

# THE *Quality Times*



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Strike Bulletin of OPSEU Local 655  
Cambrian College Academic Personnel

## Negotiations Update

The teams are meeting today. See accompanying stories and go to the OPSEU website for the latest on bargaining. [WWW.OPSEU.ORG](http://WWW.OPSEU.ORG)

## Laurels

On Wednesday, Seija Korpela prepared a wonderful chili for the picket team at Norcat, with cornbread, cookies and french stick! Very good for morale on a cold day.

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Herb Doucette, a retired elementary school teacher whose wife is an OPSEU member (not our local), gave us coffee and donuts. Very kind!

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Crystal North donated boxes of bottled water and had them delivered to all the picket lines and to strike headquarters.

## Just scary



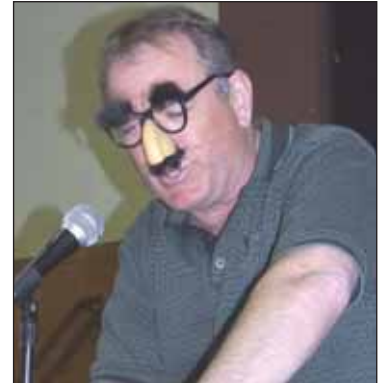
Sometimes you just never know what you're going to see at one of our meetings.



Members talk things over while waiting for the next speaker.



John Closs addresses Friday's gathering at the Navy League Hall.



Ivan Strikin gives his version of the news to the membership.

## Bargaining teams back at table today

It's back to the bargaining table. After meeting separately with College and Universities Minister Chris Bentley on Friday, and despite the same offer from management being on the table, the two teams were to be back at the table this morning.

"This does not mean there will be a settlement, but it is an important step and a step that we have been asking for from the beginning," OPSEU Local 655 President John Closs told the membership during Friday's gathering at the Navy League Hall.

The government had to get involved and "force management to bargain in good faith," Closs said.

He stressed that the reason the government has gotten involved is because of the efforts and determination of the membership.

"At every turn, management has resisted our efforts to address the decline in the quality of education. While our bargaining team focused on trying to achieve a settlement, management planned for a strike.

"Well as with many of their plans, their efforts to portray faculty as greedy and uncaring have failed miserably in the public eye."

As well, Closs said, management's so-called semester completion strategy has been dismissed as a "transparent and ridiculous sham" and only exposes their lack of respect for faculty and students.

Illustrating Cambrian's own misplaced priorities, the local president noted, based on Bob Rae's findings, the government had given additional funding aimed at restoring quality to the college system.

Some of that funding, he explained, is tied to accountability agreements. In 2005-06 Cambrian received over \$2.2 million that the college was required to account for. In the agreement, it states the college hired only four

new full-time faculty last year, while at the same time hiring four new full-time administrators.

"Our students do not need more administrators, they need more faculty and more quality time with their faculty."

Closs thanked the membership for their commitment and efforts.

## OPSEU release on bargaining

**Editor's Note: This is the official OPSEU release given out Friday, March 17.**

Contract talks between OPSEU and Ontario's colleges are set to resume on Monday, March 20 at 9:30 a.m.

The news comes after management and the union met this morning (in separate meetings) with Chris Bentley, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

"We hope that management got the message from the rallies [on March 16], both our rally and the students' rally," said OPSEU bargaining team chair Ted Montgomery. "We hope that they got the message from the minister, and we remain optimistic that they'll put a serious and reasonable offer on the table."

The union was prepared to resume talks today, but management proposed Monday, Montgomery said.

"We're willing to meet all week if negotiations are progressing," he said. "If there's no new offer, then obviously they haven't got the message yet, and even greater government involvement will have to be brought to bear."

Referring to management's "semester completion strategy" to save students' semester, Montgomery said, "We say there is a semester completion strategy: settle. And that's done by dealing with the quality issues."

Visit Local 655's Website for more information

[WWW.OPSEU655.CA](http://WWW.OPSEU655.CA)

Strike Headquarters Phone: 521-1530



Getting out the message.



A sign for the times.

**Joke of the day**

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted: "Excuse me, can you help? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied: "You are in a hot air balloon, hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

"You must be an engineer," said the balloonist.

"I am," she replied. "How did you know?"

Well," answered the balloonist," everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is, I am still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help so far."

The woman responded: "You must be management."

"I am," he replied. "But how did you know?"

"Well," said the woman, "you don't know where you are, or where you are going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault."

**Rally participants bring back message of solidarity**

For a number of Cambrian College and College Boreal faculty, Thursday's bus trip to Toronto's OPSEU rally in Dundas Square was just the boost they needed. They brought their message of solidarity back to the picket lines and the general meeting on Friday.

"It was very positive; very uplifting. We felt a groundswell of support." Carol Prechotko, faculty in the Developmental Services Worker program at Cambrian, was amazed at the turnout she saw. "As we marched on, we asked police officers on the route how many people were in attendance, and they estimated about 5,000 people were there. College and university students spoke about supporting our position to better not only their situation, but future students' as well. I felt, 'we're not doing this for nothing.' Many people support us."

And she's right. Representatives from the Canadian Federation of Labour, the Catholic Elementary and Secondary School Teachers Federation, the Elementary Public School Teachers Federation and University of Toronto faculty were on hand to lend their numbers and support to the cause of quality education.

"It was so well organized," said Pierrette Paxy, faculty in the School of Business, Media and Creative Arts.

"While we were marching, we had a drummer that never missed a beat. It was so neat to see all of the creative signs that the college faculty had come up with. Signs like 'quality education' and 'we miss our students' could be seen everywhere. It was empowering...powerful. We were all walking together because everyone there believes in our cause. We're not alone."

This message has been sent, and received, loud and clear as both sides agreed to get back to the bargaining table on Monday. At our general meeting today, our local received words of praise from former OPSEU Local 655 President Bill Kuehnbaum.

"The way the local and its members have pulled together on this is fantastic," he said. "Kudos to the executive and to your members."

A former vice president-treasurer of OPSEU and a member of many OPSEU bargaining teams, Bill has seen a lot of strikes in his career.

"In this strike, the fact that management continues to target workload has made it impossible for there not to be a strike. For 20 years, management has been trying to roll back the workload articles, and as long as workload is on the table, faculty has to fight for it."



Our gang in Toronto.

**Devalue my work; devalue me – professor says in letter**

**Letter to Quality Times**

Never before have I felt so disrespected as I do now. My education and experience are deemed replaceable by managers, some of whom could benefit from my tutelage themselves, and "other professional faculty," whoever they may be.

What started out as a fight for my students and for better education has resulted in a fight for respect.

No matter what the discipline, faculty come with

years of experience in the field. But beyond that, it takes years of teaching to develop the skills necessary to impart that knowledge and train a new generation.

To say that anyone can do what we do, that students can be served adequately without us, is a slap in the face.

This is my strike reality, and it has changed me.

*Halynka Honeczarenko  
Professor*