rough negotiations.

ED BYARD, PRESIDENT

REPORT ON PENSION MATTERS

The agreement that was reached by the Pension Committee in December 2001 had three elements:

- 1] The Plan was split into a defined contribution (DC) plan and a defined benefit (DB) plan, with current plan members having a choice, but with all new employees going into the DC plan.
- 2] The actuarial surplus was split with 50% going to the plan members, and 50% (in the form of a contribution holiday) to the University.
- 3] The governance of the Plan, currently managed by a Pension Committee which is advisory to the Board of Regents, would be replaced with an independent Board of Trustees, operating under the terms and conditions of a Trust Agreement.

As a result of these changes being approved by the employees and the Board of Regents, three Sub - committees of the Pension Committee have been established, each with representation from employees, the Board, retirees, and administration. These are:

- 1] A Committee to recommend the investment options for the new DC plan. The UWFA representatives are Anne Lavack (Business Computing) and Phil Cyrenne (Economics).
- 2] A Committee to recommend improvements to the DB plan, including the disposition of the remaining surplus amount. The UWFA representatives are Ed Byard and Tim Babcock. This Committee is co-chaired by John Corp (Pension Plan actuary) and Doug Poapst (UWFA/AESES actuary). One of the activities of this Committee will be to convene a meeting of all DB plan members (probably in late March) to discuss options for plan improvements.
- 3] A Committee to write the Trust Agreement document. The UWFA representatives are Alden Turner and Ed Byard. In addition, UWFA has retained legal counsel to advise us in this complicated drafting exercise. The goal of this Committee, chaired by former Chancellor John Bulman, is to have a draft agreement by the end of June 2001.

Each of these Committees will no doubt be surveying plan members for opinions during their deliberations, and I hope you will contact the UWFA representatives if you have any questions or comments.

ED BYARD, PRESIDENT

Distinguished Faculty Lecture Series

The next presenter in this series is Perry Nodelman, English. Perry's talk is entitled "*Making Boys Appear: Exploring Depictions of Masculinity in Children's Fiction.*" and his presentation is on Wednesday, February 28 at 7:30 p.m., in Eckhardt Gramatté Hall. Our traditional reception honoring the guest speaker will follow in the Faculty/Staff Club.

Perry plans to talk about why and how he came to focus attention on the ways boys (and men) are depicted in fiction written for children. The nature of conventional assumptions about masculinity causes them to disappear for most readers, in ways that assumptions about femininity, especially after some decades of feminist criticism, don't. As a result, it's hard to make them appear-become aware of them. Perry will describe what happened when he first asked students in children's literature courses to think about the masculinity of male characters. He then explores the implications of what they and he discovered in terms of our own developing understanding of children's books and in terms of the potential effects of these books on young readers.

Perry has been a member of the English Department since 1968. A Yale Ph.D., Perry originally specialized in Victorian literature, especially the poetry of Tennyson. Since 1975 he began concentrating on teaching and writing about children's literature, and has since published about 100 articles in journals many of them focusing on literary theory as a context for understanding books for children. He has also published two books on the subject, *The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books* (University of Georgia Press, 1988) and *The Pleasures of Children's Literature* (Longman, 1992). He has also single-authored three novels for young adults and co-authored a series of four fantasy novels for young adults with Carol Matas (*Of Two Minds, More Minds, Out of Our Minds, and A Meeting of Minds*). In addition to being sought after for keynote addresses at conferences on children's literature, Perry was a five-year editor of the journal *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, and is a past President of the Children's Literature Association.

Reception tickets can be picked up in the Faculty and Staff Club, Dean's Office or the Office of the Associate Vice-President (Academic) (4CM02). To facilitate the catering, please pick up tickets by Noon, Friday, February 23rd.

