



THE BEACON

SEPTEMBER 2013 • ISSUE NO. 2

NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (CUPE) LOCAL 3908

Your Union, Building Partnerships: Locally, regionally and internationally

Andy Cragg, General Vice President



CUPE3908 supports Bangladeshi workers' rights campaigns (Photo: Amnesty International)

Being a union and acting together as members of our union is about more than just bargaining for better wages and working conditions. As a social organization, we can play an active role in leading and supporting change at a variety of levels. With this mindset, over the past few months CUPE 3908 has confirmed its support for a variety of collective initiatives ranging from the local level to the global level.

Locally, we recently became the first trade union to join the Peterborough Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration (PPCII). This organization is comprised of over 100 individual and organizational members, ranging from the Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough, to the Workforce Development Board, to the City

of Peterborough. Through its collaborative approach – bringing stakeholders and community leaders together to discuss immigration – the PPCII aims to “promote, advance and support coordinated immigrant integration in the Peterborough community,” based on the belief that “immigrant integration is essential for long-term social, cultural, economic and environmental prosperity in the Peterborough region.” Check out www.ppcii.org for more information.

We also recently re-joined the Peterborough District Labour Council (PDLC), a local organization comprised of representatives from various local workplaces. The PDLC (www.ptbolabour.ca) supports local unions, organizes labour-related events, and works

Continued on p.3

Grad Studies Cuts aren't 'Unfortunate'

Andrea Samoil, Outgoing Unit 2 VP

No one should say that it is unfortunate that the grad studies budget has been cut by over \$150 000 by the university. To say that a deliberate budget choice is unfortunate implies firstly that there is no agent, no actor, no board of governor members or presidential advisory committee who chose to allocate \$150 000 less to graduate student programs and graduate students. Secondly, to claim that it is unfortunate implies that the university budget is like an act of nature and nothing can be done to change it.

To say that it is merely unfortunate that the grad studies budget has been slashed is to accept that budget cuts are normal rather than what budget cuts are: a call to action. The Trent Graduate Students Association has initiated a letter writing campaign. More active protest will undoubtedly be needed and Trent University students have a proud history to draw inspiration from: student strikes, occupying the president's office, interrupting senate and board of governor meetings, satirical articles in local newspapers, rallies and marches on and off campus, and much more.

How would you like to get our funding back?

(TGSA contact: Stephanie Dotto stephaniedotto@trentu.ca)

Also In This Issue:

- Contract Faculty Bargaining (p2)
- Labour History Tour (p3)
- Events (p4)
- Rights and Benefits (p4)

2013: A Bargaining Year for Contract Faculty

Contract negotiations to begin with proposal exchange on Sept.27th

Stephen Horner, President

On September 27, 2013, the CUPE3908 Bargaining Team will meet with the Employer to exchange proposals. This is the first step in negotiating our next contract. Bargaining is our opportunity to identify our needs and find ways to address them. Past rounds have enabled us to establish **professional development funding** for our members, provide (admittedly limited) **health benefits**, and gain a measure of job security through a fair **Right of First Refusal** process. Without Collective Bargaining, we wouldn't have these rights.

The proposal exchange that begins the formal process requires both sides to prepare a list of all the amendments they'd like to make to the current Collective Agreement. For the Union, this means turning the demands of members--e.g. "greater job security"--into specific language designed to achieve those goals. At the bargaining table, we explain our rationale and respond to concerns that

the Employer may raise about the impact of proposed new language.

Before proposals are developed, the bargaining team begins the process of consulting with members. Our initial bargaining survey was conducted at the beginning of the summer. The survey was an open-ended questionnaire that resulted in members voicing a wide range of concerns. Some concerns that were widely shared include the lack of orientation and mentoring, job insecurity, and 'just-in-time' hiring practices that leave no time for preparation (for more info, see our website cupe3908.org). In addition to survey results, the bargaining team relies on previous survey data, wage and benefit comparisons with other Universities, and concerns raised by members informally and through the grievance process during the previous contract.

Based on this research, the team establishes a list of bargaining priorities and goals, which is presented to the membership for approval.

September Bargaining Meetings:

The bargaining team will present the list of priorities they have developed to the membership for debate and approval. These meetings are also an excellent opportunity to learn

more about your rights and benefits, such as the Right of First Refusal and the Professional Development Fund. We look forward to seeing you!

al. This step will happen in September (see meeting dates below). Currently, in addition to the September date for exchanging proposals, we have tentative bargaining dates booked in October and November.

Members can offer input and ask questions at any time--the bargaining team can be reached by email at bteam@cupe3908.org (Just to be clear, the 'b' stands for bargaining. There is no 'a-team' that we're holding back). The bargaining team will keep members informed throughout the process, with key updates via email and regular postings to our website.

