

## **LRI ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2003 TO MAY 2004**

**CURRENT STATUS:** LRI is thriving! Current membership is at 660 persons, 5% above the spring term a year ago. We have a broad program of courses, special events and ongoing activities, thanks to the hard work, dedication, and effective efforts of our staff, instructors and committed membership. We continue to benefit from the culture and environment of Northern Virginia and our fine relationship with George Mason University. Our financial situation is strong, sufficient for our needs and flexible enough to undertake needed improvements and projects. We are close to bursting at the seams, which is healthy and vital, but that will also present future challenges and subsequent adjustments. We are facing increased costs for space and other inflationary pressures.

### **PROGRAM AND MEMBERSHIP**

- Courses and Events: We planned, developed and offered 198 courses, 30 special events, and eight different groups and ongoing activities. The Program Coordinator, active Program and Special Events Committees and six Resource Groups help recruit GMU professors, member teachers, and experts from both the public and private sector to provide leadership for a wide range of courses and special events.
- Summer session: The 2003 experimental restructuring of the summer program was well received. Six weeks of classes in late June and July, with extra opportunities for social interaction, are planned for 2004.
- Winter make-up schedule: Subject to the availability of the instructor, the week following the end of the regularly scheduled LRI winter term is now designated to make up classes canceled due to inclement weather.
- Art exhibits: LRI artists through six exhibitions displayed their paintings, photographs, and drawings in the social room annex at Tallwood and at one exhibit in Reston to the enjoyment of the membership.
- New Member Coffees: New LRI members are welcomed through personal phone calls and invited to coffee the first Friday of each term. The events have been well received and provide an opportunity to get acquainted.

- Social Events: The number of restaurant events during the year has increased and include several luncheons during term breaks. The Hospitality Committee helps with arrangements for the Annual Meeting, the Holiday Party, and with special events including the “The Best of Readers Theater”, the reading by members of the Poetry Workshop, and the Valentine’s Day Ice Cream Social.
- Reston Support: The Reston Support Committee continued to effectively work with LRI officers, staff, and various committees to increase enrollment, provide feedback and encourage course offerings and publicize LRI in area newspapers and at public events. The Committee statement of purpose was revised. LRI continues to hold some classes in cooperation with the Reston Community Center and has obtained publicity in their publications as a result.
- Teacher Appreciation: LRI honored our teachers, Program and Special Events Committees, and our special relationships with New Century College and the College of Visual and Performing Arts by hosting a Lifelong Learning Celebration at GMU in March. GMU President Alan Merten was the keynote speaker.
- Teacher Gifts: We continued our practice of giving teachers small tokens of appreciation, including, for the first time, a Starbucks card.
- Teacher Support: We continued to update classroom projectors and other equipment to meet the needs of LRI instructors. Training was conducted for individuals who will provide technological support in classrooms.
- Recruitment: LRI held a highly successful Open House in September. Volunteers participated in the Fairfax City Fall Festival, manned a table at the Senior Beacon Info Expo, staffed booths at other fairs including Reston, had several speaking engagements, publicized LRI through various articles and regularly distributed brochures to local libraries and community centers.
- Volunteerism: The Membership Committee has promoted volunteerism through identifying opportunities to extend a hand, helping to recruit and coordinate volunteer coverage for the Administrative Office, and honoring volunteers through the Valentine’s Day Ice Cream Social, in articles in *This Week at LRI*, and through the use of gold stickers on name tags.
- Surveys: A survey of the membership confirmed strong support for the summer 2003 format. A current survey is under way to identify

- member interest in the LRI program, skills, talents and interest in teaching and course preferences.
- Available courses: A listing of courses still available is now routinely provided with the confirmation letters for each term.
  - Suggestion Box: Members have been encouraged to provide feedback through the LRI suggestion box on the Web or in the social room at Tallwood.
  - Database: A database is being created to provide enrollment and attendance data, membership trends, and other information that will be useful in long-term planning for program and facilities.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

- Publications: During the past year we published four LRI course catalogs, 24 issues of *This Week at LRI*, four issues of *LRI Times*, a new edition of the *LRI Member and Volunteer Handbook*, two *LRI Membership Directories*, and two issues of *Fairfax Ink Literary Magazine*.
- Publications Committee: The committee revised their statement of responsibilities and statements of purpose and intended audience for the *LRI Catalog*, *This Week at LRI*, the *LRI Times* and the LRI Website. They developed procedures, guidelines, and schedules for submissions, and held work sessions on training in proofreading, updating Website content and specific procedures for various publications.
- Website: LRI continued the practice of making the catalogs available on the Website and having registration forms available for downloading. The Website continues to be updated regularly to provide current information regarding the program, the catalog, copies of publications, and historical and recent updates on activities.

