



Together for Change

A RETROSPECTIVE OF STUDENT INITIATIVES AT RYERSON

Ronald Stagg



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David Guptil, David Steele and Michael Walton, who experienced many of the events chronicled here, for reviewing the manuscript for accuracy, and Tom Sosa for clarifying, at the end of the review, one important fact that no one else was sure of and about which the Archives does not have a record. Recognition must also be given to present and past members of the Ryerson Centre, who initiated this project and thus leave behind a record of student involvement perhaps unique in the written history of universities.

If any inaccuracies remain in the body of this work, they are my responsibility. Any broad account such as this one is bound to omit other worthy examples. In addition to accepting responsibility for errors, I hope that any such omissions will not result in hurt feelings and that this record will serve as a recognition of a wider student involvement in the growth of the university than that which is chronicled here.

Ronald Stagg
Toronto, March 25, 2015

A Volkswagen Beetle is perched atop the Normal School Façade in the Kerr Hall quadrangle. A "crown-jewel" of a joke, pulled-off by Mech Force 10, the secret prankster arm of the mechanical engineering students. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1982.*

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Foreword

COMMUNITY IS ORGANIC by definition, fluid by nature. Metrics struggle to quantify it and even “a sense of community” is aspirational in our vernacular. Beyond the enrollment figures and donor stewardship, beyond grades and performance reports there are faces, stories and experiences. There is love, friendship, despair, frustration and passion. While academics mold the brain, community molds the character.

Ryerson has led an awkward existence, never quite fitting in, being an underdog. Not quite a college but without the privilege of a university, its very existence rushed into place by pragmatic requirements to retrain veterans. Even the campus itself, cast in the shadow of concrete and steel towers seems reminiscent of a decision made by a hurried bureaucrat, short on options. Yet from this modest beginning there was always a light, an optimism stimulated by youth, fed by possibility and led by change—a unity in adversity.

For over 50 years Ryerson Centre has been a vanguard of this community. A resource to affect change, one project at a time—a farm, a ski lodge, Oakham House

accessibility, *McClung's Magazine*, CLKN, the Student Centre and many, many others. A quiet catalyst to help the Ryerson community define itself.

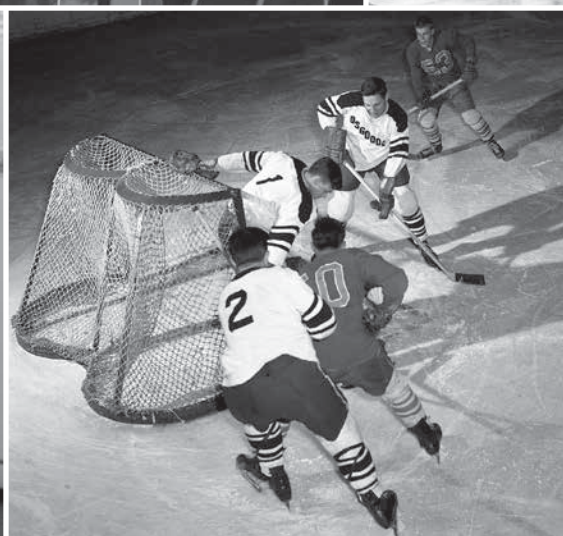
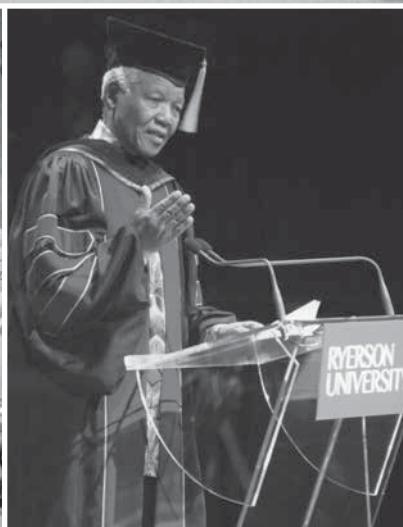
As Ryerson wades deeper into the ocean of academic institutes, it does so stronger, more confident. An institute built on the shoulders of its contributors, its students, staff, faculty and alumni. An institute that now builds shadows of concrete and steel.

It's from this perspective we provide this book. Part demarcation, part challenge to those who carry the torch next. But nonetheless, this is a tightly shot portrait of what has been—so far. A portrait where the clothes may not be wrinkle-free, the hair unkempt, gait awkward, the personality timid at times, but the unbridled enthusiasm and twinkle in the eye make it hard not to feel endearment.

Voilà a selfie.

David Steele
Ryerson Centre
RyeSAC President (1998)

PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE, TOP ROW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): The City Muffin Boys perform *The Way It Is at Ryerson*, 1967. The annual Parade and Picnic, 1990s. A Protest by Electrical Technology students, 1978. CENTRE ROW: Electronics Students, 1957–58. Nelson Mandela receiving honorary doctorate, 2001. Robert Tong, Ryerson Karate Team, 1973. BOTTOM ROW: Home Economics Student, 1960–61. Men's Hockey Team, 1956–57. Theatre Arts Students, 1985. *Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives and RyeEye Publishing.*



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Timeline

1949-50

First Blue and Gold Dance

The Ryersonian
newspaper is launched

1952

RIOT Show, standard revue format established, Fashion created costumes, Furniture Arts created sets, and Electrical Technology did the lighting, performed at Bloor Collegiate

1960-61

The first Island Picnic and Dance on Centre Island started during first week of school

1948

The Ryerson Institute of Technology is founded

Student Administrative Council founded (SAC) (student union)

1953

ROW (Ryerson Opera Workshop) puts on *The Beggar's Opera*

1963

Name changes to Ryerson Polytechnical Institute

Kerr Hall opens

1950s

1960s

1954

Gamma Epsilon Tau Fraternity founded

ROW (Ryerson Opera Workshop) puts on *Brigadoon*

Student Administrative Council (SAC) given control of its funds

Principal Howard Kerr reinforces the shirt-and-tie dress code for men

1953

1953 Ryerson Amateur Radio Club (RyeHAM) founded.

1964

Ryerson Theatre opens with reprise of *Brigadoon*

1966

A new Student Council was founded as 'The Student's Administrative Council of Ryerson Polytechnic Institute' (SAC)"

Ryerson Institute of Technology Students' Union assumes new role on campus; renamed 'Ryerson Union' (RU)"

1966-67

1st Female President of SAC, Janet Weir

Requirement for Male students to wear shirt and tie ends by successful referendum campaign by SAC

Booxodus—successful protest about small size of library

1970

The Student's Administrative Council (SAC) is renamed Student's Union of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute (SURPI)

1973-74

Ryerson Centre buys Farm near Peterborough and Ski Lodge at Blue Mountain

New Library completed

1970s

1969

Ryerson begins participating in Shinerama fundraising campaign

1968

Last annual publication of the *Ryersonia* (Student Yearbook)

1967

The Eyeopener newspaper is launched

The Student's Administrative Council (SAC) is incorporated

1979

Ryerson Centre (RC) officially changes name, updates by-laws and is now a registered charity

Lake Devo opens

1976

Ryerson Board of Governors designates Oakham House (then known as Eric Palin Hall) as Ryerson's Campus Centre

1980

The Women's Centre supported by SURPI

Student Referendum agreed to provide a levy to fund The Eyeopener and CRFM which separated them both from SURPI

1981

Palin Foundation By-law #1 approved which outlines an eight member Board of Directors, four nominated by Board of Governors and four nominated by the Ryerson Centre. The management of Oakham House is delegated to an eleven member management team.

1985

BACCHUS (Boost Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students) introduced by SURPI, two pay breathalyzer machines installed

1991

The Eyeopener prints 2nd "FUCK YOU" edition

1993

Ryerson is granted full university status by the Ontario Government

Mech Force 10 places Volkswagen on top of South Kerr Hall

Engineering Society Bug Push raises money for Hospital for Sick Children

1980s

1990s

1988

Student organized Mass Exodus fashion show becomes annual tradition

SURPI funding restored to Women's Centre

Sex Education Week sponsored by SURPI & Toronto Board of Health

1987

Recreation and Athletics Centre (RAC) opens

1986

The Women's Centre shut down by SURPI, reopened without funding

Ryerson's Board of Governors recommends the building of a student centre

Palin Foundation is restructured: By-law #2 evolves Board of Directors into a seventeen member Board of Stewards. The Board assumes management committee responsibility for Oakham House. Ryerson Centre agrees to contribute \$25,000-\$40,000 per annum for several years

2001

The Eyeopener put up Scoop W. Gerbil as candidate for President of Ryerson Students Administrative Council (RyeSAC)

1995

Referendum held to authorize student money to pay for University Ombudsperson is successful

Ryerson Students Union renamed RyeSAC (Ryerson Students' Administrative Council)

Palin Foundation negotiates to contract management of Oakham House to new management committee coordinated by RyeSAC

2002

Name changes to Ryerson University

2003

Commerce Society approved by Board of Governors

27 groups operate under Commerce Society (SIFE Ryerson—Students in Free Enterprise)

2000s

1999

Ryerson Centre offers its corporate status and history to the governance committee of the Ryerson Student Campus Centre, for evolution into the Responsible Legal Entity of the new building and Oakham House

1998

Ryerson Centre, the Palin Foundation, and the Oakham House Management Committee each pass resolutions supporting an integrated management structure which includes Oakham House and a new Student Campus Centre

1996

Referendum approves \$60 per year per student to go to Student Campus Centre Mortgage, CESAR referendum approves \$4.00 per course per student

Palin Foundation By-law #3 enacted, which restructures The Board of Directors into a seven member body appointed by RyeSAC, CESAR, Oakham Societies, Ryerson Centre and Ryerson.

2014

60 cultural, religious and interest based groups supported by RSU, as well as over 50 course unions

2012

Mattamay Athletic Centre—new location for first week of school dance

2006

RyeSAC renamed Ryerson Students' Union (RSU)

The Eyeopener prints 3rd "FUCK YOU" edition



RYERSON INSTITUTE
OF
TECHNOLOGY
50 GOULD STREET

Introduction

UNIVERSITY HISTORIES, by nature, are records of the founding and development of the institution, accounts of the creation and modification of programs and of the addition of buildings and campuses. Important individuals are often singled out, such as presidents, famous faculty and the odd highly successful student. Rarely is any attention paid to student initiatives which created something new that could be developed after graduation, or which changed some aspect of life within the university, or the way in which it was run. This publication is designed to complement all histories of Ryerson University, to highlight the role that student initiatives played in the institution's history. As such, it cannot deal with every initiative, large and small, as there are many, but it can deal with the major initiatives, and chronicle a representative cross-section of the smaller ones. This record will add to official histories and provide a more comprehensive view of the evolution of the university.

To a certain extent this lack of attention to student initiatives in official histories can be explained by the fact that Canadian universities were largely run from the top down until the student power movement of the late 1960s. While faculty had a role in academic decisions,



FACING PAGE: Two women congregate outside the 50 Gould St. Entrance to Ryerson Institute of Technology, 1951. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives.* ABOVE: The O'Keefe House Brewers demonstrate their earmark enthusiasm during an orientation activity in the quad. *Photo courtesy of RyeEye Publishing, circa 1990s.*



At Ryerson's first campus bookstore—operated by students, for students, text books and class materials were available for purchase, along with other supplies.

Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.

student participation in academic and governmental issues was almost non-existent. Student unions dealt mainly with the social aspects of student life. Student clubs operated with a fair degree of autonomy, but usually with a faculty advisor, since funding came from the university. The opportunities for students to initiate major or even minor projects were limited, often to projects suggested to them and supervised by individual faculty members. Student radicals in the 1960s and 70s decried the atmosphere in which decisions as to what would be learned, and how, were dictated to students. While demands for the elimination of grading and for a curriculum freed from ideology based on capitalism were not met, demands for a broader choice of courses, a say in university governance, and more flexible opportunities for students to initiate projects were achieved, leading to a greater role for students in universities.

The Early Years—Social Initiatives

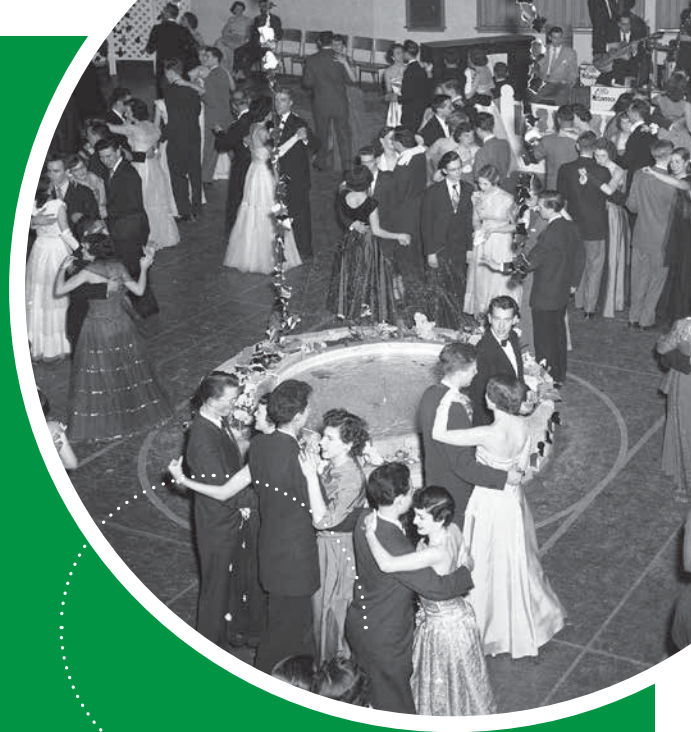
INTERESTINGLY, ONE OF the major periods for student initiatives at Ryerson was in the 1940s and 50s, when universities were still very much hierarchical places. Ryerson Institute of Technology was even more hierarchical, having been placed in the secondary school system, with an all-powerful principal, rather than in the university system with its combination of hierarchical and collegial governance. Howard Kerr had the final word on all matters, academic, financial, and physical, the latter in terms of the buildings on campus. Student dress was tightly controlled, with male students required to wear business attire. Even the slightest student misconduct was not tolerated.

(b) The Dress of the Students

Certain students are always ready to test the teachers to ascertain if the dress regulation is still in force. IT IS one of the duties of the instructional staff is to see that students are excluded from classrooms and laboratories if they are improperly dressed.



H.H. Kerr, Principal



Dances and other activities were key to the social life of the campus. The start or end of term, every holiday, and even the end-of-a-week was a reason to celebrate. The golden era of dances began to fade with the heady days of the 1960s. Dances seemed old-fashioned when compared with Yorkville's vibrant hippy culture or the progressive Rochdale college commune. Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.

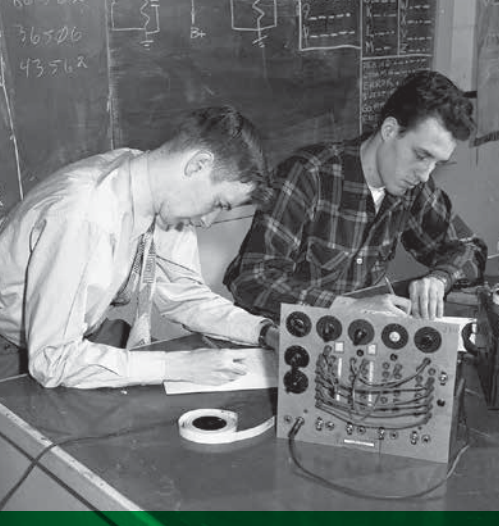


LEFT: Ryerson equestrian club, one of the first organized campus groups. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.* RIGHT: RyeHAM Amateur Radio Club members enjoyed the sanctity of a dimly lit shack more than hustle of the urban campus—much like the gamers of today, only with poorer dexterity. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.*



Why then were students able to carry out major initiatives, in a climate in which students were told what to do? The situation resulted from a combination of factors. Ryerson Institute of Technology was a new school, and a new type of school. There was a sense that everyone, students, faculty and staff, was working together to build something unique. This feeling was emphasized as course content and program length changed during the school year, and as renovations to classrooms were carried out continuously, even while classes were taking place. Instructors came directly from industry and were used to working with their fellow employees. A substantial number of them had worked in the military retraining facility that had been Ryerson's predecessor and were used to working with their peers, ex-military men, individuals who were older and had life experience. During the 1940s and early to mid-1950s many of the students were older, having spent time out of school, and were more mature than the average high school graduate. This situation reinforced the sense of students and faculty working together. Howard Kerr, although fixated on having students look and act professionally, or because of this, encouraged students to take on more responsible roles. As the student body evolved into a younger group of high school graduates, this sense of working together continued to a certain extent, until the early faculty retired.

Not surprisingly early student initiatives involved social activities, given the educational climate of the day, but students were the instigators or major participants in a wide variety of activities. A number of clubs were formed. Some lasted and some came and went within a year or two. One of the earliest



and longer lasting clubs was the riding club which met at a Toronto area stable on weekends. It is rather amusing to think that an upstart institution that became locally known as ‘Rye High’, an unsophisticated place, boasted a club that practiced a sport usually associated at the time with genteel society. Other clubs from the beginning of the 1950s included an Art Club, which did sketching and painting, a Badminton Club, a Girls Club, later called the Co-Ed Club, undoubtedly a mutual support group for the small number of women at Ryerson, and a Library Club, which created a Film Society. There were also a Debates Club, a Ski Club, a Writers Club, which met to critique the members’ work, a Drama Club and the Nontario Club, which planned social activities for out-of-province students, such as wiener roasts on the Island and meetings with the Co-Ed club. The latter two clubs were successful for a substantial period of time.

An even longer-running club, RyeHAM was formed in 1953, to provide a place for Ham Radio enthusiasts to hone their skills. Another club that existed for some years was the Circle-K Club. This organization was a service club affiliated with the Kiwanis Club. While student service today is usually individual, or focused on one cause, the fact that this club took on so many roles is a comment on how different the view of student service was in that era. The Circle-K Club operated a housing registry, very needed when Ryerson had almost no on-campus housing, brought all the campus clubs together to introduce them to students, operated the coat checking concession at the Friday night dances, which were under the sponsorship of

ABOVE: The Circle-K club was an affiliated branch of the Kiwanis community service organization. It was equal parts social convener and charitable fundraiser, planning numerous events that brought people together to do good work for the broader community. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.*



TOP LEFT: While yet to produce a Kasparov, the Chess Club remains optimistic—continuing, mostly unchanged for over 50 years as the longest running campus club. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.*

the Athletics Department, held a campus-wide drive for the United Appeal Campaign, showed a film once a month at the Home for Incurable Children (the name shows just how different the era of Ryerson's founding was from today), assisted at the TB clinic and the Blood Donor clinic for students, and donated a bursary for needy students. The Institute also had a band and a choir which quickly spawned an orchestra and a glee club. The Music Committee of SAC (the Students' Administrative Council) put on operettas. Organizations such as the band were created through faculty initiatives, but were enthusiastically supported by students, who were the members. The musical groups were critical to other student activities.

Other clubs and organizations were begun in the later 1950s and early 1960s. Various clubs based on individual sports (e.g. Badminton) appeared, as sports were as much a student pastime of the period as were dances and other social activities. These were particularly important as it was difficult to organize intercollegiate teams. As a technical institute Ryerson was not allowed to play in the university league and it also was difficult to play intercollegiate sports such as football and hockey since Ryerson had no facilities of its own. Other clubs included a Chess Club and a chapter of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. The Drama Club split in two, with Radio and Television Arts' students forming their own section. Both parts were quite active, with RTA students gradually assuming the largest portion of the roles in student productions. In late 1954, second and third year Journalism students formally created a Press Club, following up on ideas originating at the annual Press Club and Athletic



Association dinners, and building on an informal organization. The purpose of the Club was to allow Journalism students to invite newspaper personalities to speak to them and to foster discussion of press issues among themselves.

Dances played a large part in the social life on the campus. In 1949–50, for example, there was a ‘Get Acquainted’ Dance in November and a ‘Holly Hop’ just before the end of classes in December. A Sadie Hawkins Dance, a role reversal as women invited men, was a popular event. An ‘At Home’ dance finished the year. The ‘Holly Hop’ was replaced by a Christmas ‘Snow Ball’ at Christmas 1950 and that academic year saw the inauguration of a long running tradition, the Blue and Gold, at the end of the 1950–51 school year. Students created elaborate decorations in the gym, and the evening included the crowning of the Campus Queen. Over the next few years, other dances were added, filling the school year. The ‘Halloween Hop’, like the other dances, became an annual event. Any excuse was used for a dance. There were Friday night dances to celebrate the end of the week, the ‘Shamrock Shuffle’ in March, organized by the Circle-K Club, and the ‘Pep Rally’ dance before the annual football game with the Ontario Agricultural College, now the University of Guelph. The Nontario Club held dances for its members, and various schools within Ryerson also held dances. The technology organizations, Mech-Tech, Elec-Tech and Chemit, were especially active. A semi-formal graduation dance followed graduation. As soon as there were graduates, homecoming dances were organized by the Alumni Association. The first was the ‘Rye Roundup’ in 1952–53, attended by 200.