New this year, we have the ability to conduct ratification votes by electronic ballot. This change to our bylaws will save significant resources--previously we were required to mail out a package containing all of the agreed changes to the Collective Agreement, along with a ballot and a stamped envelope for its return. ☞

Peterborough:
Bagnani Hall, Traill College.
Tuesday, September 17th, 7-8:30pm

Oshawa:
Thornton Campus, TN160
Thursday, September 9th, 5-6:30pm

Your Bargaining Team (funny how they seem to lean to the left)...

Christine Freeman-Roth

Christine has taught in the Philosophy Department for almost 10 years and is also the academic advisor for Lady Eaton College.

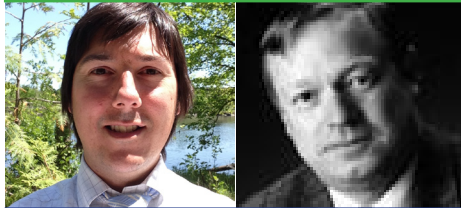


Andy Cragg

Andy is the General VP of the Local, previously serving as the Communications Officer. He is a Frost Centre graduate, and represented CUPE3908 at Senate.

Mitch Champagne

Mitch is a Course Instructor at the School of Education & Professional Learning, where he has worked since 2008, and is the Unit 1 VP.



Peter Northrop

Peter, a long-time member of the university and previous CUPE3908 executive, teaches in the Department of Computing & Information Systems.

Aimee Blyth

Aimee is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Local, has worked in Gender/Women's Studies and ERS, and is also general manager of the Seasoned Spoon Café.



Stephen Horner

Stephen is the President of the Local, teaches in Business Administration, and has previously bargained for CUPE3908 Units 1 & 2.

Partnerships...

Cont'd from p.1

...to "have labour representatives appointed to boards and commissions and elected to all levels of government in our area so that working people can fully participate in the life of our communities." The PDLCC has also recently been involved in efforts to set up a Workers' Action Centre in Peterborough, an organization that would focus on helping those in Peterborough who face precarious employment and unemployment. It would be modelled on the successful Workers' Action Centre in Toronto (<http://www.workersactioncentre.org/>).

At the regional level, in February, CUPE 3908 President, Stephen Horner, was elected to the position of Vice-Chair of the Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee, which is made up of workers from CUPE locals at universities across the province. In this position, Stephen plans to continue his efforts to highlight, within CUPE itself and in the province in general, the challenges faced by contract academics.

We also have initiated an ongoing contribution to LabourStart, an organization that supports campaigns for workers' rights around the globe by connecting union activists and disseminating information (www.labourstart.org).

LabourStart also facilitates online petition and letter-writing campaigns -- its campaign for safer conditions for Bangladeshi garment workers has garnered thousands of supporters. ☞

CUPE Community Fund

Planning an event or project that needs funding? The CUPE 3908 Community Fund offers financial contributions to organizations or individuals working in community development and social justice. Through this fund we seek to provide resources to events, projects and causes that promote collective solutions to injustice and inequality. For more information about CUPE 3908 or our donation fund visit our donations page at www.cupe3908.org/community or write to office@cupe3908.org.

On the "other" Labour Day:

A May Day tour of Peterborough's Labour History

Yvonne LaRose, Office Manager



Nassau Mill site, then and now (Photo: Paul Brown)

Did you know that where the Trent Athletic Centre now stands there was a lumber mill and that the nearby road, Nassau Mills, is named after it? Those are just a couple of interesting tidbits from our local history that I heard for the first time when I attended the Industrial Peterborough tour on May 1st, 2013, led by Trent University's own history professor emeritus Elwood Jones. Presented by Trent Valley Archives and the Peterborough & District Labour Council to commemorate May Day, the tour made nine stops honouring Peterborough's industrial development. For me, two sites stood out most:

Bonnerworth woolen mills -- From July 1st to August 19th, 1937, workers at this plant went on strike for better wages, benefits and to secure their right to organize. Local police and even specially appointed OPP officers used force to break picket lines and escort scabs into the mill, on several occasions resorting to clubs and tear gas.

Ultimately, workers achieved modest improvements in benefits, working conditions, wages and union recognition. However, the significance of women in the Bonnerworth strike is perhaps its most noteworthy aspect. Half the strikers were young women!

