



Academy News

August 2008

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The President's Greeting by Sheilagh Hickie

What a wonderful organization we have! I hope you all agree and I hope you will eventually be one of the many volunteers who keep things going. The Academy is quite proud of its volunteer status but it needs more people to help. If you want to join a committee or become a facilitator, let me know (shickie@sympatico.ca) or **Sandra Walsh**, our volunteer coordinator (swalsh_1@sympatico.ca) or any member of this year's Board.

Last year, we undertook a number of new initiatives which grew out of the Long Range Planning Committee's report which itself was an idea that came from members' comments in past years. I hope that most of these ideas will be carried on by future Boards. The work of the committee this year will be chaired by Vice President, **Ralph Garber**.

A concern arose when Knox College asked us to change our Monday to Thursday schedule to Tuesday to Friday, due to an increase in their registration. We renew our lease with Knox for only one year at a time in case their registration spikes. This has led us to think about finding longer term space and we are investigating this situation with University personnel and other seniors' learning groups.

Our association with the School of Continuing Studies (SCS) is in the beginning stages and is proceeding very well. Those attending the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June were introduced to **Marilynn Booth**, Director of the School, who expressed great interest in our self-directed, peer-learning concept. The Board, on behalf of the Academy, presented Marilynn with a cheque for \$4,000 to be awarded to mature students wanting to further their studies at SCS.

Leah Lambert, under whose leadership this association was formed, will continue to be our link to SCS.



In May, **Dugal Campbell** and I hosted a meeting of six other lifelong learning groups in the Toronto area to discuss common interests. Included were the Ryerson L.I.F.E. people, Ryerson's Prime Time Learning, Later Life Learning at Innis, the Senior Alumni group at the University of Toronto, The Ulyssean Society, Glendon's Living and Learning in Retirement and George Brown College Seniors' Association.

Together, we number around 4,300 senior Torontonians and, although most operate with lectures and some as peer-learning groups, we had several common concerns. Not the least is space and it may well be more difficult for our groups to find accommodation as the host college or university grapples with increasing enrollment. We will be meeting again in early October.

A sub-committee of this group has been formed to see whether we can approach the Ontario government ministers to discuss the growing population over 65 (in Canada, 4.5 million are in this age bracket) and what help they can give us to keep us mentally, physically and emotionally fit, thereby lowering medical costs.

Another suggestion of the Long Range Planning group was to increase diversity

at the Academy. It may well happen, just as diversity in Toronto itself has happened, almost by chance, and this will be explored by future Board members.

We have a great year ahead of us with many workshops at the "full" state and a great lineup of topics. Deciding which topic to choose is a bit like a buffet – everything looks terrific and one often puts too much on one's plate. I hope your choices don't prove too much for your palate and that the tastes of the various wonderful new subjects coalesce into a flavourful year. All the best to everyone in the coming year at the Academy. •

From the Editor

by Julia Matthews

As the academic year begins, Board members are already thinking about 2008-09. We are hoping that you will use email to give us your ideas and impressions, and that we can expand the website as a means of communication among ourselves. Watch for further developments. •

Coming Events for the Fall Semester

Aug. 15	Board Meeting
Sep. 14	Potluck Picnic
Sep. 16	Workshops Start
Sep. 24	New Members' Reception
	Forums Begin
Sep. 26	Board Meeting
Oct. 19	Fall Colour Walk
Oct. 24	Board Meeting
Nov. 10	Mailing
Nov. 21	Board Meeting
Dec. 5	Workshops End
Dec. 5	Board Meeting
Dec. 12	Holiday Luncheon
Jan. 13	Workshops Start

Meet the Academy Board for 2008-2009



Academy Board L to R, Back Row Anthony Keith (Spring Talks Chair), Ralph Garber (Vice President), Joan McCordic (Communications Ass't Chair), Han Spoel (Treasurer) Ellen Edmonds (Ass't Secretary), Julia Matthews (Communications Chair), Doug Wilson (Spring Talks Ass't Chair).
Front Row Dugal Campbell (Past President), Carol Farkas (Special Events Ass't Chair), Sheilagh Hickie (President), Sandra Hoshoooley, (Membership Ass't Chair), Pat Forrest (Special Events Chair).
Absent: Lisa Avedon (Curriculum Chair), Helena Hallett (Secretary), Edith Howard (Membership Chair), Ann Mummenhoff (Curriculum Ass't Chair), Gwyneth Sutherland (Ass't Treasurer).