FACING PAGE AND ABOVE:

Dances constituted the backbone of the social calendar, a way for students to meet and mingle. Dances frequently crowned kings and queens, a practice that was relished by attendees. *Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.*



Due to the lack of female enrollment it was frequently necessary for some departments to look elsewhere for a suitable Campus Queen contestant. This photo from Homecoming 1960–61 shows that the occasional “Y” may have appeared in the chromosome pool. *Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1961.*

The Blue and Gold, a formal dance organized by the Program Committee of SAC, the student union, along with initiation week and the two productions of the year, RIOT and the ROW show, became the highlight of the social life at the Institute. The evening also included the crowning of the Campus Queen. In 1952 the dance was moved to the Royal York Hotel and in 1953 was so popular that SAC had to rent the Oak Room at Union Station and hire a second orchestra to accommodate all who wished to attend. Over the years, faculty and invited notables, usually associated with education, attended. At the end of the 1960s the Blue and Gold became a victim of the changing atmosphere of the later years of the decade. With the dance went the Blue and Gold Society, which was officially formed by SAC in 1967, but which was an amalgamation of two unofficial organizations that had existed for some years to bolster school spirit and encourage participation in campus activities, the Blue and Gold Society and the Rye Boosters club. The new Blue and Gold Society had taken over the SAC role of organizing dances, encouraging support for Ryerson teams and organizing Winter Carnival events, but had a short life. As the focus of student life shifted more towards social issues, a change which fostered demonstrations, sit-ins, folk concerts and the like, the emphasis on formal dances seemed old-fashioned. The Blue and Gold Society was briefly resurrected by the Athletics Department in 1979, to boost school spirit and attendance at athletic events. In 2010 it was resurrected again by University Advancement, to recognize donors to Ryerson. The Blue and Gold Dance was also recreated, and continues, but now has nothing to do with student initiatives. The destruction of the old RCAF hangar, which had been moved to the Ryerson campus, and which contained a large ‘boys’ gym, in 1957, to make way for Howard Kerr Hall, the Quad, meant the end of large, on-campus dances. They were held in other places, such as Varsity Arena, but much less frequently, and they also suffered from the same societal changes in the 1960s that doomed the Blue and Gold.

The dances held on campus created a problem in the early years, when the male-female ratio was something like ten to one. Women were recruited from Willard Hall, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union headquarters on the north side of Gerrard Street, which was used as an inexpensive and safe residence for single women, and from local YWCAs. In a clever, or perhaps desperate, move the students created an on-campus dating bureau to match male and female students. This same ingenuity was shown with

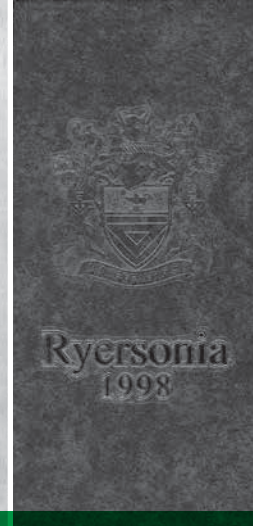
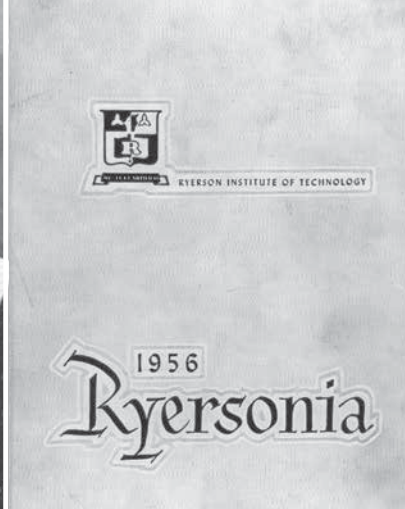


Rho Alpha Kappa, a combination campus fraternity and mentoring organization operated by Radio and Television students. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.*

regards to the choosing of Miss Ryerson each year during initiation week in September. Due to the dearth of sufficient female candidates, Miss Ryerson was often a male student.

Since women students were so few in number, it is not surprising that they would band together for mutual support. However, the Co-Ed Club was not just a mutual support organization. It shared in the general desire of students to improve life on campus. Aside from holding meetings to discuss mutual interests and concerns, the Club sponsored the Yuletide Evenings, starting in 1952, which featured the band and the Glee Club. Like the Circle-K Club, with which the Co-Ed Club co-operated, it raised money for charity.

As on other post-secondary campuses, fraternities were a part of life at Ryerson. At Ryerson some of them were really quasi-professional organizations. One of the earliest (1954) was Gamma Epsilon Tau. It was formed by students in the Graphic Arts Program, but included a few Journalism students. Associated with the American Graphic Arts Association, it acquired a house, set up a library, and acted as an educational facility for students in the graphic arts field, as well as doing printing for students on campus. Rho Alpha Kappa was a social and professional fraternity for Radio and Television Arts students. Others included Delta Sigma Phi, which also acquired a house, Tau Epsilon Nu and Theta Kappa Chi. The latter two were formed at the beginning of the

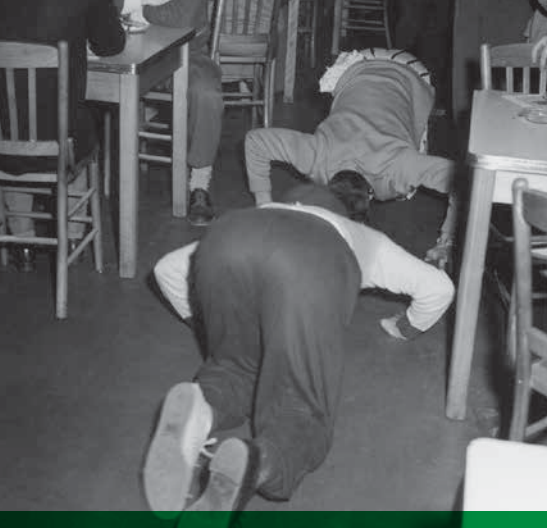


The *Ryersonia* yearbook was an annual project until 1968. A commemorative edition was produced in 1998, as part of the university's fiftieth anniversary. The initiative was run by a team of student volunteers, led by Michael Durrant of RyeSAC. Materials courtesy of Ryerson University Archives.

1960s. In 1967 an inter-fraternity drinking competition led to the death of one student and discredited the idea of fraternities among Ryerson administrators. This and the decreased emphasis on social aspects of student life at the time led to the decline of the fraternity movement at the Institution.

THE EARLY YEARS—PUBLICATIONS

Students from the Graphic Arts (earlier Printing) Program were very much at the centre of student initiated activities in the 1940s and 50s. They created *The Little Daily*, and later *The Little Weekly*, Ryerson's first newspapers, to keep students informed about activities on Campus. It was they who designed and printed the *Ryersonia*, the student yearbook. This publication was another example of student co-operation to improve life at Ryerson. Journalism students wrote for it and Photo Arts students took the photographs. In 1954, literary pieces were published in the *Ryersonia* for the first time, along with illustrative sketches, giving the broader student body more input into the publication. Originally the pieces were descriptions of various aspects of life at the Institute, but later short stories were added. The yearbook, which captured so much about student activities, and about student initiated activities, was another victim of societal changes in the late 1960s. As well as an increased emphasis on social issues outside the university, there was an increase in an emphasis on the individual over the group, at least partly based on the influence of Hippie culture. In some ways these two were



contradictory influences as one stressed working together for social justice and the other emphasized personal enjoyment over group responsibility, but neither emphasized the previous concerns of campus life and the co-operation required to pursue them. The last issue of the *Ryersonia* came out in 1968 and was almost entirely composed of photographs. The editor explained that there were not enough volunteers to put together the yearbook, and only 125 students purchased it. This lack of interest in producing a yearbook was a common problem on campuses across the country at the time. Though revived briefly with an edition in 1998 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Ryerson's founding, and partially funded by the Ryerson Centre, the yearbook did not have either the participation or the impact of its early years.

THE EARLY YEARS—INITIATION

A major event of the school year was the SAC-run initiation, lasting up to a week in September. Designed to build school spirit and camaraderie among first year students, it was run by second year, at a time when programs were mostly two years, and later three. Most of what was done would not be tolerated by current university administrations, but was quite normal in its day. Students were required to shine shoes and carry senior students on their backs, as well as wash their cars, along with floors, windows, and the statue of Egerton Ryerson. They were sometimes required to sell items in the cafeteria or on Yonge Street. Women's lingerie was a favourite item.

Orientation has always been an opportunity to bring the community together and set the tone for the year to come. In the early years dances and charity fundraisers were intermixed with darker activities, as much about indoctrination as orientation. As societal norms have changed, so have the requirements to push a peanut across a floor with one's nose. *Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.*



Chariot races were one of the more athletic orientation endeavors, but were eventually replaced by the TTC as a legitimate form of transportation—while slower, the TTC tended to get students around with fewer broken bones. The Pharmacy building at 43–44 Gerrard Street appears in the background of the top right photo, providing some campus perspective. The building was occupied at the time by the Ontario College of Pharmacy, becoming part of Ryerson campus in 1963 and subsequently the home to Ryerson Theatre School.

Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.

A peanut race, with participants pushing peanuts with their noses, formed part of the initiation or of the sports day which followed. Early initiations included a parade to city hall, with the faces of the frosh painted with lipstick and shoe polish.

After several days of this activity, the process concluded with trials, an Olympic Day of ‘sports’, a Soph-Frosh Dance, and the selection variously of Mr. and Mrs. Frosh (the best dressed) or, more often, Miss Ryerson. The trials were for frosh who had done something unacceptable during the initiation. An ‘impartial’ judge and a prosecutor were chosen from among the seniors. Penalties ranged from bobbing for apples to “sitting on the bowl” (one can only imagine). The worst offenders were sentenced to the electric chair, a home-made apparatus that inflicted a moderate shock. Among those who served as prosecutor was Isadore “Issy” Sharp, later to achieve greater fame as the founder of the Four Seasons hotel chain.

The games which occupied the last day included activities such as a dessert eating contest and a peanut race. A tug of war and a chariot race were mandatory, with the home-made chariots pulled by students. Tripping chains and smoke bombs were allowed by the rules. The closing dance and selection of Miss Ryerson were designed to bring the persecuted and the persecutors together as Ryersonians. In 1955 Howard Kerr announced that it would be the last year for the ‘sadistic bullying’ of freshmen. The sports day for that year was cancelled as punishment. The chariot race, which later became a bed race, continued to be a feature of life at Ryerson, but the more abusive aspects of initiation were phased out, to be replaced in the 1960s with the float parade to the Island Docks and the Toronto Island picnic.

Drama and Music

THE OTHER TWO big events largely run by students were RIOT, and the annual show put on by the Ryerson Opera Workshop (ROW). These profited from a lively artistic life at Ryerson. The Drama Club (later the Drama Workshop) regularly put on plays at Ryerson, reprising one of them at Donlands United Church in 1952. In 1954 and again in 1955, the Club sent one of its plays to the Inter-Varsity drama Festival. While it had a cast coordinator and a producer from Ryerson staff, it was essentially a student organization. The Opera Society performed two or three times a year, sometimes off campus at larger auditoriums. The band, the orchestra, and the choir performed at RIOT in the early years, and the band continued to do so. Both band and choir performed at the pre-Christmas noon-hour sing-alongs and at the Yuletide evening. The band played at rugby games and at opera intermissions and the choir performed on the closed-circuit Campus Radio station. SAC had a Music Committee and a Drama Committee to oversee the activities. The result of all this was that there was a substantial pool of performers for the large productions, ROW and RIOT.



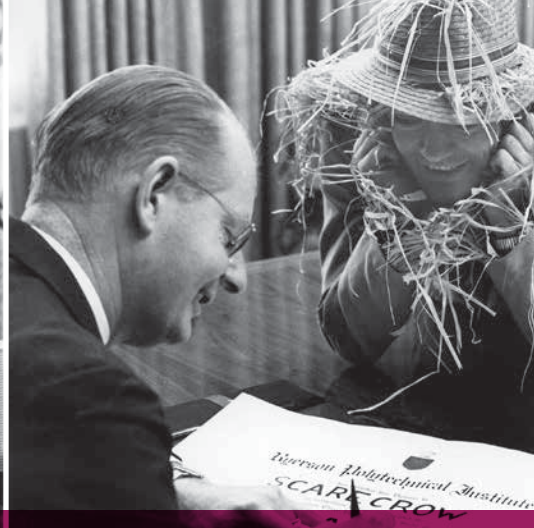
If dances were the social backbone of the campus, then theatre productions were its heart. Original translations, classics, opera and comedies were all part of the playbill, but musicals were by far the most popular. *Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1960s.*



Ryerson Opera Workshop (ROW) produced lavish and highly popular productions, but was basically a student group. *The Wizard of Oz* pictured above was an example of the high production values and promotion that made ROW successful. The top-right image is taken from inside the Toronto Dominion bank, formerly located at Yonge and Gerrard Streets, where ROW staged a photo-shoot as a publicity stunt for *Alice in Wonderland*. Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1960s.

THE RYERSON OPERA WORKSHOP

ROW was the creation of Jack McAllister, who taught English. An avid fan of musicals, he put together a cast and crew to put on the *The Beggar's Opera* in 1953. While McAllister acted as producer and director-in-chief, ROW was essentially a student production. It had an executive like a club to manage the various aspects of the production from assembling a cast and crew to doing publicity. The production had a cast of 75, and the next year *Brigadoon* had a cast of 100, a major commitment for a small institution. Among the productions that ROW performed was *Mademoiselle Angot* in 1955, a French musical translated by McAllister and a Columbia University librarian. Most though were Broadway musicals such as *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *The Red Mill*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Kiss Me Kate*. Quite a few of the cast members had previous experience in the early days, some in high school productions, some in various Ryerson productions, and some in professional theatre. Again there was a real sense of being together in something new. Cast and crew socialized as well as practicing and performing. Performances were in the theatre/auditorium in the old Board of Education building/Normal School, the original Ryerson central building and were usually held for more than one night. In 1963 the Old Ryerson building was torn down. ROW's production of *Once Upon a Mattress* was the last show in the old theatre. In 1964 the new Ryerson theatre opened with a reprise of *Brigadoon* the show first produced ten years before. Jack McAllister remained with the show up until the 1970s, sometimes directing, sometimes



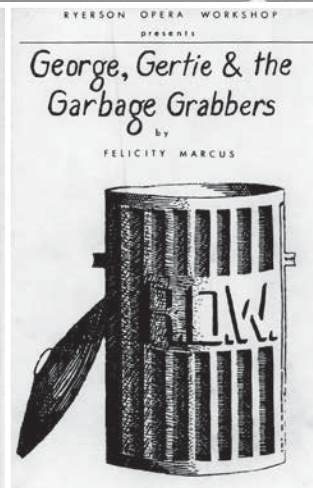
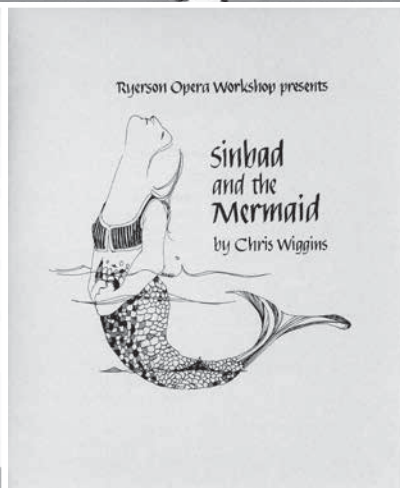
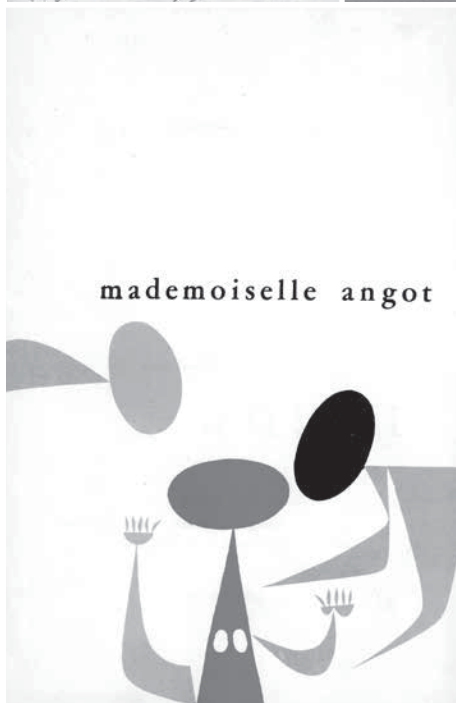
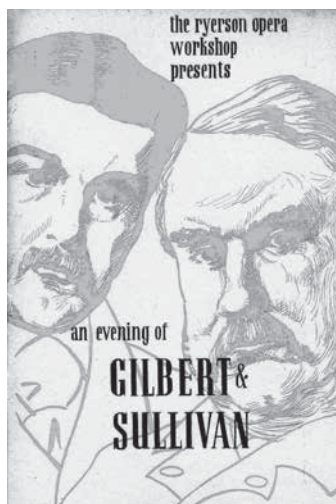
producing, and sometimes in other roles. In 1965 and 1966, for instance he was the musical director. What remained constant was the management by students of most aspects of the production except producing and directing.

In 1971 the Theatre School was created through the efforts of Jack McAllister and McAllister joined the faculty there. Beginning in 1970, ROW switched to children's musicals on a smaller scale, beginning with *Alice In Wonderland*. As with other aspects of life at Ryerson already mentioned, changing social norms, as well as competition from the Theatre School, doomed the big productions. Alice had a cast of 35. What was now known as the Ryerson Theatre Directorate (students) assembled a cast and a crew and put on 10 performances, using Eddie Siguard, the 'Artistic Director of the Ryerson Company of Players', and also a member of the new Theatre School faculty, as director. A series of small productions followed including *George*, *Gertie and the Garbage Grabbers* (1974) and *Stick with Molasses* (1976). In the latter year the claim was made that ROW had been 'resurrected from the dead'. However, this small production, performed in the cramped space of the Mini-Theatre, marked the second death of ROW.

RIOT

While the ROW productions were major events in the Ryerson school year, RIOT became, for a time, a major event in the whole of Toronto. RIOT began in 1950 as recognition of the creation of SAC, the student union,

Ryerson Opera Workshop (ROW) is an example of how student life molded Ryerson academics. The highly popular productions, under the direction of Jack McAllister, became renowned within the Toronto arts scene and led directly to the formation of the Ryerson Theatre School. *Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1960s.*



A collection of Ryerson Opera Workshop [ROW] programme cover art and promotional materials. The widely popular organization produced various works including an original translation. As is the case today, musicals were the populist choice and ROW gained a reputation for their high-production values and commercial-level quality. *Photos and material courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1950–1960s.*



RIOT-1951

RYERSONIA DE BALONIA

A Stunted Theatrical Sausage in Eleven Slices

Orchestra in pit, held down by A. Sauro

ALL SING RYERSON SONG . . . with these words preferably—

*R.I.T. we will fight for you ever,
For the gold and blue and white;
Hold high the flame of Ryerson's name
And keep it burning bright.*

*Long may you thrive—
For R.I.T. we'll strive,
And your halls will ring
As your praise we sing—*

On to Victory! On to Victory!

- 1. THE DANCE OF EXUBERATION, PERHAPS**
School of Arche-Test Your-All
- 2. McRAE'S MUG, or THE CHARIOTS WENT THAT WAY**—School of Shady Business
- 3. YE DIRTY DANCE PERIOD, or FEUDAL FIE FEET**
School of Candid Costumes
- 4. THE HORRICULUM**
School of Short Circuits
- 5. STRAWBERRY BLONDES**
School of Short Stomach
- 6. ONE MORE BLOOD DROP**
School of Broken Down Furniture
- 7. HIT ME, MAMA, WITH A SOLID STONE**
School of Scandal Arts
- 8. CLEOPATRA WAS A CO-ED**
School of Half-Cut Diamonds
- 9. SUFFER THE WRATH**
School of Industrial Chemistink
- 10. THE MUTTON GLUTTONS**
School of Mechanical and Industrial Traps
- 11. LET ME OUT OF HERE**
School of Snap Shots

THE END—GO HOME!