Tilco plastics -- Although first organized in 1951 by Textile Workers Union of America

(TWUA), in 1965 the Tilco bargaining unit had still not successfully negotiated a first contract. Therefore, on December 14th, 1965, workers legally began a strike that continued well into 1966, effectively over union recognition. In an effort to force an end to the strike while continuing to avoid good-faith bargaining, the employer obtained an ex parte injunction that banned picketing. The law at the time allowed a judge to grant an ex parte injunction to either side in a dispute without any input from the other side, so the system favoured the side with the financial resources to get to court first. Seeing this inherent bias, labour organizations and the general public in Peterborough showed solidarity with the Tilco strikers and protested the use of injunctions in situations like this. Thanks to the tenacity of our sisters and brothers at workplaces like Tilco, ex parte injunctions were abolished in 1970.

As we walked through the nine sites selected for this particular tour, I was moved thinking about all the workers just like myself packing lunch for their next day on the job or rushing to get to work on time. I am deeply grateful to those who -- on top of their busy, everyday lives and responsibilities -- found the courage to challenge bosses, government and the status quo to make more fulfilling lives for themselves, their families and those of us who've come since. ☞

Upcoming Events

Wed, Sept. 4th: CUPE TA Training Workshop (4pm—Science Complex SC137). Learn how to navigate the student/worker dilemma to make the most of your TA experience. 1 hour.

Thurs, Sept. 5th: TGSA/CUPE Grad Student BBQ (5pm—Traill College)

followed by

Thurs, Sept. 5th: CUPE on the Patio (7pm—Only Café). Look for people wearing CUPE3908 gear!

Sat, Sept. 21st: Peterborough Pride Parade (1pm—City Hall). Join the CUPE3908 contingent in celebrating progress and reminding the community that there is still work to be done.

Tues, Oct. 24th: CUPE Stewards Network meeting (see article, this page). (1pm—Stewart House, Traill College)

Wed, Sept. 25th: CUPE Social Events Committee Mtg (4pm—Stewart House, Traill College)

Thurs, Oct. 3rd: CUPE Pub Night (8pm—Olde Stone Brewing Co.)

Tues, Oct. 15th: Annual General Meeting and Elections (7pm—CUPE Regional Office, 165 Sherbrooke St, Suite 6). See article below.

AGM and Elections: Oct. 15th@7pm

Elections for all positions will be held at our Annual General Meeting. As an executive, you have the opportunity to collaborate with your colleagues on interesting projects that make Trent a better place to work and learn. Executives receive a monthly stipend for working an average 5-7 hours per week—for more details see our website, or give us a call.

All members are welcome to attend the AGM. We recognize that budget approval is hungry and thirsty work, so we make sure there are snacks and beverages. The meeting is held at CUPE's regional office (165 Sherbrooke St, across from the LCBO—the entrance is at the back of the building). The meeting will run from 7 to 8:30pm.

Unit 2 Stewards Network

Stewards play an important role in unions, helping represent the views of members to the Local's elected leadership, and keeping members informed about the activities of the union. At Trent stewards are generally organised by department, with one steward volunteering to represent members in each employing department. Being a steward is a great way to learn more about how unions work. If you have any problems with or questions about your work, feel free to contact your friendly Unit 2 Steward!

If you would like to become a Steward or are in an employing department without a Steward and you have a question, you can contact the Unit 2 Chief Steward, Adam Guzkowski, at steward2@cupe3908.org.

Reminder: Health Benefits Claims

A reminder to returning Unit 1 members that the deadline to submit claims to the Health Benefits Fund from the previous academic year is September 30th. The Health Benefits Fund covers dental, prescription medication, and optical care costs incurred by those members who do not have access to other benefits (e.g. through spousal plan etc). For more information on this and other benefits, see: <http://cupe3908.org/benefits-and-forms>.

CUPE3908 Welcomes our new Unit 1 Steward and Unit 2 VP

Replacing Roger Hunter (on leave), Diane Therrien is a graduate of the Frost Centre and a dedicated social justice activist. Diane has previously served on the CUPE executive as both Unit 1 Steward and General VP.

Steven Martin will take over from Andrea Samoil as the Unit 2 VP. Steven is an MA candidate in the History Program, where he has also worked as a TA. His commitment to workers' rights is reflected in his journalistic and policy work.

Outgoing Unit 2 VP Andrea Samoil served on the executive since August, 2012. We thank Andrea for all of her hard work on behalf of Unit 2 members, and wish her the best in the next step of her journey as a PhD student in Vancouver.

[Edit: And welcome to Adam Guzkowski too, who joined the executive as Unit 2 Chief Steward in April!]



CUPE 3908 Traill College, Trent University Box 300, 310 London Street Peterborough, ON K9H 7P4
Inter-college Mail: CUPE 3908 Traill College, Room 203, Stewart House

Drop ins: Our office is located on the upper floor of Stewart House, Traill College, 292 London St. Office hours can vary so it is a good idea to call first. Tel: **705-775-CUPE (775-2873)**