



THE *Quality Times*

Number 13
March 23, 2006

Strike Bulletin of OPSEU Local 656
Cambrian College Academic Personnel



Negotiations Update

The latest round of bargaining entered its third day Wednesday. There was still a news blackout at QT's press time.

Go to the OPSEU website for the latest on bargaining.
WWW.OPSEU.ORG

Laurels

OPSEU 623 (MNR Airport) delivered juice and water to our lines.

...

Jean-Guy Robichaud brought some Bailey's Cakes to strike HQ. He baked them himself and it was all one could do to have just one. We have to share, you know.

...

Starbucks manager Julie donated coffee and hot apple cider to our lines.

...

Manitoulin Transport has donated the firewood for our burn barrels. Also, thanks to faculty member Mike Hastie for picking it up and delivering it to the lines.

...

Cora V. brings coffee to the line every day, without fail.

...

Tony S. brings goodies on a regular basis.

Story update

In an update to the Cambrian accountability agreement for 2005-06 story that ran in Quality Times #10, the union has learned that seven new faculty were hired and three managers.

Nontaxable

Strike pay is not taxed. It should not be included as income.

OPSEU 656 arrives at line

They say there is strength in numbers. On Wednesday at noon, at least 50 support staff from OPSEU Local 656 were met with cheers of enthusiasm and signs of thanks and solidarity from those out on the lines.

"We're here to show our support, and believe me, we had no problems finding people to come out this afternoon," said Katherine Hilyer, president of OPSEU Local 656. "We're concerned about the length of the strike, and it's impact on you."

"This is wonderful", said Sherry Gervais, a faculty member picketing at the NORCAT entrance of the college. "I miss them, and knowing



An inspiring sight! OPSEU 656 members come to show support. that they're here supporting us makes Janet Binette, of the School of Nursing. "They even fixed the weather for us today."



Really cooking!

A 'La Motley Crew' breakfast

Wednesday morning, members of the Lamothe Street picket line turned their laneway into a drive-thru... literally! Upon hearing tales of pancake breakfasts on other picket lines, 'La Motley Crew' decided to take matters, and breakfast, into their own hands.

"One person brought a cook stove, another brought eggs and bacon, and it just went on from there," explains picket captain Mary-Lou Trowell. Picketers found the boost in morale

particularly appetizing.

"We've got coffee, homemade egg McMuffins and homemade cinnamon buns by Mary Boivin, the queen of 'La Motley Crew.'"

Picketers gathered around to share the responsibilities of manning the cook stove, with one industrious member cooking eggs over the open fire. "It's like Survivor, only no one's going to vote me off the island!"

Well into our third week of the strike, spirits and camaraderie continue to remain strong.

Plan to attend

Today at 4 p.m. we will be gathering for a rally at the main entrance as part of a provincewide day of rallies to show solidarity.

Other education unions and labour councils have been invited to join us.

There will be speakers and, possibly, even a bit of entertainment.

...

LUFA joins us Friday

LUFA (Laurentian University Faculty Association) members will be joining us on the picket line at 10 a.m.

Make sure to welcome them as they show their solidarity in our fight for quality.

LUFA members know the struggles we face in trying to deliver a quality education in these challenging times.

...

Time to relax for a bit

After another week on the picket line, it will be time for a brew or two Friday afternoon.

Picket lines will only be up from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday. Your Picket Captain will give out your Friday hours.

In the afternoon, interested members can meet at the Trevi on Lasalle for a bit of refreshment.

Visit Local 655's Website for more information

WWW.OPSEU655.CA

Strike Headquarters Phone: 521-1530

Eleven things I have learned from the strike

1. There is a real difference between faculty and management. I used to think we were all on the same page.
2. Dressing warmly is key to a successful picketing experience.
3. Small acts of kindness – hot coffee, soup, a smile – are precious.
4. I need my daily dose of camaraderie from my picket “mates” to keep my spirits up throughout the week.
5. Being on the union executive is not as glamorous as it looks! (They work darn hard – thanks ladies and gentlemen!!)
6. Cambrian faculty can pull together like a well oiled machine and are a force to be reckoned with.
7. Port-a-potties *can* blow over in the wind.
8. Being united in a common purpose is as warming to the soul as the fire barrel is for my toes
9. Much of the general public does not understand or appreciate what it is that we do. That includes any management who think we can be so easily replaced.
10. Where there’s a will – there’s a way. Picketing sites have been enhanced with fire barrels, port-a-potties and wind shelters thanks to the talents and help of many people.
11. Michel Blanchard really does have a costume for every occasion.