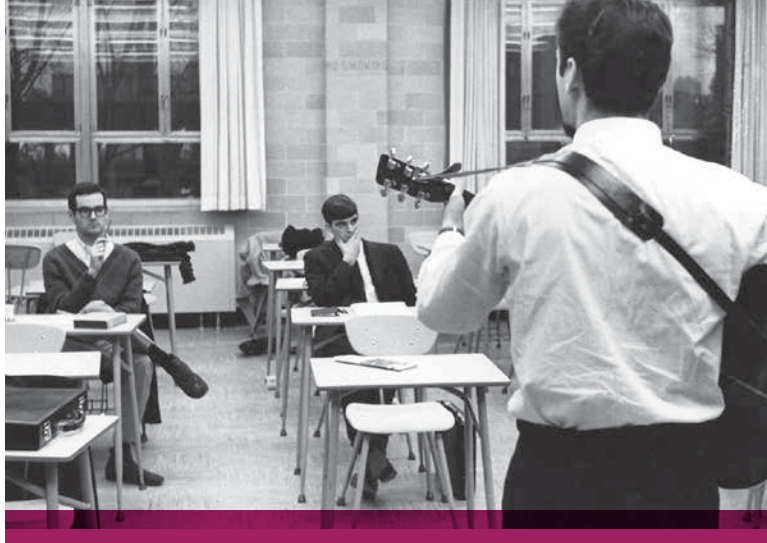
and was designed as a celebration of all the things that were Ryerson. That year it was decided that each school would do a 'stunt', a skit mocking, in a friendly way, some aspect of that school or of Ryerson generally. The show was to involve everyone, students, instructors, the staff, and the principal, Howard Kerr. While there was a producer and director from the faculty, students invented the stunts and fed the material to student writers. Students were also directors, cast, crew, and orchestra members. Even the office staff put on a skit. Prizes were awarded to the best three skits, and for the best three costumes, as the event was also billed as a masquerade, with audience members encouraged to create costumes. The evening started with the cheerleaders performing and ended with a dance. Alberindo (Al) Sauro of the English faculty, who came from a musical family, led the orchestra. Even Howard Kerr joined in the spoofs. Five hundred seats were set up in the Gym, but the demand was so great that one hundred standing room only places were sold.

The next year essentially was a repeat of the same approach, with over 200 students acting as directors, actors, writers, stage crew and members of the orchestra. The biggest difference was that the orchestra got into a

RIOT an annual student led production that spoofed 'everything Ryerson' spilled into the forefront of an early comedy scene in Toronto.

Photos and material courtesy of Ryerson University Archives.

Tough crowd. Judging by the expressions, this RIOT audition did not make the cut—perhaps a ukulele next time? *Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1960s.*



‘gunfight’ in the middle of the show Some 800 attended, and the evening concluded with a dance again with music provided by the orchestra and the Ryerson Five, a group of Ryerson musicians. The year 1952 began what became the standard RIOT. It was a revue, a unified musical comedy, with a single script. It was produced and mostly directed by students. This was made easier by the extensive experience in the entertainment industry of some of the students. Fashion created the costumes, Furniture Arts created the sets and Electrical Technology did the lighting. Even the program was printed by students. There was a 25 piece student orchestra. The only person outside of Ryerson who was involved was bandleader Benny Louis whose orchestra played at the Blue and Gold dance for quite a few years. He took music written by students and transcribed it for the student orchestra. The story concerned the history of Ryerson, from the days of Egerton Ryerson up to 1975. This was the first RIOT to run for two nights, based on past demand. During the first two years in the gym the stage had creaked and groaned and threatened to collapse, so the 1952 show took place at Bloor Collegiate.

In 1953 there were three performances at Leaside Collegiate with a cast of 110. The story consisted of eight Ryerson students touring the world ‘spreading the dogma of Ryerson and fulfilling their education’. In 1954 the show switched to a musical revue with each act a separate story. Over the years, RIOT switched back and forth between a revue and a show with a unified story. In 1955, for instance, the show was *Ghouls and Dolls*. This

show introduced a ghost, Elias, who was so popular that he was kept in succeeding shows.

Over the years, students took on an increased role. In 1954 there were two producers for the first time, a supervising one and a student one. In 1955, Bruce Rogers, an RTA student, was the student producer. He later returned to Ryerson to take Journalism and became one of the most recognized CBC on-air personalities. In the first years, Al Sauro relinquished his baton for one year to his younger brother Elvino who was a student in the Radio Arts program. Elvino had come to Ryerson to play trumpet in the student orchestra on CJRT, the Ryerson teaching radio station. In later years he joined the faculty of what became the School of Image Arts.

The year 1961 saw RIOT entirely created and mounted by students for the first time. Always good at publicity, the students outdid themselves that year. A formal notice was sent to the media from Le Toir Productions, a film company, announcing that British actress Gladys Coleman would appear in one of their films. A second notice announced that the film had been cancelled, but that Miss Coleman had agreed to stay and appear in RIOT. The notice provided details on her previous experience. She then turned up at the opening of Camelot at the O'Keefe Centre and at the opening of the Canadian Opera Company Festival. She was mobbed by fans at each event. Gladys Coleman was actually a student; the fans who mobbed her were planted; and Le Toir was, of course, RIOT spelled backwards. The hope was to attract first string critics to review the show. The publicity staff also put up 4,900 posters and handed out 700 bumper stickers. Radio stations gave free publicity and a local CBC program, the Midnight Zone, let a part of the cast perform because the host, Gill Christie, was a Ryerson graduate. The cast gave a free performance to 500 seniors, sponsored by *The Toronto Telegram* and then gave three performances at the Lansdowne Theatre for 2,000 people, for a profit of \$200.00. This might not seem like much, but RIOT had a hard time breaking even given the substantial costs associated with a large production.

Publicity not only helped sales, but also brought RIOT to the attention of the whole city. In 1963 the students placed an advertisement in the daily newspapers which read: "There will be a RIOT Mon., Nov. 5. For information call Roger at 355-2147. No experience necessary. No pickets required." In 1965 a similar advertisement was used and Mayor Philip Givens agreed to read the

Always good at publicity, the students outdid themselves that year... Publicity not only helped sales, but also brought RIOT to the attention of the whole city.

RIOT, a comedy tradition that started in 1950, continues to present day. Over the years it has helped to establish notable Toronto comedy scene icons, such as Mark Breslin, owner of the Yuk Yuk's comedy franchise. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1970s.*



'RIOT Act' in public. Borrowed tractors distributed handbills throughout the city and more were distributed at Maple Leaf Gardens during a hockey game. Howard Kerr sent out a letter to grads and staff and radio stations again gave free publicity. These tactics resulted in large ticket sales.

RIOT continued its tradition of placing as many students as possible in senior positions, hiring from outside only as necessary and often hiring people with ties to Ryerson. Most of the senior production positions in 1965 were held by people with ties to Ryerson. The Music Director, Don Firth, was a student in RTA, but he was also a musician and arranger who had his own band for five years. The Producer was a former RTA student and the Writer was a former instructor in English. In 1969 the Choreographer was a Ryerson graduate and in 1970 the Director was Robert Christie, a Theatre Arts instructor with 35 years' experience in theatre and television.

By the late 1960s RIOT was suffering from the same declining student interest as ROW and other student organizations. It had been held in the Ryerson Theatre since the structure was completed, but in the mid-1970s it was moved to the student pub, the Filling Station, because of declining attendance. The 1969 show lost \$1000.00, which the student union had to pay. The student union, now called SURPI (the Students' Union of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute) hoped that running a bar at the performances would help generate revenue. In 1973 it was decided to mount an all student production and only to pay the stage manager, the director and the choreographer for their time, to save money.

The final one of the old-style RIOTs was held in 1976. Co-directors were Don Cullen and Mark Breslin. Cullen was a former Ryerson student who had been involved with RIOT 1955 but had to drop out because of concerns about his academic standing. He had gone on to direct over 40 Wayne and Shuster comedy specials for the CBC, as well as the 1971 RIOT. Mark Breslin was the Director of the Harbourfront Theatre. He would go on to found the Yuk Yuks chain of comedy clubs, starting in 1976, and to work in radio, television and film. The producer, however, was a student. The call for auditions that year was unsuccessful, as there was not much interest in student productions anymore. A second call for auditions produced enough cast and crew to put on a show in the Filling Station two times per night for six nights, as opposed to twelve the year before. The show was a shorter one than in earlier years. Clearly there was not enough interest to mount further student productions.

This late period of RIOT productions produced a good example of individual student initiative. An RTA student, Paul Chato, by 1976 had written for RIOT for three years. Each year his off-the-wall comedy had been rejected by those putting on the show. In 1976, in frustration, Chato put on his own show in the Filling Station. The free show was called *RIOT Rejects*, and it ran for three nights. After graduation, he did comedy with friend Rick Green and then became part of the very successful comedy troupe The Frantics, known for their off-the-wall comedy. The group performed on radio and television during the 1980s and remains popular thirty years later. Since then he has had a career as performer, writer, director and businessman.

RIOT was revived in 1981, by a third year RTA student, as an all RTA show. This was a recognition that RTA students had for many years dominated RIOT. It was mounted as a skit show more akin to Second City comedy shows and *Saturday Night Live* material than to the earlier RIOT shows. It has continued in the same vein, as a small-scale show, at various venues. Appropriately for its approach, in 2013 it began performing at the Second City theatre.

RIOT had moved with the times, beginning as a skit show parodying life at Ryerson and changing to become a show based on a single idea, with either a unified story line or an episodic illustration of the common theme. Along the way, it adopted the tenure of the times. The 1959 show, held in

Radio and Television
Arts students perform at
the legendary Second City.
*Photo courtesy of RyeEye
Publishing, 2013.*



By the late 1960s the productions were known for anti-establishment jibes and sexually-charged dialogue. One of the cast of the 1969 show commented that, “We made good use of the number 69”.

Hart House, was a bit ahead of its time in featuring a ‘sexational chorus line’ and lots of obscenity, and the 1962 show was almost cancelled because of obscene material. Only the creation of a student union committee to directly supervise the content saved the show. However, by the late 1960s the productions were known for anti-establishment jibes and sexually-charged dialogue. One of the cast of the 1969 show commented that, “We made good use of the number 69”.

INITIATIVES IN THE FASHION PROGRAM

Another long-standing tradition at Ryerson, that started out as a student activity supervised by teaching staff and evolved into a mainly student activity, is the fashion show put on by senior students in the School of Costume Design, now the School of Fashion Design. From the beginning students were encouraged to show their work. In 1950, for instance, First year students presented a Spring Fashion Show in the auditorium. Second year students (most programs were two, later three years) exhibited many of their gowns at Simpson’s Department Store Fashion Show. As the program expanded to three years, second year students sometimes put on fashion shows at Ryerson and elsewhere, but the major show of the year was put on by third year (later fourth year when the program expanded again). In 1973 for instance, students put on eleven shows at the Canadian National Exhibition, but the major show of the year was done by students in their final year.

Over the years the major show was held at Ryerson and at various hotels and halls around the city. By the early 1960s the show was being run entirely by students, with a faculty advisor. They coordinated it, did the publicity, chose the music, created the choreography and provided commentary. As the program developed, Fashion Merchandising students managed the show and Design students created the clothing. The shows always had a theme. In 1961, for instance, it was called *A Roman Holiday*, in 1963, *Fashion Fantasia* and in 1968, *This is Woman*. It was not until 1973 that all outfits were original designs by the students, but all were produced by them. In 1968 the coordinator also designed the costumes for ROW and RIOT that year. In 1970, befitting the times, the show featured semi-nudity and the participants handed flowers to the audience.

In 1988 fourth year organized the show *Mass Exodus* and the name has been used ever since, usually with a secondary title outlining the theme. In 2007 it was *Mass Exodus-Platform*, in 2008, *Mass Exodus-Paramnesia* and in 2009, *Mass Exodus-Chiaroscuro*. Students are able to use what they have learned in class and in shows put on when they were second and third year students. Innovations in the 1970s included putting on a show for industry and the media as well as shows for the public.

Innovations in other areas have been a feature of the Fashion program. In 1972, twenty-one students arranged a trip to London, Paris and Rome to visit designers, manufacturers and retail outlets in the fashion industry. That same year the students set up a one-day store at Ryerson, to sell off some of the outfits produced for the final show. The year 1974 saw male models introduced for the first time into the major, end-of-program show, as a way to expand into designing clothes for men. In 1975, the major show was taped for the first time, to show future students how to put on a fashion show. In 1978, seven fashion students designed clothes for the elderly, in conjunction with Sunnybrook Medical Centre, as a volunteer project. That same year, fifty students arranged a trip to New York to visit the fashion industry as well as taking time to be tourists. The year also saw the creation of a store on campus to sell clothing designed and sewn by Fashion students. The store, called On Line, was run by third year Fashion Merchandising students. Even alumni participated in the entrepreneurial spirit. Starting in 1953 they held an annual auction and rummage sale to raise money for scholarships and bursaries for Fashion students. All of these activities marked Fashion as one of the programs with the highest level of student initiative. *Mass Exodus* continues to this day, with Fashion students working with Theatre students to put on the show at a professional level.

Of the activities covered up to this point, most had disappeared by the late 1970s. Of the productions, only the Fashion show and a scaled down RIOT survived. Most of the early clubs and fraternities had folded. Dances were held, usually near graduation, by a number of the programs, but the large, multi-program dances were no more. It thus fell to the student government to provide large-scale programming for students until course unions and their larger siblings, program societies, appeared, to take on some of the role, and new clubs/societies appeared to provide more narrowly focused activities for specific groups.



Students from the fashion department get a lesson on millinery. Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1958-59.

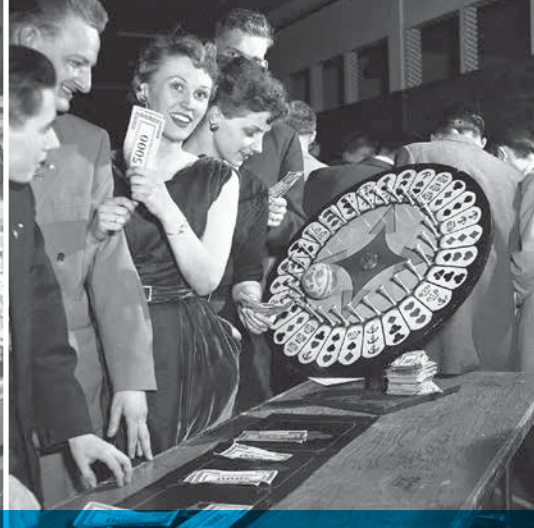


Students gather in front of the Ontario legislature building in Queen's Park to have their voices heard. Activism has often been a part of the student movement, with causes ranging from gender equality, access to education, environmental issues, anti-poverty and support for basic needs. *Photo: Jonathan Bjerg Moller, courtesy RyeEye Publishing 1998-99.*

Student Council Initiatives, Ryerson Centre Initiatives, and a Critic

THE EARLY YEARS

THE STUDENT ADMINISTRATIVE Council, as the student union was known in the early years, functioned like a student council at a high school. Founded in 1948, its budget was set by the administration and its treasurer was an instructor at the Institute. It operated within the administrative framework of Ryerson, which included Athletics and academic matters. This complex situation of interwoven operations meant that everything SAC did was subject to supervision and approval by administration. In spite of this, SAC took on a broad range of tasks. Its Drama Committee was responsible for funding the Drama Club productions, ROW and RIOT (in 1953 RIOT got its own committee of SAC). Its Music Committee was responsible for the operettas and SAC sold tickets for the shows and the Blue and Gold dance. As well as being responsible for Initiation activities, SAC responsibilities included the Snowball Dance, Homecoming Weekend, the Blue and Gold Dance, football weekends and the campaigns for Miss Ryerson and Miss Frosh. In 1949-50 it founded *The Ryersonian* as a student newspaper to let students know what was going on at



Ryerson and to inform them about what the various schools within Ryerson were doing. Journalism and Graphic Arts students put out the monthly publication on their own time. *The Little Daily/Little Weekly*, published by the students in the School of Graphic Arts, continued for a little while but lost out to the SAC paper. As with RIOT, the students behind *The Ryersonian* were skilled at getting noticed. In 1955, 5000 copies were sent out with *The Toronto Telegram* newspaper and 50,000 copies of the Education Week issue were distributed to all Toronto schoolchildren. SAC also ran the Ryerson bookstore as a way of raising funds for activities and the residences, which included two houses on Church Street, purchased by the Ryerson Union in 1963. In 1969, SAC negotiated control of some athletics, the gift store and the barber shop, as well as responsibility for health insurance, in addition to a larger share of student fees to cover the increased responsibilities.

This extensive activity from an organization that was heavily supervised can be explained by that same sense of building something new that underlay RIOT, ROW and all the other social and cultural activities of the early 1950s. This sense of contributing to Ryerson can be seen in the extent to which members of the SAC executive involved themselves in other aspects of life at the Institute. The president in 1951–52 was also the quarterback of the football squad, was the caller at square dances, and sang in the Ryerson Quartet. The secretary played the violin in the orchestra and was on the girls' basketball team. The associate secretary was also the secretary of the Ryerson Press Club, and a member of the Writers and the Debates Clubs.

In addition to a barbershop and a gift store, the SAC ran the Ryerson Bookstore (top left) and a popular casino night fundraiser (top right)." *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.*

What's in a name?

Changing its name and rebranding is a way for the governing student organization to shed the politics of a previous leadership and start anew. Originally known as the Student's Administrative Council or "the SAC" in the 1950s, the name SURPI (Student Union of Ryerson Polytechnic Institute) was selected in the 1960's—a choice that clearly pre-dated a similar sounding frozen beverage treat. In the 1980s a simplification to "Ryerson Students' Union", was selected only to be replaced in the 1990s when a renewed focus on services delivery led to the corporate sounding name "RyeSAC". By 2003 the name RyeSAC was thrown out in favour of re-instituting "Ryerson Students Union", yet again.

A major step towards independence occurred in 1954, when SAC was given control of its funds. In 1957, revisions to its constitution included the provision that all amendments to the SAC constitution would have to be approved by the Faculty Council. This latter body evolved into Academic Council which, ironically, came to include students, and is now known as Senate. At the same time the Ryerson Institute of Technology Students' Union, an existing body different from the Students Administrative Council, encompassing students staff, faculty and alumni was incorporated, with a provision that it would raise funds to build a building or buildings for the "entertainment, recreation, refreshment and accommodation of students, faculty, alumni and guests..." of the Institute. That same year, SAC, which formed part of the Union, organized a 'Gold Rush Saloon' in the large gym, with a floor show, to raised money for this purpose. No one imagined it would be another fifty years before a student centre became a reality.

The next major step in student government occurred in 1966 when the Student Union was split up, following Ryerson's transfer to the university sector, and the introduction of a Board of Governors as the supervisory authority. The rather complex interweaving of student, academic and athletic supervision came to an end, and SAC became an independent entity, financed by a share of the student activity fee, subject only to the authority of the Board of Ryerson in areas such as financial accountability and holding referenda. Student Services and Athletics stayed with Ryerson Polytechnic Institute administration. The remainder of the old Student Union was renamed the Ryerson Union and given all the money collected as incidental fees by the Institute, about one million dollars, and charged with its original tasks of financing a student centre, contributing to the quality of life at Ryerson, and providing scholarships. Its board included a minority of students, but the alumni members over the years consisted of former student union presidents and others formerly on the student union executive, giving the body a decidedly student-centred outlook. Apparently the breakup of the old Student Union had partly to do with a division of opinion among student members as to the direction the Union should take. The two groups created by the split, SAC and the Ryerson Union, represented two sets of priorities.

