

Hello all:

I have had the pleasure of serving as your president since April 2021.

This is now our third “COVID year,” holding all of our lectures virtually through ZOOM. Again, they ran flawlessly. My thanks to the Technology Committee, chaired by webmaster Roger Tessier with able assistance from Len Klochek, for making this magic happen.

Our “shop floor” is the Curriculum Committee (Judy McCormick chair) and they are to be thanked for continuing to provide our members with a varied and interesting selection of courses.

During 2022 we were faced with the challenge of updating our by-law to conform with the requirements of the Ontario Non-profit Corporations Act (ONCA) which must be met by 2024 in order to continue our existence. Our ONCA committee of Rich Bailey (Corporate Secretary), Betty Horton and Deb Forsyth-Petrov worked hard to produce the proposed bylaw presented at this meeting. The board has unanimously approved its adoption and I hope you will support this motion.

Along with the new bylaw, the ONCA committee developed a set of operating procedures and processes that will be of great help to future boards in ensuring that we are following the best governance appropriate for a volunteer organization of our nature. Again, our thanks to the committee.

ZOOM continues to allow us to present our lecture series to our members in the comfort and safety of their own homes. However, we recognise that there are some members (up to 50% in some post-course survey results) who are willing to attend lectures in person at Fairfield provided there is manageable risk from COVID in doing so. Accordingly, we are working toward offering one series at Fairfield in the Fall of 2023. Further, to assist those who cannot attend a lecture on the day it is offered, we are investigating recording lectures and having them available to our members for a brief time after the lecture date. We will keep you posted as these two initiatives move forward.

With our Treasurer, Betty Horton, on the case, we remain in strong financial shape and the board is kept apprised regularly of our accounts. Many thanks to Betty!

Our reporting secretary, Rosemary Tessier, remains a constant source of good humour and support during this time of changing governance and reporting.

My thanks also go out to Deb Forsyth-Petrov, our vice president and Third Age Network representative, for her tireless work on governance, curriculum and other matters. I can pass the reins of the Chair position over to her with great confidence.

My deepest appreciation goes to Glenn Yaffee, our past president, whose good humour and efforts (as a member of the communications committee among other things) have made my work as President a lot easier. We will miss Glenn as his tenure on the board comes to a close with this meeting. Glenn had the dubious pleasure of serving as president when COVID changed our world. His unflappable leadership in an unprecedented situation has gotten us to the somewhat calmer waters of today.

Also, there are three other significant retirements to note.

First, Jane Botsford will not be returning to the board for next year as her new third age career as an educator makes it difficult for her to continue to contribute. Many thanks Jane for your help this year.

Another significant retirement is that of Audra Hudek, our Social Committee Chair. Audra has served us well in this capacity far longer than any of the current board members and always made sure we had the much-appreciated coffee and cookies at break time at Fairfield. Thank you for your years of exceptional service Audra.

The Curriculum Committee has lost a long-time member with the retirement of Loretta Fines, who joined the board in 2009 and served as president of LUE in 2013/4, in addition to her many years on the curriculum committee. Her contributions to Learning Unlimited cannot be understated and we will miss her greatly. The curriculum committee is vital to our long-term success in bringing our great programs to you and, if you want to play a greater role in the future of LU, this is a terrific place to volunteer.

Finally, my thanks to you, our members, whose support and kind comments on course surveys are very satisfying to our volunteer board. And a special thank you to those who have stepped up to volunteer for committees or the board to ensure we can continue to provide quality courses at a very reasonable cost.

Respectfully submitted

John Willson  
April 2023