Carol Prechotko



On right, M&M try to give people driving through the main entrance picket line a clearer view of things, in more ways than one. On left, our innovative members as they normally look. Would you want them to clean your windshield?

Giving people a clearer view of things

On Wednesday, Mike Blanchard and Mike Mulvihill decided it was time for them to clean up their act.

Together, they came up with a creative way to invite motorists to stop and chat when crossing the picket lines. Armed with a squeegee and a smile, Mike and Mike engaged students and support staff alike in some friendly conversation.

“We saw dirty windshields and we thought it would be a creative way to get people to slow down. I clean and Mike (Mulvihill) talks to them. If he wants to talk longer, I clean slower!”

Response to this seemingly small act of kindness has been overwhelming. Drivers and passengers of vehicles are pleased that

faculty are approaching them in such a friendly manner, and the dynamic duo offer no shortage of jokes and relevant information about the strike.

“We’ve actually been offered tips...but we don’t take them. I’d have to claim it on my income tax!” jokes Mike Blanchard. “Someone told me ‘don’t quit your day job!’”

Picketers have noticed an increase in student traffic over the last few days, and although management’s Semester Completion Strategies are being revealed, students continue to ask questions of striking faculty members.

“They are concerned and they’re always asking us if there’s any more news on the negotiations. They want to get back into the classroom.”

Members on the line share anxieties and memories of strikes past

With negotiations continuing under a media blackout, newer OPSEU 655 members are looking to experienced faculty for support and advice on surviving their first strike.

“It’s been an emotional rollercoaster,” says Carol Prechotko, faculty in the Developmental Services Worker program. “I don’t think that anyone can appreciate what we’re going through unless they’ve actually been on picket lines.”

It is difficult to explain to spouses, friends, family and on-lookers the anxiety, frustration and emotion associated with foregoing a regular paycheque to fight for a cause that means so much to you, and thousands of potential students in the future.

“The best therapy,” Carol continues, “is to come to the picket lines and talk to other people, because they know what you’re going through.”

John Moon, a professor in the Electronic Engineering Technology program, remembers all too well the strikes in 1984 and 1989.

“The last two strikes were in the fall and the weather wasn’t nearly as bad. There was no

need for fire or shelter because we just didn’t need it. The worst weather conditions we faced were rain.”

John compares previous strikes with the one

“It’s been an emotional rollercoaster. I don’t think that anyone can appreciate what we’re going through unless they’ve actually been on picket lines.”

we’re facing today.

“My recollection is there was more confrontation on both sides. People were trying to cross the picket lines because the colleges were still trying to run night programs. Students were trying to come in and faculty was trying to slow them down. This time around, it’s definitely a different attitude.”

John praises the character of the current striking faculty.

“What impresses me most is the colder and

windier the weather, the higher the spirits. You see the effects of acts of kindness (referring to Mike & Mike’s squeegee initiative), and people are stopping, grinning and laughing. We are with a super group of people.”

Ray Rodda, professor in the School of Business, also called up memories from the previous strikes.

“The workload formula came out of the first strike (in 1984) and that changed the situation a great deal. There was no control of what management could do. I think that they were quite surprised when the arbitrator came out with a workload formula in our favour.”

With negotiations continuing at press time, and the Legislature due to begin sessions tomorrow, faculty remains optimistic that the end is near, and wonder how they will prepare for life in the classroom after the strike.

Carol Prochotko wonders: “Will we be debriefed after the strike? How do we react to student questions, and will students be angry or accusing?”

More questions arise as faculty and students wait for answers from both sides.