ONGOING TENDENCIES

The history of the student union (from 1970 SURPI—Students' Union of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute; from 1989 RSU—Ryerson Students' Union; from 1995 RyeSAC—Ryerson Students' Administrative Council; and from 2006 RSU again) has featured several repeating tendencies, none of which has shown student government at its best. After the first few years when voter turnout was quite high (over 50 percent in the beginning), most elections of executive members were characterized by voter turnouts in the neighbourhood of ten percent. Separate election of the Board of Directors, which set policy, often attracted even fewer voters (until 1970 only a board was elected and the board chose the executive). Over time, numerous presidents and vice-presidents worried about being irrelevant to students' lives and unsuccessful attempts were made to engage students. A few administrations were actually happy that the students were not paying attention to what they were doing. Personality conflicts turned up on the executive and even more on the Board of Directors, which represented different programs within Ryerson. Directors regularly resigned, some for reasons of academic workload, some because of personality conflicts and some because they were hounded about poor performance. A number of administrations were incompetent and a number left large debts for their successors. These failings can be understood when one considers that the students who served on the executive and on the Board were, with few exceptions, in their late teens and early twenties. Presidents had, at best, a couple of years as members of previous executives and, at worst, no experience at all. They were called upon to manage tens of thousands, later hundreds of thousands, eventually millions, of dollars and to manage a staff and interact with others on the executive and Board who had the same limited life experience.

In the period from the mid-1960s on, conflicts periodically arose between administrations that wanted to take on social causes such as racism, war, poverty, homelessness and aboriginal conditions and students who thought that student fees should be spent on programs that would benefit Ryerson students, not on external causes. These conflicts inhibited the student union's ability to act. The most successful administrations were often those that balanced spending on internal and external issues, or took up social issues within Ryerson.

Ryerson parade and picnic over the years

While it was not the most sober of events, the Ryerson Parade and Picnic was a student organized, student run tradition for over 50 years. It shut down Yonge St., snarled traffic, over-ran the ferry docks and forced the university to reimburse dry cleaning bills everywhere.

A media-worthy event, coverage on the 6pm news was regular—much to the envy of new students everywhere else. Shaving cream and water guns were the favoured ammunition. In the early days the event was sponsored by O’Keefe breweries, with the home of its former owner still bearing the namesake on campus. In 1984, the event was marked by tragedy when a participant dove from a docking ferry, struck a submerged post and died. A lengthy inquest resulted in a much more controlled event, after a few years of hiatus.

At the height of popularity the Parade and Picnic exceeded 5,000 participants. The event culminated in a concert on Toronto’s Olympic Island featuring popular, campus-based and up-and-coming Canadian music acts. Over the years Parade and Picnic has been a venue (and in some cases a launching point) for many notable musicians: *The Barenaked Ladies*, *Tragically Hip*, *Blue Rodeo* and more recently *Metric*, *Alexisonfire* and *K’naan*.





Ryerson Parade and Picnic an annual tradition that traces back to the 1950s when campus chariot races marked the start of new year. In its prime, the event consisted of a five-thousand student parade that shut down Yonge Street to the ferry docks and then continued as an outdoor concert at Wards Island, part of the Toronto Island complex. *Photos, Parade and Picnic 1998, Jonathan Bjerg Moller, courtesy RyeEye Publishing. Historical images courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1955, 1970s, 1980s.*

Yet, through all the problems, strife and failures student leaders worked to give the student population programs that would enrich their experience as students and services that would make life better for them while at Ryerson. SAC administrations in the 1950s were largely concerned with providing dances, theatre productions, sports and other social diversions for students. Other than that, one of the larger accomplishments was the installation of a public address system between the SAC office and areas frequented by students, to inform them of what was going on around the campus. In 1959–60, SAC worked to establish closer ties with the various clubs, seeing these as a worthy extension of the student union mandate. Bruce Kennedy, president in 1960–61, started the tradition of the picnic and dance on Centre Island in the first week of school, to instill school spirit and a sense of community. That tradition continued until the event was temporarily moved to the Mattamay Athletic Centre in 2012.

The first signs that SAC would not be all about social activities occurred in 1965, when the early Ryerson of dances and athletics and the later, more activist Ryerson, mixed. In that year the Athletics Department decided to disband the football team. Ryerson had a difficult time fielding an adequate team, as it had no home practice field and was relegated to playing other schools not known for football, such as the Ontario Agricultural College. Because football was popular with the students, the president of SAC made a public appeal for support from students by walking through the campus with a bullhorn, and SAC cancelled all social activities, to reinforce the point that the students wanted football. The protest was successful and Ryerson kept its team until increasing student apathy about sports led to cancellation.

The creation of a separate SAC, able to collect fees, in 1966 coincided with the election of the first female president, Janet Weir. Weir was the first president to bring ideological differences to the fore when she claimed at a conference in London, Ontario that she was a communist, which she later explained as wanting a classless society. After easily surviving a motion of non-confidence and the creation of Pro-Ac, a right wing party, Weir went on to a successful year in office. Among her accomplishments was a successful referendum campaign backed by the faculty association to end the requirement, put in place by the departed Howard Kerr, that all males had to wear a shirt and tie.

While an attempt to have SAC money set aside for housing for the poor

failed, her administration did put forward a request for a seat on Faculty Council, and carried out one of the most colourful campaigns in Ryerson's history. Howard Kerr felt that a large library was not needed in a technical school, and many of the technical books in the small 26,000 volume library were from the 1930s. While a new library was being planned, the newly-hired librarian, the first professional librarian employed by Ryerson, announced that the library collection would remain small by university standards. Students resented this and Weir, together with a Ryerson representative from the quasi-national student organization, the Canadian Union of Students, organized Booxodus. Students were urged to take out five books each and thus empty the library, to stress how inadequate it was. While less than 3,000 were taken out, the point was made and a larger, better lit room was found for the library with an accompanying promise that a photocopier and a microfilm reader would be installed. The Institute set aside money when the new library was completed in 1974 to buy more books.

Weir's successor, her fiancé Dave Maxwell, had some great ideas: student representatives on Ryerson's Board of Governors, advanced, university level technical courses, and an instructor evaluation. He also took on an initiative for cooperative housing proposed by a small group of Ryerson students. They had come up with the idea of creating a college somewhat like Rochdale College, which housed students and allowed them to live and learn in a cooperative atmosphere. SAC agreed to make a loan to get the project off the ground. Very quickly, however, the student union was cut out of the project to build Neil-Wycik Co-operative College. Co-operative housing was a SAC concern from the time of Janet Weir until this disappointment. This loan may have contributed to Maxwell's image problem, but there were other issues as well. SAC gave \$5,000 from a Centennial fund to native groups to support cultural development with little to show for it. He got into a fight with a publishing company over the cancellation of a student directory after the directory was printed, and was attacked by those with right wing views for his supposedly left wing views, which included the concept of a 'free school' run by faculty and students and allowing students to take any course that wished. Combined, these issues resulted in Maxwell being the only student union president ever removed from office in a student referendum, which Maxwell called to endorse the free school concept, promising to quit if he lost.

Yet, through all the problems, strife and failures student leaders worked to give the student population programs that would enrich their experience as students and services that would make life better for them while at Ryerson.



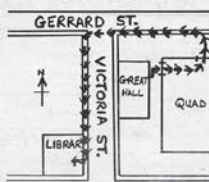
THE MARCH

To join the BOOXODUS all Ryerson students are urged to assemble in the Great Hall at 1 p.m. today.

A march will be formed and the 3,000 students who are expected to take part will march out the northgate to Gerrard St. and along Victoria St. to the library.

Each student is asked to take any six books from the library and return them on Wednesday.

THE ROUTE



"We're playing BOOXODUS.
It's sort of a scavenger hunt."



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OVER IDEOLOGY

In 1970, the president, former treasurer Barry Hales, began the creation of the current student union by bringing in a new constitution and a set of bylaws to give administrative structure to the organization. Unfortunately, he also left behind a debt estimated at between \$24,000 and \$50,000, at a time when that amount of money was worth a great deal. This debt was from the actions of past presidents, a series of loans to needy students that could not be repaid, and a costly program of dances and guest speakers that Hales instituted. Luckily for the future of student union Hales was followed by the dynamic partnership of Michael Walton as president and David Guptill as vice-president. They were brought in partly as a reaction against what was seen as a student administration that spent too much money, and gave too much attention to external causes. Both men were popular with students because of their personalities and their no nonsense policies. Guptill dealt with the financial issues and the union, now calling itself SURPI, came out of the year with a surplus. Walton, who had previous experience in the Blue and Gold Society, with the strong support of Ryerson administration, attempted to decentralize services to students by urging the creation of course unions, which would be given money to provide programming for students in specific programs. This was one of the first attempts to make student government more relevant to students. Walton also encouraged new clubs to form. His efforts met with modest success as there was a limited amount of money to give to course unions and none for clubs because of the financial problems.

What was available was a result of cutting dances and concerts for the year, and letting go field social workers, working in the Jarvis-Sherbourne area, who had been hired under Hales. For two or three years SAC had maintained a money-losing coffee house, The Pornographic Onion, which was designed to serve students and the poor, but in 1970 Ryerson had demolished the building, saving additional money. Activities that were kept were mostly designed to provide services to students, but generally to break even or make money: a print shop, a new games room; and two additions made by vice president David Guptill, movie nights and pub nights.

FACING PAGE: Activism on campus has taken many forms over the years, but none as elegant nor as poignant as Booxodus. A portmanteau of "books" and "exodus" Booxodus was a campaign to demonstrate the inadequacy of the Ryerson Library facility. On November 20, 1967 an organized mob of students borrowed nearly three thousand books from library—representing about one-third of the overall holdings. *Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1967.*



One of the legendary *Eyeopener* censorship protests from the 1990s, signed by Graeme Smith who went on to become one of Canada's most respected foreign correspondents. Courtesy RyeEye Publishing.

BITING THE HAND...

During Walton's term in office, SURPI priorities clashed with those of another student initiative. In 1967 a group of students led by Radio and Television Arts and Journalism student Tom Thorne, and including future SAC president Barry Hales, decided to shake up Ryerson. *The Ryersonian*, which began life as a record of what was happening on campus had, by the mid-1960s, become a teaching aid in the Journalism Program. At a time when anti-establishment attitudes were growing among many post-secondary students, the carefully neutral reporting of *The Ryersonian* seemed, to the founders of *The Eyeopener*, to be out of step with the times. Based on the satirical, muck-raking, early twentieth century *The Calgary Eyeopener*, the new newspaper attacked every possible target, from the war in Vietnam to the Ontario Government to Ryerson administrators and to SURPI, which supervised and funded the newspaper.

In previous years *The Eyeopener* had attacked the Ontario government over its failure to deliver OSAP loans on time and had printed a satirical article supposedly written by the chair of the Board of Governors, prompting a denunciation and a retraction. During the 1971-72 year the newspaper tried to publish an article on its front page which Michael Walton felt was libelous. The article at issue was an attack on a member of the administration which, among other accusations, suggested that he had engaged in an illicit affair. Walton ordered the printers to withhold the article and to substitute a note in the blank space saying the material was withheld because it was libelous. A testy exchange ensued in which Walton told the editorial staff that they could not print the article and the staff insisted that they had the right of free speech. The issue for Walton was that, as the publisher, SURPI could be sued. Ultimately *The Eyeopener* backed down, but the point was made that there could not be freedom of the press as long as SURPI was ultimately liable.

Further emphasizing the awkwardness of the relationship, the co-editors and the photo editor resigned at the end of 1971, claiming that SURPI was not paying them enough for the quality of work that they did. This resulted in a boost in the amount of money that SURPI paid, but also left SURPI looking for ways to protect itself. Until 1978 there was continued friction, at



which point *The Eyeopener* and the campus radio station CRFM (renamed CKLN, but still broadcasting on closed circuit until 1983) were finally given independence, though still funded by SURPI. These years were undoubtedly difficult ones for SURPI as *The Eyeopener* went on its merry way. Having no constitution until 1978 which spelled out what masthead positions were and how they were filled only added to the sense of anything goes in what was published. In 1971 *The Eyeopener*, told by president Donald Mordell that any newspaper that covered the deliberations of the Board of Governors must have material approved by the president, published a refusal to comply accompanied by a drawing of a raised finger and a large “FUCK YOU”. The use of the F word, a symbol of youthful rebelliousness in the 1970s, became a notable feature of the newspaper at a time when mainstream newspapers would not consider even using F—k when reporting what people said. Christie Blatchford, who wrote for *The Eyeopener* from 1972–74, before going on to a successful career in journalism, reveled in the idea of being able to use the word which upset so many people.

This final connection to SURPI was broken in 1980 when a student referendum agreed to provide a levy to fund the paper and the station. *The Eyeopener* continued to make fun of the failings of student government and to print provocative material, although over the ensuing decades, depending on the times and on the students working on the paper, it occasionally lost its bite, sounding more like *The Ryersonian*. Journalism students working on *The*

Campus radio dates back to 1977 when CRFM began broadcasting closed-circuit. It obtained a transmitting license in 1983 transforming it into CKLN 88.1 FM—Ryerson Campus/Community radio. Funded almost entirely by a student levy, CKLN diverged paths from Ryerson, progressively alienating itself from the campus, even refusing (for a time) to identify Ryerson in its call sign. Ongoing mismanagement resulted in CKLN ceasing operation in 2011. In a sad irony the CKLN frequency is today Indie 88.1, a commercial operation capitalizing on the independent radio market CKLN is largely considered to have pioneered in Canada.

Photo: Jonathan Bjerg Moller, courtesy RyeEye Publishing 1998–99.

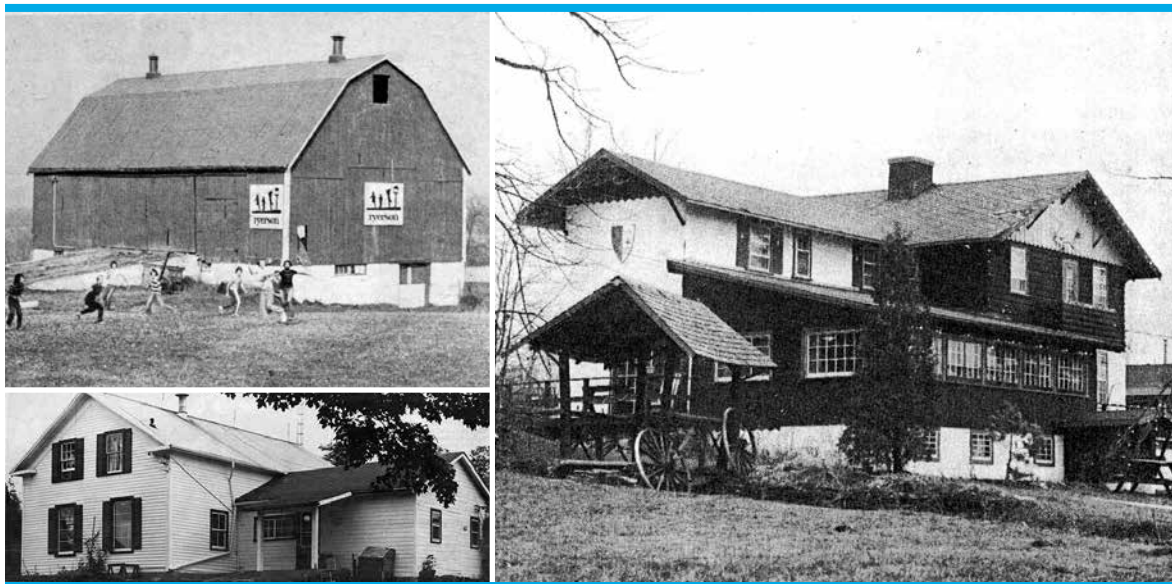
FACING PAGE: Clippings from *The Ryersonian* 1979, 1980 and *The Eyeopener* 1980, illustrate the Ryerson farm in Millbrook and the Ryerson Ski Lodge at Blue Mountain. Clippings courtesy of Ryerson University Archives.

Ryersonian as part of their education competed with their independent rival for scoops on the perceived misdeeds of Ryerson's administration and those of the student union, and succeeded at times, though their reporting was couched in less provocative language than *The Eyeopener* at its nose-thumbing best.

Walton's other concerns included continuity, and greater influence over Academic Council's and Board of Governors' decisions. Continuity was seen in terms of presidents having previous experience with the student union in order that there be continuation of policies. Thus Walton, who had served in the Hale's administration, supported his vice president, Dave Guptill, in the next election, and both supported Guptill's vice president, Marc Belanger, in the following presidential election. Continuity was achieved through the early 1970s. The negative consequence of having a president with no experience with student government was shown during the 1976–7 term in office of Leigh Branderhorst who foundered on lack of experience.

Students had been granted two seats on the Board of Governors in 1968 and four seats on Academic Council, when it was created in 1969. The Board seats had been occupied by conservative, business oriented students. Walton and his executive felt that these two did not represent the opinions of the majority of students and worked to elect some who did. Walton, himself, was to serve on the Board. In 1972 Academic Council had been restructured and instead of four token students, the number was raised to one-third of the total. By the time Guptill took over, SURPI had a person specifically assigned to doing research for the student members, to make them more effective. Walton also cut off loans to Neil-Wycik which were supposed to total \$75,000 over five years, an amount SURPI could not afford.

As president, David Guptill found more money for course unions and encouraged the formation of more, as well as encouraging the formation of clubs. Pub nights were held twice a week and movie showings were expanded to ten times a week. SURPI had moved away from social action in the broader outside community and focused on a fiscally responsible agenda of internal action. The issue of the pub was one that would take a generation to solve. Under the law, SURPI could not get a pub license and had to use Ryerson's license and, in effect, accept Ryerson's rules for running a pub. These were run originally in Palin Hall (now Oakham House), which had been renovated for student use by the Ryerson Centre in 1961, after Ryerson



Real Estate Moguls

Over the years the Ryerson community has owned and operated a variety of properties on and off- campus through Ryerson Centre—an organization established in the 1950s by President Howard Kerr to collect funds for campus-community projects. By the early 1960s, Ryerson Centre acquired two residential properties located on Church Street, north of Gould Street and completed a renovation of Oakham House, formally establishing it to be the “Campus Centre”. In 1965 ownership of the two Church Street properties was transferred to the university for \$2, with the covenant that they be for non-academic use.

In 1971 Ryerson Centre purchased a farm large enough for a Ryerson-wide, Woodstock-like campout. Located in Millbrook, the farm provided Peterborough grocery stores with enough berries to maintain the town’s jam production. Shared accommodation for up to 24 guests was provided in a large farm house for \$2 per night. After operating for almost a decade, Ryerson Centre sold the farm in 1980 for \$120,000, doubling its investment.

In addition to the farm there was a Ski Lodge at Blue Mountain. This opened in 1975, charging a \$25 per night fee including a hearty breakfast, lunch and dinner. The facility was capable of accommodating up to 80 guests over three chalets and a bunk house. The lodge was sold in 1983 for just over \$261,000. Today, the site holds the luxury Blue Mountain Weider Lodge resort—leaving the south Jorgensen Hall staircase as the only viable slope for Ryerson.

Money from the sale of the properties was invested and used to fund many projects including a major renovation of Oakham House in 1995 and a \$500,000 divestment gift to the Student Campus Centre project. In a twist, Ryerson Centre was displaced from its 50-year home in Oakham House after the Student (Campus) Centre management board took over.



ABOVE: Oakham House served as the Campus Centre and was the first of several student-owned or operated properties on campus. These properties served to fill social, recreational and even housing needs for the community, in areas where university funding fell short. *Photos courtesy of the RyeEye Publishing, 1996.*

acquired the building from the Ontario Government. Later the pub moved to Jorgenson Hall, after the latter was constructed. Going by various names, such as The Ram's Corral, Louie's Pub, The Filling Station, The Edge, the pub remained a central feature of almost all student administrations, regardless of political bent. Another student service dealt with at this time was the campus radio station. It had been housed in Radio and Television Arts and run jointly by RTA and SAC/SURPI, but RTA cut the station, CRFM, loose and SURPI took it over, paying for new quarters, as it was seen as important to have a student-run radio station. Guptill also began the process of setting up a student evaluation of courses, for the benefit of students who were contemplating taking them in future, but the arrangements were complicated and were resisted by faculty. As a result it was quite a few years before an effective campus-wide system was in place.

THE RYERSON CENTRE STEPS UP ITS GAME

During the Walton-Guptill period, the student union came to terms with the Ryerson Centre, as the Ryerson Union was now known, seeing it for the first time as complementary to SURPI goals, not as competition. Student Union presidents automatically sat on its board, but previous presidents had believed that the organization's monies should have been turned over to SAC. Michael Walton, after being president, spent several years working with SURPI in various capacities, but also worked with Ryerson Centre on its goals. He believed so much in these goals that he has served on Ryerson Centre until the present day (2015). David Guptill, although not serving as long, put in many years on the Centre board. Recognizing that a student centre was a long way in the future, Ryerson Centre looked at other ways to serve students. However, when SURPI asked for a greater share of the student activity fee, Ryerson's Director of Student Services, David Crombie suggested, in 1971, merging SURPI and the Ryerson Centre, with the Centre deciding how much money SURPI would get every year. Walton and Guptill were not prepared to go that far, though heavily involved with the Centre. Such an arrangement would have meant that faculty on the Ryerson Centre would then have a say in SURPI finances.