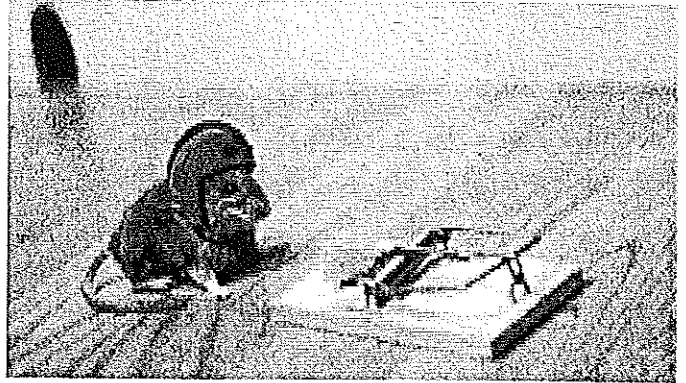
Blast From The Past!

Congratulations to **Mike McIntyre**, Psychology, who correctly identified UWFA Past President, Allen Mills, Political Science, as our November Blast From The Past! If you can correctly identify this long-time UWFA activist please phone Kim Best at 9430 to register your answer. The first twenty correct respondents will have their names placed in a hat and the lucky name drawn will win lunch in the Faculty/Staff Club!



Campus Critter Update

Please continue to report rodent sightings to the proper authorities for action. Recent difficulty in eradicating mice has been exacerbated by a new strategy adopted by these highly adaptive rodents which makes cloning and transgenics pale by comparison! The fearless mouse, shown to the right, was snapped on a recent foray into Wesley Hall.



The University of Winnipeg Faculty Association

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 2001 - 2002 UWFA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The UWFA is seeking interested persons to serve on the 2001 - 2002 UWFA Executive Council. If you would like to serve, or want to nominate someone, please complete the attached tear-off sheet and return it by no later than NOON, Friday, March 9, 2001, to Mark Fortier, English, or Kim Best, UWFA Office, 302 Sparling Hall.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE (2-year terms)

President
Secretary
Members-at-Large (3 to be chosen)

I nominate / volunteer (please print) _____

for the position of _____

SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE

SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR

REPORT OF THE GRIEVANCE OFFICER (1999-2000)

My term as Grievance Officer began July 1, 1999 with the filing of a policy grievance regarding the safety of the Lockhart Hall stairwells. During the summer and fall, I attended a number of meetings on this issue and made a presentation to the university Workplace Safety and Health Committee in October. In January, the grievance was resolved when the university agreed to replace the hand railings and mount cautionary signs. The work was completed this summer in all Lockhart stairwells.

(Note: A number of people have had accidents in these stairwells over the past several years, but not all of these were reported to the Safety and Health Committee. I urge faculty to report all accidents—even apparently minor ones—immediately to the Safety Officer, Brad Loewen, at ext. 9894.)

In December 1999, Ed Byard and I negotiated a Letter of Understanding allowing the final version of the Respectful Learning and Working Environment Policy to replace the former Sexual Harassment Policy. One advantage of this new policy is that it encourages and enables UWFA to work more closely with Naomi Levine, who acted as an informal mediator on several occasions this year.

In February, UWFA and the University agreed not to go through arbitration to resolve the problem of how some junior faculty were placed on the new salary grid, and instead negotiated a partial settlement.