## **FACILITIES**

- The House: Renovation of the old Tallwood house was begun by GMU to stabilize the building, replace the roof, fix the floors, and repaint the walls. The Board approved expenditures not to exceed \$40,000 for the construction of two new rest rooms with heating and air-conditioning for them as well as for the existing rest rooms in the addition to the House. It is expected that LRI will retain use of the downstairs space in the House as well as the addition.

- Projects: An emergency fire exit was added to TA-1 for safety reasons. The maximum capacity for the room is now 140 persons.
- The roof over the breezeway was freshly painted and more artwork is on display in the classrooms. Work orders were submitted to GMU for sidewalk improvements from the parking lot in front of the Tallwood Annex to the patio, from the patio stairs to TA-2, and for the construction of three handicapped parking spaces by TA-3.
- Space: We now utilize a 150-seat room in Christ Lutheran Church to accommodate two of our most popular courses. This has boosted our ability to meet member needs, but at an increased rental cost which will need review. The use of the Fairfax Christian Church is also under review.
- Washington Plaza Baptist Church: The contract is under review at the request of the church. It is likely some adjustment in the rent will be necessary. The Church is agreeable to a number of small changes being suggested by LRI.
- Landscaping: A major effort has resulted in an attractive transformation of the front of the Tallwood Annex.
- Maintenance: We continue to work effectively with GMU Physical Plant managers and staff on lawn mowing, leaf raking, snow plowing, tree removal, plumbing, roof repairs and gutter replacement and other necessary repairs at Tallwood.
- Safety: LRI had a Fire and Safety Inspection in November and has since completed a series of steps to insure compliance with the recommendations of the report. Staff members are now trained in CPR procedures.

## **ADMINISTRATION AND BOARD OPERATIONS**

- Staffing: We unexpectedly lost the services of Joanne Lingerfelt due to illness in her family. Jennifer Maloney was promoted to LRI Administrator. We recruited Ashleigh Shipe as Administrative Assistant, thanks to the special efforts of the Administration Committee in developing job descriptions, placing advertisements and interviewing candidates. The office maintained normal LRI operations during several weeks of being shorthanded. Richard Speier ably filled in for Mathilde Speier during the fall term at Reston.
- Facilities Committee: In June LRI re-established and organized a Facilities Committee to plan for future facility requirements and

implement improvements in existing facilities to assure a safe, comfortable and attractive environment for the staff and members.

- Hospitality Committee: The former Membership Services Committee was renamed the Hospitality Committee, with a focus on maintaining a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, supporting social interaction and activities for members and assisting in special events which involve social activities as part of the program.
- Membership Committee: The former Publicity Committee was renamed the Membership Committee, with responsibility for recruitment of members; ensuring that the needs, concerns, and suggestions of members are addressed; and encouraging the active participation of members in LRI programs.
- Planning Committee: The Committee provided a master plan that provided recommendations, based on steady but slow growth through 2007, regarding ten areas of the LRI program. The Board agreed to eliminate the committee in favor of developing plans through the joint efforts of the LRI Executive Committee (officers) in conjunction with chairs of various operational committees involved with the issues being addressed.
- Nominating Committee: The Board approved modifications in “Procedures and Guidelines for the Nominating Committee” based on the experience of spring 2003. The new procedures are being utilized this spring in voting for a slate of eight well-qualified candidates to fill six vacancies on the Board.
- Absentee balloting: Absentee balloting will be used in the election of officers at the 2004 LRI Board organizational meeting.
- Conflict of interest: A draft policy has been developed that would pertain to all Board members, committee chairs and employees. The primary focus is on any potential financial gain.
- Topics List: The Board maintains an ongoing shopping list of issues and ideas for future attention. Many issues have been addressed as indicated in this report. Items currently under consideration include an LRI historian, remembrance events, extension of membership in the event of illness or death in the family, and developing an evaluation form for optional use by teachers.
- E-mail: LRI policy on e-mail procedures was clarified. LRI officers, committee chairs and the administrator are now

authorized to send e-mails to the membership under their own names.

- Banner System: The office has adjusted to the GMU Banner accounting system of reporting which required reissuing all GMU ID cards.
- Executive Handbook: The LRI Executive Handbook was updated to reflect decisions made by the Board on behalf of the membership.

