

# LOCAL LINES

Algonquin College

O.P.S.E.U.

Local 415

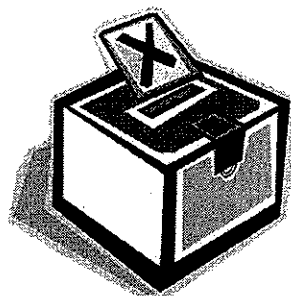
## Justice denied: part-time ballots will not be counted

Jack Wilson with files from OPSEU

After much effort by OPSEU to organize part-time college workers, the August 12 decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board was an unwelcome setback. In her decision, OLRB Vice Chair Mary Ellen Cummings ruled that OPSEU had failed to meet a minimum benchmark for signing up members – a position the union had vigorously challenged. The result is that the thousands of ballots of the part-time staff who voted in 2009 – both academic and support staff – will never be counted.

Although the colleges spent countless taxpayer dollars to contest the vote, the union holds the Liberal governments under Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne responsible for the decision by the OLRB. [Their decision] “effectively takes away the democratic right of more than 16,000 college part-time workers to join a union,” said Smokey Thomas, the president of OPSEU.

“This is a remarkable example of democracy denied,” said Thomas. “This is no fault of the OLRB but of successive Liberal governments. Premier Wynne, who promotes herself as socially progressive and an agent of change, could have made a clean



break from her predecessor but has instead chosen to mimic his position.”

It was with much effort that the union persuaded the McGuinty government to amend the Community Colleges Bargaining Act in 2008 to allow part-time employees to organize and participate in collective bargaining – a right that had been denied to this category of workers for more than 30 years.

In the subsequent organizing drive, more than 9,400 part-time employees signed OPSEU cards including more than 600 part-time academics at Algonquin. The counting of those ballots has been delayed before the OLRB by a series of challenges mounted by college management, notwithstanding the fact that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has the statutory power to order the colleges to recognize the successful outcome of an organizing drive.

Thomas said the colleges spent untold millions of dollars on their challenge before the OLRB – money that could have been better spent on building frontline education services for the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians enrolled in provincial colleges.

“Sadly, both premiers could have acted in the interest of expanding democratic rights but in the end they elected to turn their back on the will of working people,” said Thomas.

Since the decision was handed down, the respective divisional executives of CAAT Academic and CAAT Support were to meet jointly this fall to consider next steps.

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The Editor would like to acknowledge the assistance of

Rod Bain  
Doug Brandy  
Diane Brulé  
Marlaine Finnegan  
Wassim Garzouzi  
Pat Kennedy  
JP Lamarche  
Kevin Mallory  
Jennifer Monk  
Leann Nicholson  
Shawn Pentecost  
Judy Puritt  
Nadine Smith  
Dawn Steiner  
Claire Tortolo

#### Officers of OPSEU Local 415

President	Pat Kennedy	7716
First Vice President	Jack Wilson	5099
Second Vice President	David Haley	5932
Chief Steward	JP Lamarche	2569
Treasurer	Shawn Pentecost	2766
Secretary	Chris Wojcik	5041

Union Office Administrator	Diane Brulé	7716
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#### Stewards

Pembroke		
Pauline Edmonds	Room 323	2715
Shawn Pentecost	Room 104	2766

Perth		
Rod Bain	Room 1	5623

Woodroffe		
Myra Clark	B443B	6077
Serge Desforages*	H204F	7402
Dave Ferries	B402	7755
Scott Fewer	B122C	3242
David Haley	T307L	5932
Dusan Horvat	J313	5516
Pat Kennedy	C215B	7716
JP Lamarche	B334D	2569
David McCue	J215	5750
Virginia Mielke	T323	5769
Mike Nauth*	CA503	5232
Judy Puritt	B334C	5872
Audrey Rosa	E335	5432
Kim Smith*		
Maria Taylor	C230L	5396
Jodi Tilley	J313	5120
Claire Tortolo	B433	7351
Jack Wilson	P112	5099
Chris Wojcik	K117	5041
Joe Yu	CA502	5961