New Members Invited!

This year all new members are invited to join other Academicians at our first Forum. Academy cinephile extraordinaire, **Arne Bowers**, will take us on a fascinating trip back to the glory days before talkies in his presentation, *Highlights of the Silent Cinema*. Come out, enjoy the Forum and meet new colleagues. This is an ideal opportunity to get a sense of the stimulation, conviviality and volunteer opportunities offered by the Academy.

**Wednesday, September 24th
2 pm, Room 5
Knox College**

Registration Accomplished by Edith Howard

The Membership Committee and volunteers, cheered on by President **Sheilagh Hickie** and Past President **Dugal Campbell**, gathered on May 29th to delve for envelopes in an elegant green garbage bag. Registration went smoothly. **Désirée Ashworth, Margaret Robertson, Sandra Walsh, Debrah Weiss** and **June West** shared data entry and phoned the "wait-listed" to offer second choices.

Confirmation letters went out on July 2nd. To date we have 314 members, 39 of whom are new to the Academy. We are pleased with this fact: there were only 28 at this time last year. Five fewer workshops were offered this year than last

year due to double time slots for Global Film, an unexpected cancellation, and unused time slots on Friday afternoon. This accounts for the longer waiting lists for some workshops. During the year, do give the Curriculum Committee feedback on subjects you would like to see on the lineup next year. •

Openings still exist in a number of workshops! Consult the Academy website <http://www.allto.ca/status.html> and let us know if you are interested in registering for an additional workshop.

Board Strikes Technology Committee by Karen Melville

At its June meeting the Board struck an Ad Hoc Committee to look into the Academy's future technology requirements. This action was prompted by the decision of the Academy's current database manager, **Margaret Robertson**, to cut back on her heavy commitment to managing the database by the end of this year.

The new committee will meet over the summer to discuss issues such as appropriate software and the allocation of

workload. Should the Academy continue with FileMaker Pro or move to specialized continuing education registration software? What tasks should the software perform? How can we expand the number of people accessing the database without affecting quality control?

The committee welcomes input from members with views they wish to share. We would particularly like to hear from members with experience in database management systems or who

have familiarity with registration practices of other continuing education organizations.

Please contact the committee chair, **Karen Melville** at karen.melville@sympatico.ca (416-921-7885) or any of the committee members:

Désirée Ashworth, Edith Howard, Sheilagh Hickie, Margaret Robertson, Han Spoel. •

Annual General Meeting June 2008 by Julia Matthews

We had a splendid turnout at the 17th Annual General Meeting at Victoria College. Committee Chairs reported to the membership on their activities over the past year and the proposed slate of new Board members was elected.

This year we were treated to an uplifting address by **Marilynn Booth** who brought with her two colleagues from the School of Continuing Studies where she is the Director. See the details in President **Sheilagh Hickie's** article (front page). After the business and speeches, all present then enjoyed a buffet lunch. •

At the AGM
Joseph Kessel with
guest speaker
Marilynn Booth.



Member Close Up: Eileen and Ralph Garber by Julia Matthews

You can learn many things about both Garbers with a simple Google search, but then you miss good stuff – stories that can be told during lunch, for instance. I found out that Ralph was a champion sprinter in high school, and that he chased Eileen until, as he puts it, she caught him. Eileen, for her part, says that the mantra “Whither



thou goest... “ was mostly enabling, even having to uproot seven children to many places in the US, but that leaving Rutgers in New Jersey to come to Toronto was the hardest move, because she was especially enjoying her work as a school trustee.

Eileen and Ralph were two of the first five graduate students at McGill to study group work, a new approach to social work. Their internships set a path for future interests – Ralph with the East End Boys’ Club and Eileen with younger children. She has kept on championing the role of what were once called Settlement Houses. You sense that either or both of them

could run the world. Ralph’s view of how to make things happen can be summed up as follows: there is a rational process by which we can come together with solutions. The forces of irrationality (bureaucracy) must be identified as obstacles. Then we can work to go around, over or under them to achieve desirable outcomes.