## **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

- Budget: The LRI budget for 2004 was developed and approved. Payroll, rent, publications and social room supplies continue as some of the larger cost components.
- Accounting and Bookkeeping: Steven A. Barolotta, CPA was engaged to prepare LRI's financial statements and reports and to supervise the bookkeeping functions in the LRI office.
- Pension plan arrangements: The Board has reaffirmed the previously unwritten but practiced policy of providing LRI employees the opportunity to establish individual 403(b)(7) pension plan arrangements. The issue of providing other benefits for employees is under consideration.
- Osher Foundation: LRI has submitted a proposal to the Bernard Osher Foundation that, if accepted, may result in a grant of \$1.3 million or more over four years.
- "Friends of LRI": The Development Committee continued to encourage contributions from the LRI membership resulting in significant funds that have been used for capital projects and the GMU scholarships. They provided an informational letter to the membership promoting the awareness of gifting opportunities and "Friends of LRI". Members generously contributed over \$28,000 for the acquisition of capital equipment and to supplement shortfalls in the operating budget.
- Combined Federal Campaign: LRI has submitted an application to be considered part of the Fall 2004 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area.

## **GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

- Senior Level Meetings: We met with senior level GMU management in November 2003 and provided annual reports

regarding LRI and GMU contacts and activities and discussed various issues, including the Tallwood site. Representatives met again in February 2004 to discuss contributions and higher education funding support. GMU confirmed that Tallwood House would be stabilized, not demolished.

- Legislative Support: LRI representatives testified at local hearings in support of adequate State-appropriated funds for higher education in Virginia in general and GMU in particular. LRI members were asked and responded to the request to contact their Virginia House of Delegates representative in support of increased educational funding for GMU.
- GMU President: Dr. Alan Merten spoke to LRI in February 2004 on GMU's future growth and the need for adequate funding from both public and private sources.
- Scholarships: LRI awarded three \$2,000 GMU student scholarships - two scholarships to New Century College and one scholarship to the College of Visual and Performing Arts.
- Gifting Opportunities: We developed a list of opportunities for Board or other LRI members to support GMU organizations, with emphasis on the College of Visual and Performing Arts and the Patriot's Club.
- Alumni Office: The GMU Alumni office provided LRI with addresses for a mailing to their members regarding the September Open House. The alumni magazine "Mason Spirit" is including an article about LRI in the Spring 2004 issue.

## **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

- Mid-Atlantic Conference: LRI participated in the highly successful Lifelong Learning Institutes Mid-Atlantic Conference, October 2003 along with 150 representatives of 28 LLI's from Maine to Florida. LRI speakers participated on five panels and benefited from the exchanging views at 17 sessions and hearing from Elderhostel Institute Network President Nancy Merz.
- ALRI Consultation: Various LRI members assisted the Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute by sharing experiences and answering questions on topics ranging from publications to programs.
- Chesterfield County: We met with community leaders interested in starting an LLI in Chesterfield County (near Richmond).

- Fall for the Book: LRI hosted two events in September for “Fall for the Book”, an annual autumn activity sponsored by GMU, the City of Fairfax, and the Washington Post.
- Fairfax County Schools: LRI benefited from the fine work of Travonta Thompson this spring. Travonta is a junior in Fairfax County Public School’s Office Technology and Procedures program and as a student intern in our office has done everything from manning the phones to updating/creating reports in Word and Excel.

## **THE FUTURE**

LRI’s future or vision is becoming clearer. We have more certainty and a stronger sense of where we might be heading than we did a year ago.

- Membership continues to grow.
- The LRI budget will increase in line with inflation and higher costs for space and personnel.
- Tallwood House is being stabilized: it will have more rest rooms and we have dibs on the first floor. We have had discussions with GMU regarding exclusive access that would include the second floor. Parking will be an issue should we be sharing the building during the day.
- We can be cautiously optimistic on our chances of receiving one of the Osher grants.
- There are many long-term possibilities regarding our location but two options are emerging from discussions with GMU:

Vision one: LRI remains at Tallwood and the associated seven-acre property. We work with GMU on construction of “additional improvements”, i.e., new permanent classrooms and expansion of parking sufficient to accommodate the needs of 1000 to 1500 members, along with the flexibility to add additional accommodations in time.

Vision two: We move to west campus (west of route 123, north of the field house, and close to the City of Fairfax) as part of a multi-purpose facility that, in addition to a new home for LRI, would include one or more entities having related interests or purposes, such as retirement resident housing. Any entities or developers not

an integral part of GMU, including LRI, would be expected to contribute funds for their appropriate portions of the multi-purpose facility. This option then would mean the construction of new classrooms, offices and parking to accommodate the needs of 1000 to 1500 LRI members, along with longer-run flexibility to expand.

With either of the above scenarios LRI would likely wish to establish a designated fund, perhaps with the GMU Foundation, into which LRI could deposit contributions for the purpose of future projects.

LRI is getting to be a “big kid” with a great future. We have had a very productive year as an organization. Our work is not yet done. RWB 5/7/04