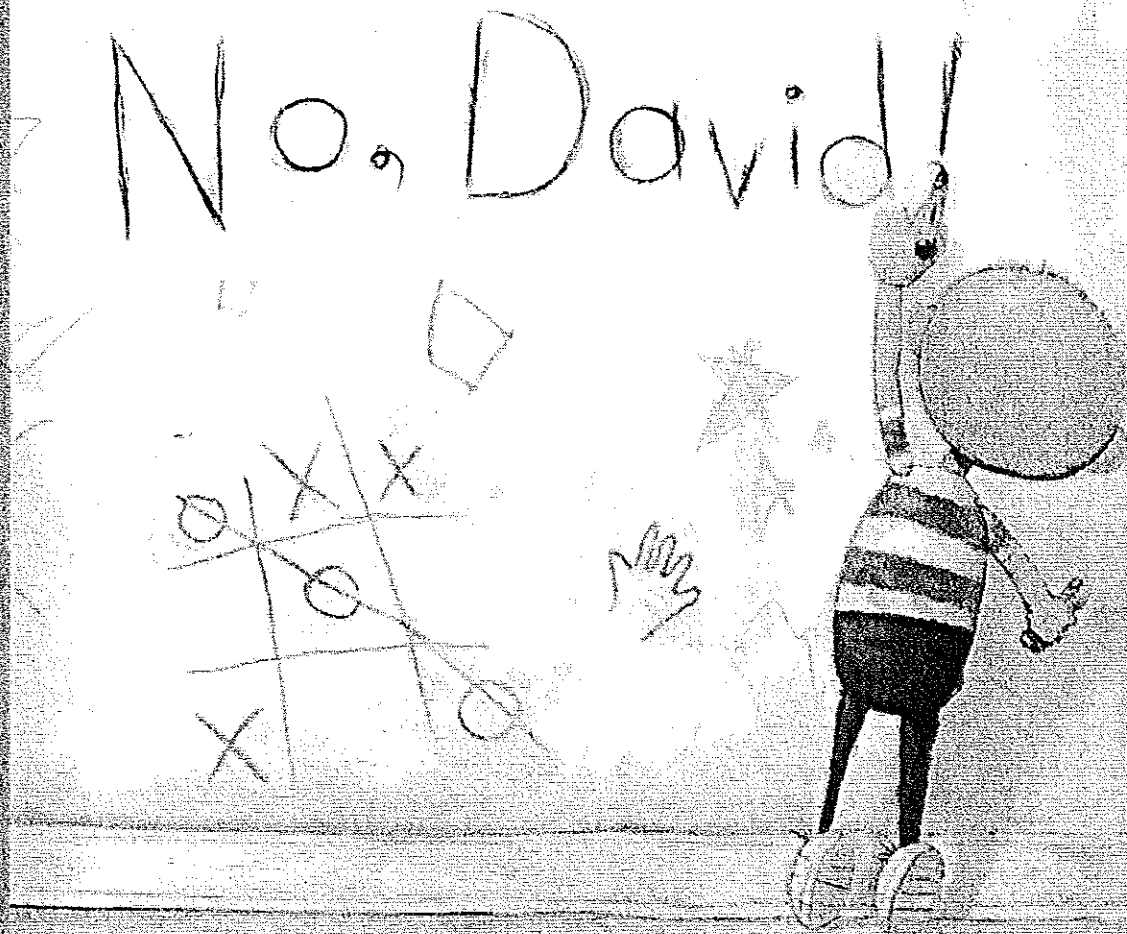
Over this past year, I've spent considerable time informally advising faculty on such matters as tenure and promotion, performance evaluation, leaves, reclassification, workload, respectful workplace issues, and paid and unpaid leave. Since September, my workload has averaged 2 – 3 inquiries, appointments, or meetings per week, taking up anywhere from two to eight hours per week. However, only three formal individual grievances had been filed by the end of May. A settlement was reached on one of those grievances in August. This summer, I also began consulting with other UWFA executive members to compile a list of items in the Collective Agreement that need to be reopened during upcoming negotiations.

I am grateful to Sandra Zuk, Associate Grievance Officer, for her invaluable help throughout this year, including but not limited to gathering accident information regarding the Lockhart stairs and serving as Acting Grievance Officer in August. I'd also like to note that Byron Sheldrick of Political Science is now an Associate Grievance Officer. Finally, I'd like to thank Ed Byard and Kim Best for their ongoing help and support.

AMANDA GOLDRICK-JONES

Making BOYS APPEAR

Exploring Depictions of Masculinity
in Children's Literature



Perry Nodelman/English Dept.

painting by david shannon



Distinguished Faculty Lecture Series

Wed. Feb. 28

Eckhardt-Granata Hall 7:30 p.m.

Faculty & Staff Club

Presented by The University of Winnipeg Faculty Association

477 UNIVERSITY W/NNipeg