

Exercising Arctic Institute Citizenship

In this *Arctic* we return to a trusted format that harkens back to the first issues of the journal in the late 1940s. We are once again combining news of Arctic Institute members, essay format contributions on topics of immediate interest to our readers, and yes, even a cartoon, with the usual *Arctic* staples of peer-reviewed papers, book reviews, and the occasional Arctic profile. In this manner the entire message of the institute can find a safe harbour in one publication, and over time *Arctic* will demonstrate a broader appeal, especially to those members whose love of things northern is less scientific than topical, familial and geographic. We want all of our members to find pleasure in their affiliation through reading *Arctic*.

We have made this decision for many reasons. Regular readers of our *Annual Report* will have noticed that federal support for scholarly publications has plunged, and *Arctic* has not been spared the experience. We have lost 75% of our publishing grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and all of our support from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. In spite of this, we have maintained the support of our membership at the continuing level of about \$90 000 per year, and are topping up the publication expense shortfall with money from our program trust fund. By carefully stewarding modest annual surpluses over the last 20 years, we have bought ourselves some institutional freedom.

In the face of government deficits, university budget cutbacks, and the demise of most federal support for scholarly publishing, we continue to publish. And we should celebrate the ability of the institute to do so. This celebration is what Sir Ralf Dahrendorf, the noted Oxford proponent of civil society, calls for “whenever a university or research institute obtains independence” (1990:26). Dahrendorf, and most recently John Ralston Saul (1994) in Canada, argue strongly that civil society institutions more than ever must resist the blandishments of corporatism and defend and support the common good. By definition this is the role of the citizen, the fundamental unit of civil society. As members of the Arctic Institute, we constitute the supporters of a 52-year-old charter member of Canadian and American civil society—one with a conspicuous role in the support of northern scholarship. It is entirely appropriate that our capacity to publish for the common good is unrestricted by government grants or corporate largesse, and the notional ties to policy and profit that they convey. When you hold your copy of *Arctic* in your hands and read its contents, you are exercising a fundamental citizenship right in civil society.

It is only natural, therefore, that we should encourage more citizens to join the membership. And in this cause we have decided to broaden the content appeal of *Arctic*. We encourage you to write, phone, fax or e-mail your opinion of these changes to us in Calgary. Tell us what topics you want to see more coverage of; advise us when what we publish rankles; write articles for us when you have something to say to the membership; enjoin others in our cause.

From now on, the first page of *Arctic* will contain a commentary on some aspect of northern research and publication for the membership. Here again we welcome your participation in the editorial process, perhaps as writer and certainly as reader. In the spirit of the early numbers of *Arctic*, we now invite you to read on, as member, citizen, and devotee of the North.

REFERENCES

- DAHRENDORF, R. 1990. Threats to civil society, East and West. *Harper's Magazine*, July:24–26.
SAUL, J.R. 1995. *Unconscious civilization*. Concord, Ontario: Anansi.

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