During the Hales time in office, with Hales chairing the Ryerson Centre, the Centre established a committee to look into buying a farm, and commissioned an architect's report. The idea was based on the farm run for student use by Hart House at the University of Toronto. A decision was made at that time that there was not enough interest in the idea as yet. During the presidency of Marc Belanger, the former vice president who succeeded Guptill, Ryerson Centre did buy a farm, outside of Peterborough. Two years later the Centre bought a ski lodge at Blue Mountain, the thinking being that the lodge could serve students, and support itself by also catering to the general public. These two properties proved to be poor investments. The farm was relatively heavily used, but its only revenue stream, aside from what came from token fees paid by students came from renting out the fields to a farmer. The Ryerson Centre had to cover the remainder of the operating costs. The lodge was old and needed constant maintenance. Students did not use it

The Centre made a very astute investment under Belanger's leadership in buying land in Brampton, which was later sold for development at a profit.

that much, and the general public did not go to Blue Mountain the way they would a decade or more later, making it a much greater drain on the Centre than the farm. Both properties were sold within slightly more than a decade.

On the other hand, the Centre made a very astute investment under Belanger's leadership in buying land in Brampton, which was later sold for development at a profit. Belanger's time in office also saw the Centre, pushed by the student union members, commit to renting Eric Palin Hall and turning it into a campus centre, efforts that were carried on under Roger Gillespie. In 1976, Ryerson's Board of Governors declared that Eric Palin Hall, now called Oakham House, was Ryerson's Campus Centre, to serve students, faculty, staff and alumni. The Board and the Ryerson Centre each committed \$350,000 for further renovations and the Board committed to ongoing financial support, plus an annual student levy to support the House. Ryerson



Two houses on the east side of Church Street, north of Gould Street were owned by Ryerson Centre and transferred to the university for \$2. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1950s.*

and Ryerson Centre jointly created a new body, the Palin Foundation, to run Oakham. In fact, until the late 1980s the Ryerson Centre initiated numerous projects for the benefit of students, though not every student administration saw it as a worthy partner to student government. It invested in upgrading the Bookstore, created a student loan program, bought athletic equipment, and supported other student activities. By the late 1980s support for Oakham House and for a series of campaigns to build a new student campus centre became its main initiatives. The Centre also turned over to Ryerson the two houses on Church street that had been bought for student use. They were turned over for \$2.00, and the Institute signed a covenant that the land would always be used for non-academic purposes. In all of these endeavours, the Centre, guided by students and ex-student politicians, had the betterment of student life as its overarching goal.

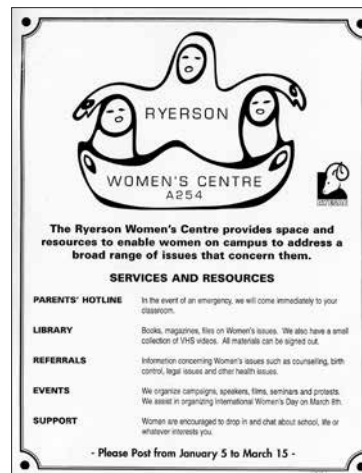
STUDENT UNION GROWTH

Aside from his work on the Centre Board, Belanger's successor, Bruce Moran, and his executive ran a campaign to obtain a week off in the winter, to give students a break from studying after almost six months of school. The Board of Governors was opposed to this, but gave in to the well organized campaign. Moran also objected to how the portion of the student activity fee that did not go to SURPI was spent, and as a result the Institute created the President's Advisory Council on Student Life (PACOSL), which included a minority student representation. Student groups could apply to PACOSL for funding for projects of various kinds. At the same time, Moran succeeded in getting the student activity fee increased. His administration also arranged for Accounting Finance students to run a tax clinic for the student body and for University of Toronto Law students to provide basic legal advice to Ryerson students. Government money was used to provide mini-loans to students and a rudimentary health insurance plan was established, to provide partial payments for medical expenses. His successor, Roger Gillespie, was in office when Ryerson removed the last Institute control over SURPI, by relinquishing the Board's right to scrutinize SURPI accounts. As with

the study week issue, SURPI insisted that it was autonomous until the Institute gave in. Now the student union could do whatever it wanted with its money. Further student union initiatives would not be hindered by any fear of reprisals. While the Board specified how much money SURPI would get from each student, if more funds were needed, SURPI could increase the amount through a referendum, and did on multiple occasions. Gillespie's administration also asked Neil-Wycik for the original SAC loan, pegged at \$35,000, to be returned, which it was.

By 1977 there were 34 course unions, 11 professional societies, nine clubs and seven cultural groups supported by SURPI. Course unions now had to submit a budget to SURPI, in order to get targeted funding, and clubs were supported financially as well. SURPI had added a typing service and a hair salon, The Cutting Edge, as services for which students had to pay. The used bookstore, formerly a volunteer project, became another service paid for by SURPI. Students could make free long distance calls home through RyeHAM. The following year, SURPI added peer counselling to its bank of services. Of course, not all services were to continue until the present day. Several changes were made to the typing service, including self-typing and farming out the paid typing service to a student-run company, to make it affordable, but ultimately the proliferation of computers, and cost, made it a liability. The hair stylist quit in 1982 after SURPI cut her hours and insisted she charge more, because the salon was losing money at a time when SURPI was in financial trouble. This was as a result of concerts and dances that lost a good deal of money, donations to the Ontario Federation of Students, a lobby group, and to organized labour, and previous losses on the pub and the print shop. Peer counselling in a drop-in lounge was replaced by birth control information and other literature on sexuality.

In 1980 what became a major new service was created under President Mary Zeldin, The Women's Centre. A collective called Ryerson Equality Rights Awareness of Women had been formed a couple of years before, and Zeldin's administration turned it into a SURPI service. A separate voice for women was a controversial policy at the time. Funding was regularly threatened. There were isolated charges leveled that the Centre was a nest of lesbians, and that the Centre discriminated against men. Women's Centre



Ryerson Women's Centre overcame adversity and discrimination before finally being recognized as an official service organization, paving the way for groups such as RyePride and more recently the Racialised Students' Collective. *Material courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1995.*



In the days before cell phone ubiquity, the web, FaceTime, texting and the rise of the commentocracy there was the humble telephone. An awkwardly large device, it had no apps and no store. Its mobility was limited as it was attached to the wall by a cable. Regardless, it was a popular form of communication and offered as free service by the student government. *Photo courtesy of the RyeEye Publishing, 1996.*

Collective members responded by running for, and winning SURPI Board and Executive positions. In 1983, under Vice President Liz Devine, the Centre and SURPI mounted the first of an annual series of visually explicit and provocative campaigns to have sanitary pads and tampons stocked in washrooms. For years Ryerson refused, citing fears of vandalism and theft. Women could only request supplies from SURPI's Jorgenson Hall reception desk. In 1986 SURPI, under the leadership of a former Collective member, shut the Centre down when it was felt to be exceeding its mandate. After a campaign by members of the Centre aroused student support, it reopened, without funding. While funding was restored in 1988, SURPI claimed the space was little used, and reassigned it the following summer to house its typing service. After operating out of the Student Union office for a year, the Centre was relocated to a small room in the rear hallway. While the opposition to the Centre can be explained partially in terms of the distrust of a feminist women's collective, the subsequent acceptance of the Centre as a mainstream student union service came about only after it overcame years of internal struggles between pro-choice and anti-abortion factions, a reluctance to deal specifically with sexual identity issues, and a reluctance to explicitly support student choice by making condoms easily available to students. Tampons, however, would not be widely available until the students were well on their way to having their own building.

Despite having annual debates about whether the pub, the typing service, concerts, the used book store or the print shop should be subsidized or operated to generate profit, as they tended to lose money, and being embroiled in an almost constant internal squabble over stands on social issues (nuclear disarmament, pro-choice, etc.), SURPI continued to add new services and to take on issues directly related to Ryerson students throughout the 1980s. For several years free coffee was provided to students. A free phone for local calls was installed, later expanded to five. The pub, now in the basement of Jorgenson Hall, was renovated at considerable expense. A tutoring service was created for students, though volunteer tutors were in short supply and the service was cancelled after a couple of years. A small number of bursaries were made available to students. In 1984, SURPI joined a coalition lobbying for a half-price Metropass for students. This campaign went on for years, until a reduced price pass was achieved.

During the 1981–82 school year, SURPI was involved in what was clearly a product of the times. On several occasions ‘pub crawls’ were organized. Students were tied together in groups of five and had to run from bar to bar set up by SURPI, each student drinking a beer or shot at each location. The team which successfully navigated five bars first was the winning team. Views on drinking changed dramatically over the succeeding few years. In response to the drowning death of a high school student who had attended the Island picnic and had been drinking before diving off of the ferry on the way back to the city, SURPI introduced BACCHUS, Boost Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students, in early 1985. This was an American program which Wilfrid Laurier University had already adopted. Shortly after, two pay breathalyzer machines were installed. In taking these actions, SURPI became a leader in what became a national concern to reduce drinking on university campuses in Canada.

A STUDENT CENTRE AT LAST?

In 1986, Ryerson’s Board of Governors recommended the building of a student centre and thus put in motion a long campaign by the student union, the Ryerson Centre, and the Palin Foundation to make the dream of students in the 1950s a reality. SURPI spent \$10,000 dollars on consultants to see if it could afford to run the student centre, only to find out that Ryerson had designated the land on which the centre was to go to build a Graphic Arts Management building. Thus a search began for another location.

During the 1990s each organization spent an increasing amount of time on the project, but in the meantime there were other issues connected with the quasi-student centre, Oakham House. The Palin Foundation was having increasing difficulties with the operating costs of Oakham. Despite taking measures to cut costs, even routine maintenance of the interior of the building added to the debt. The Ryerson Centre devoted increasing energy and money to supporting Oakham. By the mid-1990s the situation was so serious that the Palin Foundation turned the day-to-day management of Oakham over to the student union in return for funds to pay the debt and a promise to cover future debt in return for possible future profits. All three organizations were



LEFT TO RIGHT: Oakham House Societies, modeled after UofT's Hart House groups, included a Debating, Wine and Gourmet, Naturalist, Theatre, Choir and a Literary society. The Literary society published *Oh! magazine*, *McClungs*, a critically acclaimed feminist magazine and *The White Wall Review*, an annual literary journal. Both *McClungs* and *The White Wall Review* continue today, through the Journalism and English faculties respectively. Material courtesy of Ryerson University Archives."

student or student and student union alumni dominated, but were at odds over which organization, Palin or RSU (as of 1989) would control Oakham House. The dispute was partly over the fact that Oakham received a small student levy, and supported services which did not duplicate, but paralleled SURPI/RSU services. These services, almost all entirely student initiated and student run, included: *Oh! Magazine*, the *White Wall Review*, a debating society, a theatre society, a film society, a naturalist society, and a wine and gourmet food society. One service which did directly compete with the student union was the pub that operated in the basement of Oakham, in opposition to the RyeSAC pub in Jorgenson Hall.

MORE SERVICES

The student union continued to look for new services to offer students, as well as, under some administrations, new social causes to fund or endorse. Almost all put themselves behind opposition to cuts in educational funding and, as fees were increased to help pay educational costs, opposition to tuition increases. While pursuing better financial terms for students, and other external causes, the union also took on internal social issues. SURPI organized a food drive for the Daily Bread Food Bank in 1987, but as budget cuts and tuition increases hit students increasingly hard the student union began to think of setting up a food bank for students. Also in 1987, SURPI successfully lobbied to have some Ryerson administrative fees reduced. The year 1988 saw the first of numerous annual Sex Education Weeks sponsored by SURPI and the Toronto Board of Health. The following year, SURPI and the Ontario Federation of Students, a

lobby group that the student union had been part of for almost two decades, offered a financial assistance clinic to advise students on options for getting money to pay for their education. Subsequently the two organizations ran a poster campaign to encourage more women to run for (student) office.

The 1990s was another decade that was a very active one for the student union. Concerned about the safety of large numbers of students crossing Church Street to and from the new Rogers Communications Centre, SURPI campaigned for an overpass early in 1989, an idea to which the City of Toronto was opposed. The successful campaign included organizing a large group of students to block Church Street at the point where students crossed. During 1989 and again in 1990 SURPI/RSU successfully lobbied Ryerson first to begin installing recycling bins and then to increase the number. In 1990 RSU set up a committee to fight homophobia, followed later that year by a three day B-Glad celebration (bi-sexual, gay and lesbian) to raise awareness. This same administration, under Janet Piper, submitted a report to Academic Council calling for the appointment of a university ombudsperson. Subsequent administrations kept up the pressure, and were ultimately joined by CESAR, the part-time and Continuing Education student union, until agreement was reached in 1995 and a referendum held to authorize student money for the service. In the Fall of 1990, RSU gave out 200 plates of Kraft dinner to students to emphasize the plight of students trying to cope with the high cost of education. The union also began a walk home program offering volunteer escorts for female students going home late at night, pressed the president of Ryerson, Terry Grier, for more books for the library, and arranged a referendum on the question of whether students would pay an annual fee to build a student centre. When the vote was held, two-thirds of those who voted said no. Among the most active campaigners on the no side were the residents of the small O'Keefe House residence, who believed that their home would be demolished to make room for the student centre.

In 1992, in response to complaints from students about a group active on campus which was seen as a religious cult, RSU started an anti-cult campaign which was vigorously supported by subsequent administrations in the 1990s. A student dental plan was introduced that year, as a complement to the health plan. At the end of the year, with the support of Student Services, which put on PARTY (Promoting Alcohol Responsibility), RSU finally organized an

The cost of higher education has always been a hot-button issue and activism was widespread and aggressive during the 1990s. In 1996, a Ryerson student activist was arrested and slapped with the obscure charge of "Intimidating the Legislature" for disrupting Queens Park, in-session. *Photo: Jonathan Bjerg Moller, courtesy RyeEye Publishing 1998–99.*



effective responsible drinking week, after two years of failed attempts. Its campaign was called 'Mocktoberfest'. With CESAR and Bacchus Canada it set up a wrecked car, in which two people had died, outside Jorgenson Hall. Students from the new residence building responded by raising money for Bacchus in the cafeteria. The program for escorting female students home at night was revived and formalized as 'Walk and Watch'. First Security was used and then students, but the program had to be abandoned within the year because of liability issues, to be revived later as a Ryerson University service. Racism awareness campaigns were organized in the mid-90s, and in

1994 a Smoking Awareness Day was initiated by RSU and run by Ryerson's Health and Safety Committee. In 1995 a student food room, Feed Back was opened, to deal with the difficulties caused by constantly increasing tuition. All of these programs amounted to a concerted effort to improve students' safety and their well-being.

The union felt that serving the students was more important than breaking even.

The mid-1990s were marked by student protests against tuition hikes, by instability in student politics, leading to RyeSAC (renamed in 1995) withdrawing from the student centre project, and by repeated yearly losses by the student union. Perhaps the most notable protest on campus occurred when Victoria Bowman, president in 1996–97, delivered 30 bags of ice to President Claude Lajeunesse's office as part of a joint university protest calling for a tuition freeze. RSU, after the defeat of the referendum in 1991, had regrouped around the student centre project, but when Paul Cheevers ran for president on a platform of no extra fee to pay for a centre, and won, the project was temporarily abandoned again. It was soon revived as Ryerson, the Ryerson Centre, RyeSAC and the Palin Foundation were all behind the project. RyeSAC services such as the pub, the copy shop (CopyRITE) and entertainment (concerts, comedy nights, etc.) lost tens of thousands almost every year but, aside from closing the pub temporarily to save money, the union felt that serving the students was more important than breaking even.

Aside from services to improve student health and safety, RSU/RyeSAC introduced several other programs in the mid- to late 1990s. One that was important to Victoria Bowman, before, during and even after she was president, when she was an employee of RyeSAC, was the 'Out of the Cold' program, which was designed to assist the homeless. In later years it evolved into 'Raising the Roof' fundraising and 'Toque Tuesday', during which toques were sold to raise money. To this was added 'Sleeping in the Cold', later 'Coping with the Cold', a program in which students volunteered to sleep



In 1997 protests and activism continued, reaching a stand-off when RyeSAC VP Education Gord Tanner led an occupation of Liberal Candidate Bonnie Hickey's St. Johns East constituency office. *Photos: Jonathan Bjerg Moller, Sean Fitz-Gerald, courtesy RyeEye Publishing 1998–99.*

outside to experience homeless conditions and raise money to buy sleeping bags for the homeless. Rye-It was a program introduced in 1995 which allowed students to volunteer through RyeSAC to support activities such as Orientation and Winter Carnival, or activities in the broader community with which RyeSAC was involved. Although the name is no longer used, this program continues today (2015).

Efforts to make Ryerson inclusive continued. As vice president in 1997, David Steele pushed to have RyePride, a campus club which grew out of the old B-Glad celebration, raised in status, to effectively serve the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgendered student community. While Steele was president the following year RyeSAC made RyePride, now RyePRIDE, into one of its core services. A few years later RyeSAC set up RyeACCESS to serve students with disabilities and the Working Students Centre, to provide services for students seeking employment. In 1997 the food room was renamed the Community Food room, with the intent that it would serve not only students, but the poor in the downtown area. In 1997 RyeSAC established an Advisory Committee on Equity which put out an annual report on equity issues and organized events such as a celebration of Black History Month. The following year it appointed a commissioner of equity issues.

At the end of 1998, RyeSAC re-established the tax clinic, which had been terminated five years before and the next year hired a lawyer to offer advice to students on a part-time basis. He was a replacement for the Downtown Legal Services, offered by University of Toronto law students, which had been deemed too expensive for the small number of students using it.

THE STUDENT CENTRE PROJECT

By the late 1990s, RyeSAC became heavily involved in the student centre issue. By that time a new location, wrapping around one side and the back of Oakham House had been selected by Ryerson. What had to be settled was how the centre would be financed, what it would look like and who would control the building. After extensive, in some cases acrimonious, discussions, it was agreed that the building would be called the Student Campus Centre, in line with Ryerson Centre's original mandate to provide

a building for students, faculty, staff and alumni, that Ryerson would hold the mortgage, that the Palin Foundation, which agreed to take Oakham House into the centre, would be the legal entity responsible for running the building, and that the building would be financed by the students. Ryerson Centre provided \$500,000 towards construction costs, as per its mandate, and Ryerson provided the land and agreed to assume some ongoing expenses, particularly related to services. A student referendum approved using \$60.00 per student per year which had gone towards the Athletic Centre mortgage, now paid off, towards the Student Campus Centre mortgage. A separate CESAR referendum approved a \$4.00 per course levy from Continuing Education students.

Agreement was followed by all parties participating in the design and construction process. Students had a part in designing a building in which their organizations would be the major tenants. Generally, these discussions were friendly and constructive. As proof that this was in large measure a student project, the RyeSAC president served as co-chair of the committee responsible for the Centre, with Ryerson's vice president administration. However, towards the end of the process a new party entered the discussions, the Canadian Federation of Students. Ryerson had a long association with this organization, but primarily in terms of supporting CFS protests. The organization lobbies governments for tuition cuts and organizes protests on this issue, as well as taking up other social causes. There are always some students who feel that they should not be paying money to an organization that does nothing directly for their university. At Ryerson, certain groups also have felt that, because Ryerson is a 'professional school', it has no business being involved with social issues. Other students have felt strongly that opposing tuition hikes is an issue for every student, and that issues such as opposing war and poverty were issues that should be concerns of all students.

David Guptill had taken Ryerson into the Ontario Federation of Students, which lobbied within Ontario, but refused its call for a protest, and refused to join the National Union of Students, a predecessor organization to the CUS, so Ryerson came late to the NUS. SURPI did join the reborn CUS in 1981 when it was formed, and participated in a number of protests over the succeeding years, the support depending on the political outlook of the current student union board and executive. At times the CFS was criticized



STUDENT SPACE FOR STUDENTS!

Why a Student Centre?
To provide more space and services for students.

What will be in it?
Pharmacy, Travel Agency, Online Resource Centre, Student Services, Career Centre, Off-Campus Housing and a Health Centre. These are just a few of the possibilities. Students will decide!