Within the Academy, Eileen has been busy on committees: several years ago, she organised a 3D forum in which members displayed and discussed their creations (weaving, painting, pottery, knitting). Eileen loves the poetry workshop. Where else, she asks, can you discuss this passion?

It was **Ross Linton's** workshop that first hooked Ralph, who has facilitated several popular sessions since then. Members of his workshops will not be surprised to hear that in his professional life, he was



extraordinarily successful at producing reports that made a difference, reports whose recommendations were actually implemented. This year he will, as Vice President, be ensuring our future through liaison with the wider world. •

What’s On Your Desktop? by Joan McCordic

Calendar, stapler, post-it notes, calculator ... No, no! Not that desktop – the one on your computer! If you’re like me, your computer is a relatively new tool, one that has taken over a corner in the house only since retirement. At first I used it as a glorified typewriter: I was thrilled to produce flawless business letters, minutes, reports, flyers – without any blobs of whiteout.

Then came the Internet and I discovered the joys of email correspondence with distant friends and family, not to mention the convenience of online banking. After I joined the Academy, the world of electronic research opened up. I now subscribe to *Scientific American* via the Internet, thus saving many trees and giving me access not only to the current issue but a vast archive of past issues.

Truth to tell, the computer still intimidates me. The frustration of losing several hours’ work is intense. I’m sure the stuff is in there if only I knew how to retrieve it! Maybe no one else has this problem. *Continued on Pg. 4* ➤➤



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Introduce your
friends and family to
the Academy.

See our website at
www.allto.ca
for more
information on
workshops and events.

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Bridging the (Summer) Gap Academy walkers enjoy the High Park experience.

Still Time to Join Us on an Academy Walk by Rene Laukat

There's still time to join the Academy walkers for Tuesday morning explorations of Toronto's neighborhoods and ravines. Walks continue to the end of August. Check for details on our website, www.allto.ca.

Some of this summer's highlights included **Josie Szczasiuk** leading us through High Park, alerting us to the numerous poison ivy patches and ending the walk with a banquet at the *Grenadier Restaurant in the Park*; **Madeline Grant** guiding us, through the historic Beltline Park and Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, to al fresco dining at the popular

Boccone Italian Caf ; **Tony Barclay** taking us to the Distillery District with an insider's tour of the **Young Centre for the Performing Arts** a.k.a. **Soulpepper Theatre** facilities, followed by a picnic lunch at Tony and Lyla's fabulous condo terrace with its view of the magnificent St. James Cathedral.

And a little farther afield, the newly declared gem of our 2008 walks season, the gorgeously lush and fern-covered Highland Creek valley with a picnic on the shores of Lake Ontario. Hoping to see you on the trails! •

>> What's on Your Desktop? *Cont. from Pg. 3*

As a result of working on Academy projects, however, I have begun to understand about websites. The verb 'to google' has now entered my vocabulary. Are there any seats for Hamlet next week? Google 'Stratford Festival'. What time does the ferry for Tobermory leave? How do I get to Rice Lake? From paying a parking ticket to booking a tee-time, there's a website waiting to help you, including our own Academy site.

Ready for a test? Is there still space in the Academy's workshop 'Ottoman Empire'? Who is the new President of the Academy? Are there Academy workshops in December? You don't need to go thrashing around looking for your last mailing! Just google 'Academy for Lifelong Learning Toronto', or go directly to: www.allto.ca. Photos, news, schedules, committees, workshops, walks, parties,

contacts, by-laws - and all updated daily! Now: Take your mouse and right-click on the Academy website, and then add it to your desktop immediately! Select 'Hyperlink', then 'Add to Favorites', then 'Desktop', and Bingo! The magic Academy logo will be right there on your desktop, beside Explorer, Excel, Adobe and Puzzle Pirates. Next: Use it, and stay up-to-date on Academy activities! PS. Can anyone tell me how to get rid of the bulk emails urging me to buy Viagra? •

We Get Letters

Want to comment on an article or submit one of your own? Have a great picture of Academy events or workshops?

We're especially looking for shots of the Academy experience. Send your suggestions/images to

Julia Matthews, juliamatt@gmail.com.