How Soon?
Planning will begin immediately and Ground Breaking will occur by the year 2000.

I'm Graduating!
Why should I care?
The Student Centre will not ONLY be beneficial to students in the future but also you as an alumnus. RAC also required vision from graduating students.

Will it Raise Tuition?
No! The plan is to reduce the current RAC fee of \$30/ Semester to a Student Centre fund once RAC is paid off in 1995.

YOU DECIDE

MARCH 25 & 26

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

Student Centre

YOU DECIDE

MARCH 25 & 26

Survey says: No student centre



Die student centre, die! die! die!

ABOVE AND FACING PAGE: City Councillor Kyle Rae attends the "bricks and mortar" community building launch of the Student Campus Centre campaign. Kyle Rae has been a long-term Ryerson Centre board member and is a recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from Ryerson.

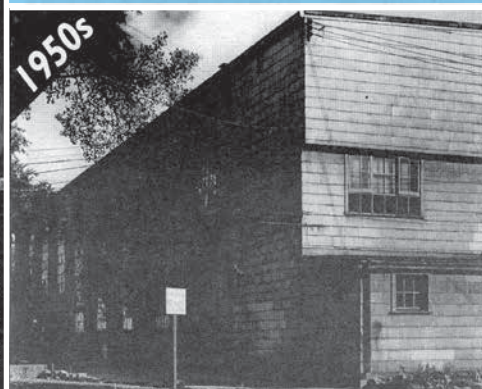
FACING PAGES, the various incarnations of the Student Campus Centre through the years and the corresponding campus response, reflected in the media of the day. *Photos and clippings courtesy of RyeEye Publishing, 1996. Facing page, clippings courtesy of RyeEye Publishing, 1996. Student centre photos: Jason Tse, 2014.*



RyeSAC crew hard at work

Watch where you stick that shovel. From left, John McGowan, v.p. finance and development, Neera Shukla, campus centre commissioner, and David Stenlo, president-elect, are dreaming of breaking ground on a new student centre at 55 Gould St.

That's where the crew will be today at 2:15 p.m., to launch their student centre campaign, along with Toronto councillor Kyle Rae. RyeSAC is asking for students' support during the board of directors elections March 25 and 26, when students can vote on whether they're willing to divert funds towards constructing a student centre.





A brief history of the student centre and everything

Who knew it could take 50 years to build a 30,000 square foot building? Considering snails have been recorded at the blistering pace of 158 ft/hr—well, you get the idea. Ryerson founding Principal Howard Kerr knew the campus needed a heart, but given the lack of a suitable site, an unsustainable operating model and fair-weather support, it took three referendums and 50 years to realize it.

The first two referendums in the 1980s and the early 1990s both failed, the latter due to a spirited campaign by O'Keefe House residents who resented the proposed annexing of their facility. Considerable resources had been invested in this campaign, models built and photos ops scheduled. The loss demoralized those who had worked on the project and black-balled the topic for years to come.

Fast-forward to 1995 and enter on the scene a fire-cracker of a commuter student named Neera Shukla. She saw the opportunity to re-purpose an expiring student levy as a way to pay for the new facility, without increasing fees. After much coaxing and cajoling, she managed to convince not only the RyeSAC executive but also the University. In 1996 the rest of the school agreed, voting overwhelmingly in support.



Rye gets its student centre

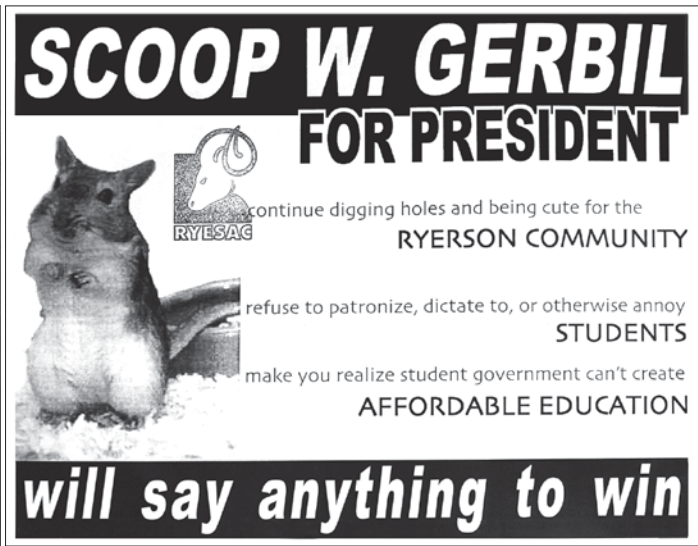
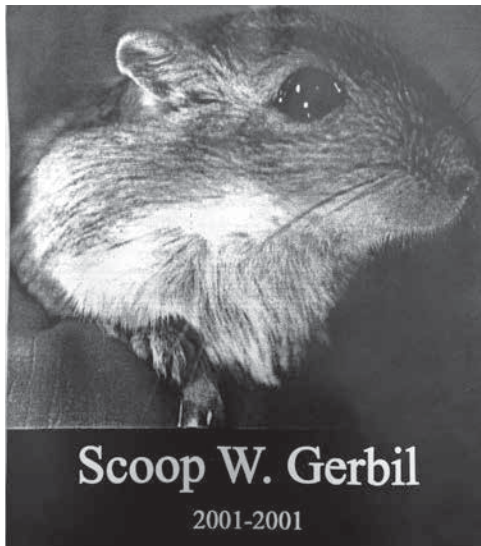


for its political stance and for the amount of money it took in dues. In the mid-1990s there was an unsuccessful bid to take Ryerson out of CFS.

What changed after the turn of the century was a CFS decision to seek out supporters in various post-secondary institutions and support them in return for support of CFS goals. The CFS sent representatives to Ryerson who worked with like-minded people to help win control of both RySAC and CESAR. These two bodies then insisted that the student organizations should have absolute control of the Student Campus Centre, which they called the Student Centre. An intense lobbying campaign, targeting the president of Ryerson, one of the two entities which created the Palin Foundation, resulted in the student organizations being able to fill all the positions on the Palin Board. Although Faculty, Staff and Alumni would now have no share in deciding what happened in the Student Centre, as had been envisioned by all the organizations involved, this did not preclude them from paying to use the facilities. The big loser was the Ryerson Centre, the other creator of the Palin Foundation, which had envisioned an ongoing role in the Student Campus Centre, and now had none. In many ways, this struggle over control mirrored long-term debate among students over whether the main focus should be on internal or external issues, with students and former student leaders on the Palin Board and the Ryerson Centre Board disagreeing with those students who supported CFS goals.

MORE EYEOPENER ANTICS

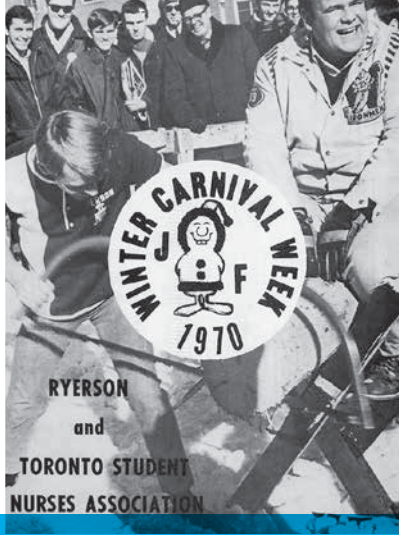
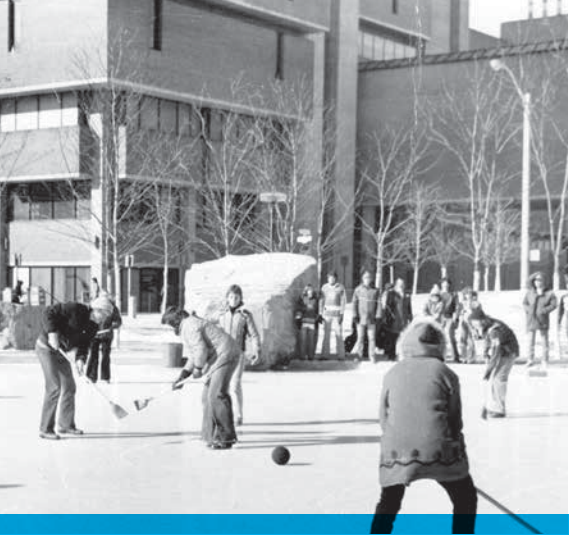
Not surprisingly, *The Eyeopener* had a great time satirizing the participants in the battle over the student centre, until some students complained that too much was being said about too little. Although at times more a reporter of campus news than an irreverent critic and general trouble-maker, as originally envisioned, at its best the newspaper lived up to its creators' goals. In 1991, when the harassment office published a report calling for a tribunal to review complaints against the campus media and take action, the paper published its second FUCK YOU edition, challenging what it saw as censorship. John Miller, Chair of the Journalism Department, came to the defense of *The*



Eyeopener, insisting that the newspaper was right in opposing censorship. At the beginning of the school term in 2006, John Miller announced changes in the curriculum of the Journalism Program, which would prevent any fourth year print journalism students from working on *The Eyeopener*, and tried to get two of the editors who were in their final year to quit the newspaper. In a move obviously referring to 1991, the paper responded by giving John Miller the same written form of the proverbial middle finger. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s the paper was often in trouble over its spoof editions, including ones directed at the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post*, and over its annual Love and Sex edition. The latter often featured controversial photographs. One of the early ones, in 1995, for example featured both naked breasts and an erect penis. Along with the controversial material, however, the annual Love and Sex paper also published articles on sexuality and sex practices which had an educational value.

At its best, the paper loved to tweak the nose of RSU for the antics of the Board and the executive, occasionally going over the line of good taste. One of their more inventive digs involved putting up a candidate for president in 2001, feeling the election too dull and knowing that few students voted anyway, because student politics meant little to them. *The Eyeopener* put up Scoop W. Gerbil as the preferred candidate. Scoop was a Gerbil who was

Over the years *The Eyeopener* has used some unconventional tools to draw attention to campus issues—notably in 2001 running Scoop W. Gerbil for student government president. Campaign poster top-right, top-left, an obituary photo, 2001. Material courtesy of RyeEye Publishing.



Winter Carnival 1970 including log cutting competition, broomball tournament and ice sculpture. Hot tubs appeared in the 1990s. *Historic photos and material courtesy of Ryerson University Archives. Photos (top-right and facing page top-right): Jonathan Bjerg Moller, courtesy RyeEye Publishing 1998–99.*

featured in a photo shoot in the 1970s and then was used as a fictional investigator of food in the cafeteria. In later years he evolved into a reporter who wrote stories with which the real writers did not want to be associated. Thus this irreverent fictional candidate was a perfect one to poke fun at the student union. With its view of student politics, it is not surprising then that the paper would take digs at the participants in the fight over the student centre; students against students, students against alumni of RSU, and students against faculty and staff. It did not hurt that RSU and *The Eyeopener* were already in a fight over the edition parodying the *National Post*.

After the fuss over the Student Campus Centre subsided and the current RSU executive had moved on, RSU got back to local issues, in addition to its concern with CFS national issues. In recent years the student union has campaigned for the permanent closure of Gould Street, to unify the central portion of the campus and to make it easier for students rushing between buildings when classes change. It has campaigned for an end to bottled water on campus, seeing the bottles as a waste of energy, and unnecessary garbage. One issue that it has taken up, that of having healthier and less expensive food available in the cafeterias, is of particular interest to students.

Over the last twenty years or so the number of organizations supported by the student union has increased dramatically. There are now over 60 cultural (Bangladeshi Students' Association, Iranian Students' Association), Religious (Chinese Christian Fellowship at Ryerson, Mandarin Chinese Christian



Fellowship, Muslim Students' Association) and interest-based (Responsible Pet Ownership, Gaming and Multi-player E-Sports of Ryerson) groups supported by RSU, as well as over 50 course unions. The fastest growth in recent years has been in interest based organizations. All of the groups are student-organized and student-run.

To read the newspaper accounts of student union politics over the last 65 years is to read about clashes of egos and of ideologies, about the effects of varying degrees of competence and incompetence, about verbal and even occasional physical, confrontation. However, when this more sensational material is filtered out, what is left is a record of significant accomplishments by student politicians. Some of the programs were just for the entertainment of students, including films, concerts, dances, the pub and Winter Carnival. Some were created to create a sense of community among students. These included Initiation week and the Island Picnic. Others were designed to improve the health and safety of students. Still others programs were designed for the benefit of the broader community.





CESAR and a Role

TO SPEAK ONLY of the student union which serves day students would be to ignore the other student union, CESAR, which serves part-time and evening students. Being an organization of part-time students with a part-time executive, for most of its existence it has provided a few basic services with a small office staff, the most notable being course evaluations. These evaluations were of particular use since many of the instructors in Continuing Education courses were hired from outside Ryerson, and, in some cases, there was no direct department or school responsibility for the content or management of courses.

In the late 1990s CESAR began to increase and diversify its services and programs. A referendum was organized to build a new home for what became known as the Chang School of Continuing Education, Heaslip House. This referendum also raised money for student awards. Though the organization was originally planning to take up space in Heaslip House, the building of the Student Campus Centre offered an opportunity to bring the two student organizations together under one roof. The CESAR referendum to assist in funding the Student Campus Centre also provided funds for capital projects.



This was used to install computers and photocopying equipment in the new facilities in the Student Campus Centre. The computers were of particular use to students who could not afford their own equipment. Revenue from photocopying was put back into the office.

CESAR now has a program of bursaries which grew out of the program begun in the 1990s. Aside from backing CFS/RSU campaigns such as those to cut tuition, drop bottled water on campus, close Gould Street, end war and poverty, the union has dealt with CE specific issues such as daycare and full financial credit for part-time studies. The organization provides a health and dental plan, assistance with academic appeals, and a full range of academic support, much like its daytime equivalent. It makes available a career counsellor from Ryerson's Career Development and Employment Centre and shares RSU's part-time lawyer and tax service. As with RSU's services, what CESAR offers is constantly changing and evolving with changes at Ryerson. From its origins as an almost entirely volunteer organization it has developed into a body that provides many of the same services as the student union provides for day students.

Ryerson's formidable part-time, distance and continuing education community is served by CESAR—the Continuing Education Students' at Ryerson. *CESAR orientation photos, sourced from www.mycesar.ca, 2013.*

CESAR now has a program of bursaries which grew out of the program begun in the 1990s.



Bed races, a descendent of the chariot races of yore, were a combined team building event, interdisciplinary competition and a charity fundraiser. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1971.*

More Student Organizations

WHILE THE TWO student unions serve the largest numbers of students, there are other organizations on campus that deal with substantial numbers of students. These are societies serving the students in a particular faculty. At the moment there are two, the Commerce Society and the Engineering Students' Society (RESS), and one more has just won approval, the Ryerson Communication and Design Society (FCDS) in the Faculty of Communication and Design. These organizations can raise their own funds from students and organize programming, but students still have the benefit of RSU programs.

THE ENGINEERING SOCIETY

The first of these was the Engineering Society, founded in the 1988–89 year. It sought approval from both Ryerson's Board of Governors and from RSU to operate as an RSU approved organization which could have access to a student levy and could program for engineers. Unfortunately for the organization, there were elements of traditional engineering student culture within the

Society. In 1988 frosh were painted purple, taught rude songs to sing and forced to crawl the halls of the Quad. In 1989 a group known as the Kick Ass Crew forced first year students to do pushups over nursing students as part of orientation, and the orientation handbook printed the words to the “North Atlantic Squadron”, a notoriously crude song popular in wartime. The Director of Student Services accused the students involved of demeaning Inuit women in the song. These actions plus others involving the Society and the Engineering newspaper, *The Golden Ram*, caused the Society to be put on probation for two years. Among the more notorious actions was the building of a cement wall covered in acid in front of the door to the Journalism building by the ‘Zero Tolerance Committee’ to protest *Ryersonian* attacks on Engineering students’ conduct, and the second issue of *The Golden Ram*. This issue included a ‘Nutritionists Eye Exam’, which consisted of a series of black blocks. Viewed from a distance it read, “Eat More Pussy”. Across it was printed, “Censored by the Ryerson Administration”. Administration complaints directed at *The Golden Ram* resulted in more student attention than the issue would have received. The Board of Governors created a council to oversee the activities of the Society, including its newspaper, and put the Director of Student Services at its head.

Mark Lemieux, a member of the Engineering Society who sat on the Board of Governors, and who became SURPI president, argued that the negative publicity was unfair since the Society did “forty times” more good things than bad. He was exaggerating, but it is true that there was a very positive side to the Society’s efforts. It encouraged women to enter engineering and participated in raising money for a number of charities. In 1989, for example, a car bash, involving an old car and a sledge hammer, raised \$540.00 for the Hospital for Sick Children. As well, not all social activities promoted sexism, racism and homophobia. In a kind of throwback to the chariot races of early Ryerson initiations, the Society organized a bed race against the residents of O’Keefe House, who were mostly engineers, with students pushing beds around the Quad. In the same year, 1989, Engineering students staged a peaceful protest outside a Board of Governors meeting to demand a speed-up of the Engineering accreditation process, which would allow them to earn degrees. Despite the positives, the Board of Governors extended the probation for another two years, worried about finances and organization.

THIS PAGE: Bed races organized along with other events, services and programming by groups like RESS (Ryerson Engineering Society) have been instrumental in community building within specific faculties. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives.*

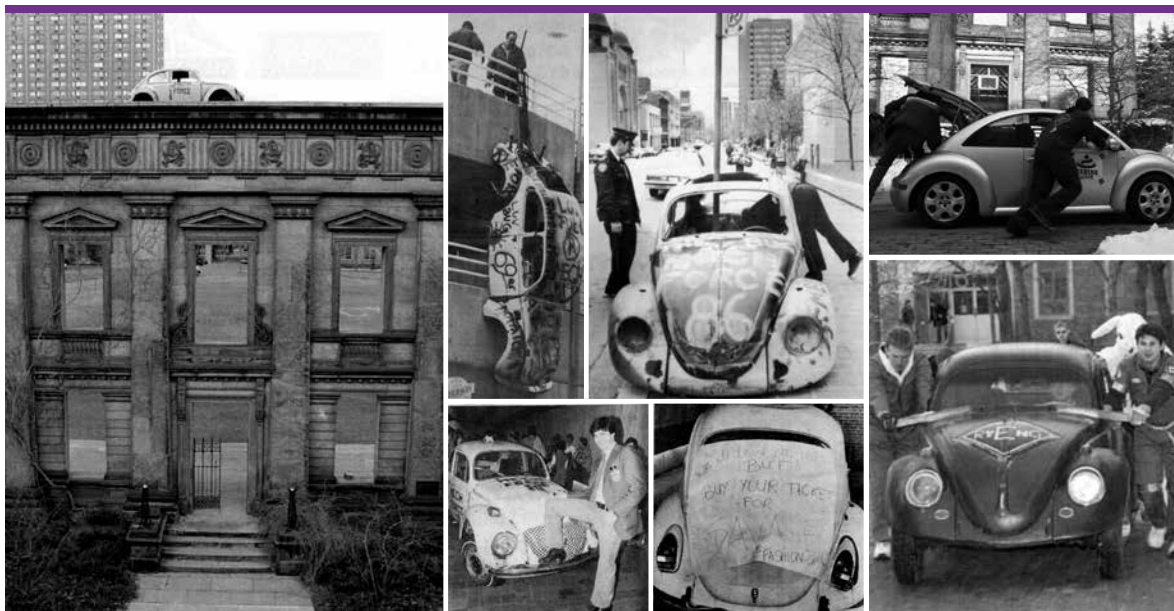
FACING PAGE: *Clippings from The Eyeopener and Ryersonian, courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1970s, 1980s, and 2007. Photo of Beetle on top of Ryerson Normal School facade courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1982.*



The student union was also unhappy with the sexism of the Engineers, and with RESS holding pub nights at Oakham House, hurting RSU revenues.

As a consequence of the targeted execution of twelve women in engineering at École Polytechnique in 1989 and the extended probation, *The Golden Ram* voluntarily ceased publication for five months in 1991, and RESS promised to avoid promoting excessive drinking, racist and sexist attitudes. In 1993, a group called Mech Force 10 placed a Volkswagen on top of south Kerr Hall, an audacious prank. It was reported in the campus press but was censored from *The Golden Ram* by the supervising council, because it would glorify the act. Engineers protested what they saw as unwarranted censorship and campaigned for a pact with RSU, which would free them from control. RSU finally signed on in 1993 and the Board of Governors agreed to the pact early in 1994.

Until the pact came into force, RESS was known more for the negative than the positive, and wished to escape that image. In 1993 Shinerama, shining shoes for charity, an activity in which RSU also participated, raised \$7,000 for Cystic Fibrosis research. RESS asked all Engineering students to wear a purple ribbon to commemorate the Montreal Massacre and organized an 'Engineering Adoption Agency Day' as part of National Engineering Week, during which 60 career studies students from high schools were brought in and organized in teams. They then competed at building a launching device. Perhaps the activity that generated the most positive press and helped RESS escape its previous image was the 'Bug Push', a different version of the bed race. Engineers and other volunteers tried to push a Volkswagen Beetle around the Quad for 24



What's with all the Beetles?

Ancient Egyptians used beetles to represent the force that moved the sun. At Ryerson our use of the beetle has been left in the hands of RESS (Ryerson Engineering Student Society) or more specifically Mech Force 10, the secretive prankster arm of mechanical engineering students. Mech Force 10 has (under the nose of security) welded, hoisted, dangled or dropped Volkswagen Beetles across campus since the 1960s. The crowning jewel of this 50 year beetle campaign was to hoist a love-bug atop the RAC (Ryerson Athletics Centre) facade—where, like a crown, it reminded students everywhere that yes, engineers could have a sense of humour too (at least once in 50 years). More recently the tradition has taken a charitable turn with engineering students donating their time to push a Volkswagen beetle around the quad to raise money for Sick Kids Hospital.



hours to raised money for the Hospital for Sick Children. This has become an annual event, with university administrators and politicians taking part.

Aside from the yearly ‘Bug Push’ the Engineering Society again invited high school students during National Engineering Week, supported a campaign to get more females into engineering, and organized lectures by professionals working in the field. The society began offering money to a limited number of students to help with their theses. In 2006 the program was expanded. Working with the Professional Engineers of Ontario and the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, RESS organized study sessions for first year mid-term tests, provided funding for theses and design projects, and funding support for engineering design teams. Money was made available for representatives sent to conferences for engineering students. In 2007 a chapter of Engineers Without Borders was set up at Ryerson.

Yet, in spite of all the good work, as in 1989, Ryerson Engineering students could not escape the reputation of behaving inappropriately. In 2003, discussing the issue of attracting women to engineering, *The Eyeopener* reported that *The Golden Ram* had a feature called ‘Whoroscope’. In 2004 *The Eyeopener* reported that those who wanted to be in charge of the frosh next year had to run around the campus in underwear, or less. In 2005 Ryerson President Claude Lajeunesse claimed that *The Golden Ram* had published offensive material and announced that was being investigated. Shortly after, RyePRIDE and the Women’s Centre complained about sexist, misogynistic and homophobic articles. The editor and writers were forced to undergo five hours of sensitivity training and the RESS president insisted on approving every article in future.

The year 2007 saw Engineering students bombard Commerce freshies with water balloon and squirt them with water guns. In 2008 and again in 2012, it was reported that second year Engineers stripped to their underwear and did a Conga line to become frosh leaders. In 2012 it took place in Dundas Square. This was the yearly practice after 2006, even if it did not get reported every year. In 2013 the matter finally became an issue when the future frosh leaders were filmed crawling across Lake Devo in their underwear or bathing suits. One female student was seen being slapped on the behind, and snowballs were thrown at them as they crawled. It did no good to explain that this was all done voluntarily as they had already been picked as leaders, and was not any kind of initiation. It did not help either when the press was told that

the ‘volunteers’ also had to do the Conga line. President Levy, embarrassed by the publicity, made it clear that this conduct would not be tolerated. So much good work was being overshadowed by the initiative of traditional engineering team building, and insensitivity to certain groups. This is a situation where negative student initiatives have worked against positive initiatives in terms of image, not of results.

THE COMMERCE SOCIETY

The Commerce Society was approved by the Board of Governors in 2003, but had existed on an ad hoc basis for the previous two years, funded by the Dean of Business. It was a means to end the rivalry for resources among the four programs within the Business Faculty, Business Management, Information Technology Management, Retail Management and Hospitality and Tourism. Initially its primary function was to organize a separate Frosh program. In 2007 this was a three day affair which included an etiquette dinner and a concluding black tie gala dinner. The etiquette dinner showed students how to carry on a polite conversation and dining skills such as how to hold a wine glass without heating the wine. Other activities that the Society financed included networking and promotion, in order to build an image for the Faculty of Business with Commerce Societies at other universities. As part of this, large numbers of members were sent to various conferences. Currently, the Society provides a mobile app so that Business students can access campus information on events, academic information, and the campus phone directory and campus news. This app is also available to a number of post-secondary institutions across Canada. The Society funds over 20 student groups in the faculty, and carries out some charitable work. In 2007, for instance, it organized charitable events for the Yonge Street Mission and in 2012, the ‘Lets Can Hunger’ food drive. Like RESS, which protested what it saw as censorship, there is also a political side to the Commerce Society. Having a decidedly free enterprise philosophy, in 2007 the Society collected signatures on a petition and moved at an RSU Board meeting to leave the Canadian Federation of Students because of the latter’s anti-corporate stance. This move was unsuccessful.

The StartMeUp program allows student entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas to a group of fellow student entrepreneurs, mentors and industry experts.

SIFE RYERSON

Some 27 groups operate under the Commerce Society. One that does not, and is among the largest, is SIFE Ryerson (Students in Free Enterprise) a chapter of a Global organization, open to students from programs across the university. As of 2010, Ryerson had the largest team in Canada, and ran eight programs, 34 projects and over 80 events. Among its most notable programs are RYE Market (Ryerson Young Entrepreneur Market), StartMeUp, and \$tart\$mart. RYE Market provides a test market to university and college students from various institutions to promote and sell products and services. The StartMeUp program allows student entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas to a group of fellow student entrepreneurs, mentors and industry experts. These ideas may be for a product, a service, a non-profit business, or a community organization. If the pitch is successful, the applicants are passed on to Ryerson's Digital Media Zone, where SIFE maintains a panel of student advisors. On-line support is also provided. The StartMeUp program also works closely with the student-run Ryerson Entrepreneur Institute (REI), which provides other resources. REI additionally provides education, funding and other resources to high school and university students, existing businesses, marginalized youth, young mothers, aboriginals and recent immigrants interested in pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours. It is currently the only student-run entrepreneurial institute in Canada. The \$tart\$mart program provides lessons in financial planning at low income secondary schools. SIFE has won multiple awards, including at the national level, for these financial education programs.

Over the years SIFE has engaged in a variety of other projects. It organized a Global Entrepreneurship Week, featuring the RYE Market, seminars from business people such as those involved with the television program Dragons Den, and competitions. At the second such week, in 2009, SIFE Ryerson organized a fashion show called 'Mystique', featuring business casual fashions. Three stores provided some of the clothes and Ryerson students designed the rest. This show followed by two months the 'Ryerson Pop Up', a joint venture of the School of Fashion and the Ted Rogers School of Retail Management, a project begun by the chairs of the two schools but carried out by students. The students were paid as part of a Work Study Program and Fashions were sold from a Nissan Cube vehicle that was provided. No doubt the cooperation between schools in the 'Pop Up' helped pave the way for the SIFE show.



*Photo courtesy of Kevin Yu,
ENACTUS*

SIFE and StartMeUp have run the Slight Communications Business Plan Competition since 2003, for which all students are eligible. Students provide a business plan for a proposed business, with a large cash prize and potential business contacts as the prizes. After the violence connected to the G20 meetings in Toronto StartMeUp created maps of the businesses damaged in the city and started a campaign called 'Protests to Profits' in which members handed out the maps to encourage shoppers to frequent the damaged stores. In 2011 SIFE and Commerce Society representatives went to a small village in Kenya to introduce small business enterprises to the poor inhabitants. The following year five members of SIFE went back to Kenya to see how the businesses were doing. Also in 2012, SIFE and the Ryerson Centre for Urban Energy organized a program called 'Energy Savers', which would canvas older neighbourhoods and perform energy audits where appropriate, to help reduce energy use.

COMMERCE SOCIETY AFFILIATES

Of the 27 groups that operate under the umbrella, there are course unions and specialized groups. Most of the groups associated with the Commerce program focus on various aspects of business. The Ryerson Commerce and Government Association (RCGA), for instance, deals with the influence of government regulations on commerce. The Ryerson Sports and Business Association (RSBA) focuses on sports as a business. Ryerson Toastmasters and Ryerson Speech and Debates Association assist students in learning speaking

skills necessary in business. ENACTUS Ryerson provides volunteers for various causes and in turn gives these volunteers usable experience. ENACTUS works with SIFE on the StartMeUp program and on the RU Green initiative, which develops ways to show the community how to reduce the carbon footprint. It also maintains the Ryerson Angels Network (RAN), which is a group of angel investors who will finance and mentor projects for Ryerson students, alumni and faculty. AIESEC Ryerson is a chapter of the largest student organization in the world and focusses on leadership experience and international internships through its global network.

One of the largest organizations at Ryerson is DECA U, located in the Business Faculty. This organization, which welcomes students from across Ryerson, provides training and networking events for its 'delegates'; to develop their 'analytical, presentation and networking skills' which they then use in local, provincial and national competitions, as a way of honing those skills to prepare them for the business world. DECA Ryerson also holds an annual business case competition called 'Regional on Bay' for thousands of high school students in the high school division of DECA, leading to national finals.

In Information Technology Management (ITM), an important group is Women in Information Technology Management. As in engineering, the field has traditionally been heavily male dominated. This organization was created to empower women who would be entering the profession. In 2011 the decision was made to allow men to join, as a way to show males the barriers faced by women working with information technology. As with all the other organizations associated with the Faculty of Business, this organization is run by students for students.

Course unions/societies operate under RSU, and in Business and Engineering Faculties, under the professional society. The functioning of these groups is very dependent on the commitment of a few students who organize events and publicize these events, and other events relevant to the members. Because of this situation there is a considerable variation in the effectiveness of course unions/societies. As a general rule, these groups organize informal and formal get-togethers, often including graduation banquets and dances. The most active invite guest speakers and perhaps show films, and/or have presentations on the discipline by those working in the field or by fellow students. While they may have faculty help in recruiting outside speakers, most of the work is done by the students themselves.

Initiatives by Individuals and Small Groups

ASIDE FROM THE many initiatives taken by organized groups at Ryerson, there are many undertaken informally by small groups of students and by individuals. One of the difficulties that students have had, especially in times of recession and in periods of rapid increases in tuition is paying tuition and living expenses. Some students have come up with unique ways to deal with the problem. A group of students paid their way at the end of the 1980s by working in pop-up late night drinking establishments (booze cans) and running some themselves. One member of the RSU executive, embarrassed to ask his family for more money decided to borrow it from the RSU safe. As possibly the best-liked member of the executive, because of his engaging, easy going personality, he was the least suspected. When caught, he was mortified. His family paid the money back, plus gave him the money he needed and the courts let him off due to his sincere contrition. Not so an immediate past-president of the Engineering Society, who was also very much liked by those who knew him. Short of cash, he took to robbing banks with a replica gun. Arrested after robbing three, he was given four years to consider other ways to raise money.



Students, part of the Alternative Spring Break (ASB) program, pose for a group photo. A student initiated program, ASB supports students who provide front-line aid work in foreign projects during the April-May time frame. *Photo: Jeffrey Patterson, courtesy of Dr. Arne Kislenko.*

Most student initiatives have not been quite as controversial. What follows is a random selection of initiatives, to show the breadth of such activities. Many such have gone unreported, but the examples cited here will show that innovation is very much a part of student life at Ryerson. Some of these have altered how things are done at the university and other innovations, carried out at Ryerson, have led to innovative careers afterwards. Some initiatives started small and grew. For instance, when it became possible to create new sports teams a few years ago, one woman petitioned for several years to restart a women's hockey team, which had not existed for over 30 years. The team was supported by volunteers including her Dad as coach, her mother as trainer and her brother who provided equipment support. Within five years of launching, however, the team achieved varsity status, had acquired a former national women's hockey team coach, and was playing at the ice surface formerly occupied by Maple Leaf Gardens. Other initiatives have emerged fully grown. The women behind McClung's magazine, which was founded to deal with issues from a female perspective, created it after reading men's magazines and deciding that there should be a platform at Ryerson for the female voice. A few years ago, two students created Minx, the world's shortest marathon, to raise money for charity. The mini-marathon took place in Dundas Square and raised \$8,000.

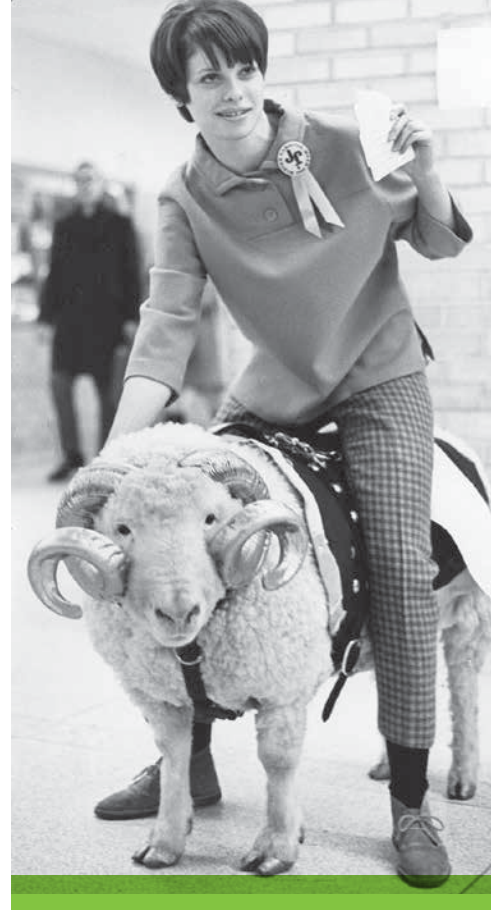
One of the earliest examples of student initiatives occurred in 1952, after the football and hockey teams were named the Ryerson Rams. One of the students, a member of the school band, which played at football games, had a ram brought from the family farm. 'Terrible Tex', as he was called, was led around at the game by the student's young brother. Tex did not look very terrible, being young and without horns. Ryerson then went 'ramless' until late in 1960. Palin Hall, later to be Oakham House, had been purchased by Ryerson from the Ontario government and was used as a residence until renovations took place in the 1970s. Four men from Palin decided that Ryerson needed a mascot. Several other universities had a live mascot at the time. The men decided to steal one, but did not know what a ram looked like. They used a livestock company and bought one for \$10.85 at the Toronto Stockyards. In preparation for the sale, they sold shares on campus at 25 cents a share and raised \$52.00. The remainder of the money was to be used to house and feed Eggy, as he was called. The problem of where to house

him was solved when Principal Kerr arranged a spot on campus for him. His first appearance was at a Ryerson-Waterloo hockey game on January 31, 1961, where the chant “Eggy wants a goal” was invented. It must have worked as Ryerson triumphed 15–3.

Another tradition began a few days later when Eggy was ‘ramnapped’. Howard Kerr was informed and called other universities in the area to see if they had a ram that did not belong to them. The culprit or culprits were never caught, but Eggy turned up in Kerr’s garage. After spending the winter at Ryerson, in a specially built plywood shed, Eggy was sent to a farm for the summer. Unfortunately, shortly before the next school year was to begin, the ram was diagnosed with cancer and had to be euthanized. The extent to which it had contributed to school spirit can be gauged by the fact that two minutes silence were observed on campus, followed by a luncheon at which ‘Eggy-burgers’ (beef, not lamb) were served. A long memorial tribute was published, featuring the immortal line, “the ground on which he trod has become holy, baptized by his sanctifying trademark”, a reference to Eggy’s propensity to leave droppings everywhere, including in the car bringing him back from Howard Kerr’s garage after being ‘ramnapped’.

SAC stepped in at this point and purchased a pedigree ram for only \$5.00, Eggy II. Aside from attending football and hockey games and walking in parades, this Eggy led a very colourful life. On two occasions University of Waterloo students tried to kidnap him from his shed behind Palin Hall. The first time, a diversionary tactic warned the residents of the Hall and 41 students were there to welcome the Waterloo students. The second time, the Waterloo students brought a crane and tried to hoist the shed onto a flatbed truck at 4:00 in the morning. When they were discovered by a single student as the shed was going over the fence, there was not time to warn other residents, so the student turned on a hose and held them at bay until police arrived. University of Toronto students, however, succeeded on several occasions. Eggy II had a new ‘chariot’ built for him by maintenance staff, so that he could be transported, which was known as the ‘Eggy-carton’. In 1962, to welcome him, Seniors and Juniors sent Frosh on a hunt for ram droppings during initiation.

In 1969, after the May Convocation, Eggy II was retired to a farm where he died in a flood shortly after. As with the original Eggy his head was



A real ladies ram. Eggy, wearing his best wool sweater and a snappy blue and gold cape socializes with his fans between scheduled appearances. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1960.*



TOP LEFT: One of the several live Eggys, from the early years. CENTRE: 1990's Eggy waits patiently for a new graduating class to emerge from convocation. RIGHT: Current-day Eggy offers up a fist-bump, in his new home, at the Mattamy Athletics Centre (former Maple Leaf Gardens).

Photos courtesy of Ryerson University Archives and RyeEye Publishing

mounted in Palin Hall and Ryerson went looking for a replacement. This time the Ryerson Alumni Association paid for a ram, but their purchase did not work out as well. Eggy III was noted for two things, his sexual appetite and his tendency to be very aggressive. During the summers he kept a large group of Ewes very happy on the farm. He attacked any competing ram, killing at least one. While on campus, he chased most people who came close to him, including his handlers. The Alumni office actively sought occasions when students could use him, but found very few, since anyone who got close to him did not want to do so again. In 1976, when Oakham House was renovated, Eggy's shed was removed and he was kept on a farm. He had to be tranquilized to transport him to Toronto, and again to go back. Since it was expensive, he was semi-retired. In 1981 he was attacked by bush wolves and had to be euthanized.

Although by the mid-1970s only two universities still had live mascots, and Ryerson had purchased a ram costume in the late 1970s, the students still wanted a live Eggy. Students collected \$200.00 to buy one and, after some debate, SURPI agreed to pay the rest. The family of a Social Work graduate agreed to provide a ram, and when he arrived there was a celebration. Howard Kerr was brought out of retirement to welcome him, which was done under the mounted heads of his predecessors.

This Eggy died at age eight, in 1987, and the Dow family again offered to donate a replacement. This Eggy lived only until 1991. A new ram was purchased but never served. The Toronto Humane Society was concerned

about the treatment of farm animals in an urban environment and pressured Ryerson's administration to end the practice, which by then was very out of favour on other campuses. In a sense, this was a last hold-out of the school spirit of the 1950s and early 1960s. A person in an Eggy costume appeared in the June 1992 Convocation and has ever since. After the live mascot was abandoned, there were a few complaints about the mounted heads. They were taken down and, after efforts failed to find a permanent home or homes for them around campus, they now rest discreetly in the University Archives.

It was not just because live mascots could be injured in the course of their activities on campus, or if kidnapped, that the Humane Society was concerned. Live animals had been used in pranks on various campuses, often without thought to the consequences. In 1986, a young boar was greased and let loose in the Ryerson cafeteria at lunch time. The following year a pig met the same fate. Rumour has it that this was a prank by Engineering students, and it may have involved a prize for any prankster being able to capture the animal. Needless to say, both animals were traumatized by being chased through the crowded cafeteria. This is an initiative that is not likely to be repeated.

Innovation is often associated with artistic expression, with good reason. In the ideal case, the artistic mind is trained to experiment. A faculty member in the Theatre Program, Sheldon Rosen, came up with the idea for a program called the New Voices Festival about a decade ago, based on the idea of guerilla theatre. Students put forward the idea for a play and, if accepted, write, produce, and direct the production, supported by others in the Theatre Program, including the technical crew. While faculty advice is available, these are essentially student creations. Some of these have gone on to be showcased at international festivals. The fourth year students who mount these productions have received academic credits for this work only since 2012. Essentially this was an opportunity to be creative, in preparation for a later career.

Dance students have had a similar opportunity for about a quarter of a century. In a program called Choreographic Works, Dance students can create and mount their own works. There is no credit for this work, only the opportunity to innovate. Out of the choreographic experience has grown at least two dance cooperatives. One of these, the Independent Dance Artists

Cooperative (IDAC), has since wound down. The second, which also involves former students, is called Alias Dance Project. Not only does this group strive to push the boundaries of dance (one recent project involved an amalgamation of dance, video, and interactive, motion-sensor based creations), but also it runs a dance and fitness studio, to introduce dance to people of all ages, and, for a time, operated a young people's dance company, Pivotal Dance Motion Theatre.

Innovation is often associated with artistic expression,
with good reason.

Alias Dance Project dancers Caitlin Amodeo, Francesca Chudnoff (choreographer) and Lauren Cook perform *Triptych pt. 2*, presented at The Harbourfront Theatre in 2014. Photo: Christopher James Cushman, courtesy of Alias Dance Project.



A similar outgrowth of student initiated activity occurred in the School of Image Arts. In late 1995 and 1996, four students from different programs in the school were inspired by one of faculty member Bruce Elder's courses, Experimental Film Processes, and by screenings of avant-garde films at Cinematheque Ontario. As a result they took more of Elder's courses and, at his suggestion, got together and screened other experimental films. Out of this initiative developed a film collective, Loop, which grew over the years to include others, mostly former Ryerson Image Arts students. This group both screens their own experimental films and the films of others. In keeping with the experimental impetus of the collective, screenings are often interwoven with other media; dance, music, photography, etc. Their films have been shown in numerous venues, including at Cinematheque Ontario, and the EXiS experimental film and video festival in Seoul, South Korea. This experience has been so influential in shaping the lives of some of the members of the collective that one of the founders, Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof, now teaches in Image Arts, the Ryerson school that inspired her.

Some ideas originate with students, as in the Image Arts example, and some with faculty, as in the examples from the Theatre School. In 2005, two Business students approached History faculty member Arne Kislenko, who was teaching them in a course in international relations. They suggested that some kind of action was needed to engage the broader student body in the study of global affairs. Out of this discussion came the International Issues

Discussion Series (IID). Each year, a small team of seven or eight students, who can be from any area of Ryerson, develops a list of issues that they feel are topical and a list of speakers that they would like to hear, the two lists not necessarily being connected. The critical aspect is that the presentations should provoke discussion. While Arne Kislenko approaches the speakers that are on the list, and helps to find speakers for suggested topics, the students provide contact information and biographies for the speakers, and chair the sessions, which are also open to the general public. Two of the organizing group host all of the sessions for the year.

Another initiative that came from students was that of the Alternate Spring Break. In 2007 some students approached Arne Kislenko to see if it was possible to mount a program involving some kind of aid project in a foreign country. Professor Kislenko, who already was mulling over a similar concept, assisted the students in mounting the first project in 2008. As the concept has evolved, the duration of the trip taken by students has grown from two to six weeks. The projects selected are carried out through smaller NGOs (non-governmental organizations). All students sign contracts indicating their responsibilities. Initially Kislenko sat in on interviews with prospective participants, but now a trained student acts as the moderator of the interview sessions, with other experienced students conducting the interviews, while Dr. Kislenko handles the finances and deals with any legal issues. Students are advised about health and safety issues, and how the Student Code of Conduct applies during the project. Although initially all of this training was done by Kislenko, much of it can now be done by students with experience in past projects. After selection, the team, under three student leaders, does weekly training and team building, involving researching the physical conditions and the culture in the country in which they will be working, risk assessment, travel logistics, etc. They must raise the portion of the money not covered by grants, money provided by Ryerson and other available funds, through raffles, bake sales or any other method that they devise. No Ryerson faculty travel with the students, but they must report weekly to Arne Kislenko. In large measure this is a student driven, student controlled initiative, with faculty involved only in the legal and financial reporting aspects of the project, and in a mentoring role. This experience has such an impact that many of the students involved return for another of the ASB projects.



The Alternative Spring Break (ASB) program is led by students with collaboration from Dr. Arne Kislenko. The program offers students a chance to provide front-line foreign aid. *Photo: Jeffrey Patterson, courtesy of*

Dr. Arne Kislenko. FACING PAGE: The long-awaited Student Campus Centre, photographed shortly after it's completion in 2008. Photo: Shai Gil, courtesy of CS&P Architects Inc. 2008.

Most of the hosts for the IID presentations have gone on to graduate school and four of those from the ASB, which has existed for a shorter time, have also entered graduate work, while three are working in the field of international aid. These results from the student initiative experience mimic those from the Theatre School and Image Arts. Undoubtedly, other examples of this type could be found in other areas of the university. The opportunity to create and manage a project or projects has not only influenced the lives of students while at Ryerson, but also had an effect on their future careers.





Egerton Ryerson presides over the campus, posed conveniently for generations of selfies. *Photo: Jason Tse, 2014.*

Conclusion

ADD TO THIS the initiatives carried out through the various organizations chronicled in this account and the total effect is very substantial. In the short time of sixty-five years that Ryerson has existed, student initiatives have put students on the governing bodies of the institution, created policies for the health and safety of students, pushed for inclusion and protection of women and marginalized groups, fought for and won protection from unfair treatment of students, and worked with faculty, staff and administration towards the successful completion of a student campus centre. The integration of student life with the professions into which students would graduate has been a priority of students in some parts of Ryerson such as Engineering and Business. Essential services such as photocopying, printing and typing were provided, as well as social activities such as a pub, a games room, dances, concerts and movies to provide a break from academic pursuits. Initiation activities, which changed from hazing and games to the parade and Island picnic, and the Winter Carnival were introduced to foster a sense of community among students. Students have successfully campaigned for a better library. Social welfare policies included ones to assist students, such as

the food room, and ones to assist the broader community outside Ryerson, such as the various charity drives and converting the food room to a community food room. From time to time student initiatives have targeted social issues such as poverty, nuclear war, and racism, as well the constant issue of the cost of education. These causes are often controversial within Ryerson, but they nevertheless represent initiatives by a certain percentage of students.

Universities are not built solely by governors, administrators, faculty and staff. In the focus on growth, on academic achievements and on rewards for research it is easy to miss the contribution that students make to the development of the institution.

Students have set up and run a wide range of clubs, as well as course unions. Major undertakings such as ROW and RIOT were largely created and mounted by them, as well. A wide range of publications, from *The Little Weekly*, and the early *Ryersonian*, before it became a teaching newspaper, to *The Eyeopener*, *Oh! Magazine*, *McClung's* and the *White Wall Review* all were founded and/or run by students, offering experiences in a variety of literary fields, and propelling some students into careers that they might not otherwise have chosen. All of these non-academic endeavours contributed very significantly to student life on campus.

Universities are not built solely by governors, administrators, faculty and staff. In the focus on growth, on academic achievements and on rewards for research it is easy to miss the contribution that students make to the development of the institution. Some contributions are small and some major, but the sum total creates an institution much different from what it would have otherwise been. In addition, student initiatives sometimes lead to careers that are focused in a particular direction by the experience. The development of Ryerson can only be fully understood if the effect of these student initiatives is taken into account. In fact, no university history is really complete unless initiatives made by students are included.



Ryerson Centre Directors

(In order of first appearance.)

1950–1960

Cangiano, Donald Anthony
Kerr, Howard Hillen*
Kilty, Dorothy*
Trimble,
 William Burbae Smythe
Worsley, Charles Robert

Bullock, Geoffrey
Cangiano, Charles
Carter, Roger*
Crombie, David*
Croot, William C
Fuerstenberg, Adam
Gibson, Douglas*
Gonsalves, Mary Christine*
Gonsalves, Louis*
Hakomaki, Harry Michael*
Hales, Barry*
Handley, James

Kerr, Peter*
Krumins, Benita*
Parson, Albert Normand
Peters, James
Reeves, Michael*
Shore, Earl
Spratt, Donald C
Sutherland, David B
Tameanko, Marvin*
Thompson, Arthur John*

1960–1970

Abel, James
Bishop, Anthony
Borrowdale, Brian*

PHOTOS ON FACING PAGE, TOP LEFT: CJRT Broadcast Studio. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1953–54.*

TOP RIGHT: Annual Homecoming Parade. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1956.* MIDDLE LEFT: Aerospace

Technology students. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1960–61.* MIDDLE RIGHT: Food Administration students.

Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1954–55. BOTTOM LEFT: Students participate in the Shinerama fundraiser for cystic fibrosis, which continues today. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1970s.* BOTTOM MIDDLE: Student

orientation train. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1969.* BOTTOM RIGHT: Construction of Ryerson Athletics Centre (RAC) in centre of Kerr Hall quad. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1980s.*

1970–1980

Acker, Alison
Anderson, Alan
Aspervig, Kenneth Errol
Atchison, Lori Winifred
Baer, Jim
Baker, Paul
Bartnik, Renee Marie
Basciano, Susan
Bassett, Richard
Bean, Gordon
Bein, Ulf Uwe
Belanger, Marc*
Benward, Michael
Bierma, Don
Black, Heather
Bland, Christine
Boomer, David
Boon, Sharon
Borowiec, Joseph
Bow, Keith
Bow, Andrea
Boyes, Jim
Branderhorst, Leigh*
Brennan, Robert
Briant, Constance
Briscoe, Barrie
Brock, Frederic William
Brogden, Thomas
 Wilfred Peter
Brown, Gary Hugh
Brown, Howard
Burns, Gary John
Burr, Stephen
Burton, Bruce

Butcher, S
Byram, Terence
Calder, Alan
Campbell, William
Carscullen, Beth
Carter, Susan
Chevez, Carol
Chouinard, Patrick Clifford
Christoff, Thomas Nicholas
Ciolfi, Angelo
Clause, Robert
Clay, Gary
Cleaver, Katherine Ann*
Cole, Bradley
Cook, Jack
Cooper, Linda
Corner, Chris
Cote, Anthony
Cullen, Maurice*
Cunningham, Barb
Currie, Alan
Currie, Gunta
D'Abrey, Terence
Darling, Alan
DeBerger, Ronald
Delsol, J. Sherman
Dennis, Katherine
Deveau, Dennis*
Dottin, Patrick
Douglas, James*
Dowler, Marie
Duffield, Susan*
Dumham, Grant
Dunning, Laurie
Dzus, John

Eagle, Edgar Allan*
Edgar, John*
Ellis, Michael
Emid, Alan
Enzsol, Gabor
Ewing, Robert Lorne
Ezyk, John
Ferguson, Norman
Fradgley, William
Fragnito, Rita
Fullerton, Lawrence
Garrod, Philip
Gbadamosi, Kola
Gibson, Gloria
Gibson, Terry
Gilham, Andrea
Gillespie, Roger*
Gilmore, Douglas
Godwin, Wayne
Golden, Jean
Gordner, Norman
Gorman, JR*
Gray, Lawrence
Grell, Diane
Grier, Terence
Griffiths, M. Alan
Grimshaw, David
Gross, Matthew
Guptill, David*
Hainsworth, Frederic Noel*
Harms, Hugo
Harris, H
Harris, Barbara
Harvey, David Roy
Haugh, Arthur*

Hawkes, Donald
 Healy, Rosemary
 Hendriks, Adrian
 Hiscocks, Patricia
 Hoff, Herb*
 Holden, Ross
 Homewood, Jerry
 Huestis, Richard
 Hume, George
 Hutchison, Gordon
 Hutton, Mary Ann
 Ivory, Craig
 Ivory, Nicole
 Jacks, Barry
 Jackson, Robert
 Jackson, Bruce William
 Jeffrey, Alan
 Jenkins, Lee
 Jensen, Viggo
 Jeruzalska, Ala
 Jewell, Ronald Blair
 Jewett, Paul
 Jiwani, Echo
 John, Amory Mosita
 Jones, Anthony
 Kailan, Christopher Lloyd
 Kauntz, Traudie
 Kee, Yvonne
 Kelly, Nan*
 Kennedy, Kathleen
 Kent, Michael
 Killin, Kenneth James
 King, Pat
 Kneider, George
 Lebroque, Frances

Leckie, Craig
 Lewis, David
 Locis, Glenn Robert*
 Lockwood, Garth*
 Long, John Richard
 Lundy, Douglas
 Lunn, Richard
 MacDonald, Stephen
 MacKay, Kent
 MacKenzie, Susan
 Maguire, Lee
 Main, M
 Makriyannis, Paul
 Maksymetz, Ron
 McBeth, Christine
 McCallum, Glenna
 McCord, John Thomas*
 McCowan, Ann
 McCrory, Leslie
 McCuaig, Allan David*
 McKelvie, David*
 McKenister, Richard
 McKibbin, James*
 McLaughlin, Peter
 McNeill, James
 McQuaig, David
 Mitchell, Fran
 Mittias, Armia
 Monument, James
 Moran, Bruce*
 Moran, Dave
 Munro, Mary
 Murphy, Mary Kathleen
 Nebrega, Joseph
 Newbigging, David

Norman, Peter
 Norris, Julien
 O'Connor, Terence
 One, George
 Palmer, Charles
 Paquette, Louise
 Marie Esperance
 Patchett, Betty
 Peckett, Jeffrey
 Perkins, John
 Perotta, Louis
 Petersons, Andrew
 Pettypiece, Ann
 Ralston, W.W.
 Randall, Briane
 Redmond, Barry
 Reedyk, Arie
 Reichert, Raymond Roy
 Rellinger, Gloria Anne*
 Reno, William Yakes
 Reynolds, Clinton
 Rigby, Peter
 Riva, Dorthy
 Robinson, Francis
 Roy, Kelly, Bernadette
 Rozowey, Rob
 Sahota, Sarwan
 Salvatore, Joseph*
 Schwenker, Kevin
 Segalowitz, Edward
 Semper, Daniel
 Sharman, Philip
 Sherk, Ronald
 Shirtliff, Ronald
 Shoniker, Thomas

Shwenker, Kevin
 Sim, Barbara, Ann*
 Sim, Derek
 Simon, Donald
 Sinclair, David Gordon
 Sivertson, Ray
 Skinner, Stephen
 Slater, Katherine
 Sobon, Sonia
 Sokol, Alan
 Sosa, Tom
 Spence Sales, Jonas
 Steele, Michael
 Steinman, Howard
 Sullivan, James
 Surtherland, Ian George
 Sutton, Donald
 Tarr, John
 Taylor, David Leslie*
 Thoem, Ruth
 Thompson, Elizabeth
 Tomlinson, Joy
 Travers, Karl
 Trimbull, David
 Valenta, Kurt
 Vasilivitch, Andrew Chris
 Waite, Edward Francis
 Wallace, Jack
 Walmsley, David
 Walsh, Christine
 Walton, Michael James*
 Warner, Douglas
 Wavioc, Paul
 Waxberg, Rosa
 Wayman, Theodore

Weisman, Varley*
 Wheeler, Donald
 Wiggins, William
 Wilkins, Kathleen
 Williams, Roy
 Williams, Peter
 Wilson, Patrick
 Wodiuk, Leon
 Wowchuk, Gregory Paul
 Wright, Gordon Neville
 York, Sally
 Young, Mary
 Zawierzeniec, Steven
 Zeldin, Mary Paula*
 Ziesman, Hal

1980-1990

Adams, David Kenneth
 Beddie, Louise Ruth
 Bidde, Louise
 Blochlinger, Ruth
 Brault, Louis Joseph
 Briggs, Elizabeth Joanne
 Caza, Jules
 Clarence, Brian
 Cooper, Valetta Emily*
 Corallo, John*
 Devine, Liz*
 Duerden, Frank
 Durrant, Michael*
 Easton, Bruce N
 Eeuwes, Harry Ranier
 England, Ross
 Fitzgerald, Bruce

Fletcher,
 John David (Toby)*
 Gibbs, Chris
 Greer, Allan William*
 Hallan, Todd*
 Hayward, Barry
 Johnston, Charles
 Johnston, Adam
 Jones, Brian
 Liddle, Gerry Thomas
 Main, Paula
 Martin, Mary Ann
 Meinzer, Patricia
 Ostermann, Irene
 Purdon, James Robert
 Quigg, Patricia
 Rannie, Paul
 Scott, Bradley
 Scott, Robert
 Stefurak, Larissa
 Tanenbaum, David
 Taylor, Kelvin*
 Taylor, Frederick
 Teliatnik, Rosemary
 Tighe, Wayne Christopher
 Vivash, David
 Walker, Colleen
 Watson, Sue
 Williams, Nancy

1990-2000

Ali, Ryad
 Bartle, L.J.*
 Bornstein, Mikhael
 Bowes, Brent

Bowman, Victoria*
 Brown, Dean
 Burrows, Jean
 Butterly, Jim
 Campbell, Kelli
 Cappadocia, Frank
 Corrallo, John*
 Crane, Bob
 Cullingworth, Jane
 D'Angelo, Michael
 Deluca, Angelo
 Dickson, Juanita
 Emmorey, Kim
 Fabrizio, John
 Felstein, Paul
 Frache, Pam
 Francescucci, Anthony
 Garvin, Daren
 George Orjalo, Carl
 George, Erin
 Gill, Michelle
 Goldman, Aaron
 Guercio, Gino
 Holmes, Danielle
 Hornick, Daniel

* *director/officer*

Ladd, Deena
 Lemieux, Mark
 Little, Dawn
 Loeb, Riva
 Love, John
 Lozano, Barbara
 Mann, David
 McNeil, Donna
 Orjalo, Carl
 Pederson, Ian*
 Philips, John-Paris
 Piper, Janet*
 Quinn, Greg*
 Rhodas, Carlos
 Sadinsky, Ellie
 Short, Mark
 Steele, David*
 Whitelaw, Bob
 Wright, Cory

2000–2014

Barry, Sarah
 Bay, Odelia
 Blaine, Dominique
 Chappell, Janet

Cooney, Darren*
 Drew, Chris
 Emerson, Rob
 Flynn, Darcy
 Futter, Tanja
 Graham, Nancy
 Hamilton, Ian
 Jones, Chris
 Lavigne, Brad
 Loreto, Nora
 MacLellan, Duncan*
 Marciniec, Ken*
 McGowan, John*
 McLarty, Liane*
 McNeil, Chris
 Rae, Kyle
 Ramlachan, Neil
 Salter, Jeremy
 Spencer, Pauline
 Toledo, Estefania
 Vandervoort, Daniel
 Verticchio, Mike
 Wade, Richard
 Watt, Jenn

PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE, TOP LEFT: Ryerson Bookstore located in Jorgenson Hall, *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives* TOP RIGHT: Winter Carnival go-kart rally in the Kerr Hall quad. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1970s.* MIDDLE LEFT: Historic image of the Toronto Normal School, the facade remains in Kerr Hall quad today. *Photo courtesy of City of Toronto Archives, 1910..* MIDDLE RIGHT: Dancers perform Movin, *photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 1980.* BOTTOM LEFT: Security gate and entrance into Kerr Hall quad. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1960s.* BOTTOM MIDDLE: Bug push around Kerr Hall quad for Sick Kids Hospital charity—University President Sheldon Levy and Mayor David Miller. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, 2007.* BOTTOM RIGHT: Rams volleyball game. *Photo courtesy of Ryerson University Archives, circa 1980s.*





“Truly a must read for graduates and those of us who worked at Ryerson and left a piece of our heart there.”

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enthusiasticelephant.com

This fascinating book reminds us that there was—and is—always much more to Ryerson than lectures and labs and exams. The great photos and Ron Stagg’s text take us on a fascinating ride through 65 years of student life. They reveal the lively back story of the small postwar institute of technology that grew into a major university which is today is one of Toronto’s proudest landmarks. It reminds us what a dynamic role that her students, with all their energy and originality, played in Ryerson’s evolution! Kudos to the Ryerson Centre for leaving us this little historical gem. Truly a must read for graduates and those of us who worked at Ryerson and left a piece of our heart there.

—TERRY GRIER, Ryerson University President (1988–1995).

***Together For Change* is a unique record of student initiatives and involvement at Ryerson University.** Since its beginnings as a new type of post-secondary school in post war Ontario, Ryerson has transformed itself repeatedly and evolved into a major comprehensive city university with a reputation for relevance, entrepreneurship and innovation. Students, who have always been central to the University’s mission, have helped shape the culture of the Ryerson community. With a personal, insightful style, Dr. Stagg chronicles the activities of student government, student clubs and societies and the student press over their 65 year history with particular emphasis on the challenges and successes in their long quest for a student centre. A must read for any of us, students, staff or faculty, who wandered the familiar halls of the institution whose current by-line appropriately reads “Everyone Makes A Mark”.

—DENNIS MOCK, President Nipissing University (2003–2009),
Ryerson University Vice-President Academic (1989–2000).