\*on leave

Correspondence should be addressed to  
Jack Wilson, Editor  
c/o Local Lines  
C215b Woodroffe  
Algonquin College  
1385 Woodroffe Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K2G 1V8  
(613) 727-4723 x5099  
(613) 727-7765 (fax)  
or e-mail wilsonjohns@rogers.com

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION

**CALM**

OF LABOUR MEDIA

## Editorial

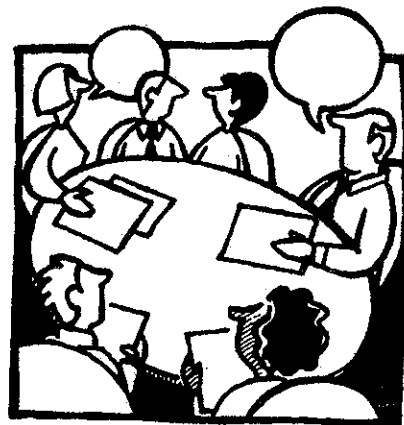
### Do you feel more engaged?

Last November, all Algonquin staff were asked to participate in a college-wide employment engagement survey administered by Entec Corporation, which bills itself as "a global leader in employee engagement, organizational health and employee emotional wellness." The intention was to find out to what degree the different employment groups (faculty, support staff, and administrators) as well as those of different employment status (full-time versus part-time) felt they were engaged in their work at the college. According to the college's own website, "High employee engagement has been linked to increased job satisfaction, improved morale and lower levels of stress and stress related illness."

The respondents to the survey were asked to rate their responses to dozens of questions and were afforded the opportunity to add personal comments as well.

The results of the survey were presented at a college-wide town hall meeting in February of this year, followed in subsequent weeks by town hall meetings in individual schools where participants were asked to reflect on the survey results.

The first indication that there might be a problem with the process emerged via two issues: first, none of the personal comments were published which calls into question why respondents were asked to make them in the



© WILSON / CALM

first place. This concern fed into the second issue, and that was the aggregation of results for completely different schools. For reasons known only to senior administration, the results for the School of Business and the School of Hospitality and Tourism were combined as were the results for the Perth and Pembroke campuses. Despite requests by faculty and some of the managers in the respective areas to have the results reported for the aforementioned schools separately, senior administration refused, which has led to speculation on how poor the results may have been for certain schools.

Following the town hall meetings, the college administration identified three major themes that they felt were priorities:

1. Increasing Communications
2. Celebrating Success/Employee Recognition/Dealing with Low Performers

### 3. Streamlining Internal Processes

All staff were then invited to a second town hall in May, at which time those who were able to attend were asked to participate in one of three groups based on the above-mentioned priorities. There was free-flowing discussion in each group, and afterwards all the participants reconvened in a plenary session during which a summary of responses was provided.

I participated in the second group with its somewhat unwieldy theme, and these were the specific issues that emerged and which were captured by the recorder appointed for our group:

1. Poor compensation for part-time staff
2. Inequitable treatment (again in the case of part-time staff) and lack of transparency with respect to college hiring practices
3. Failure to address "underperforming" staff
4. Inequitable access to professional development

In response to those issues, the group recommended the college respectively take the following actions:

1. Take a leadership role and ask the Ontario Labour Relations Board to count the ballots cast by part-time college workers in 2009 determining whether they wished to collectively bargain (this was before the unfortunate decision in late August by the OLRB which stated OPSEU had not met the minimum threshold of getting 35% of part-time



- employees province-wide to sign a union card)
2. Have transparent and clear requirements for full-time positions so part-time staff can prepare accordingly when job openings come up
3. Have clear descriptions of expectations as well as regular assessments for all staff
4. Provide a meaningful and clear "career path" for all employees

The college leadership stated it welcomed these comments and that the "invaluable" feedback would be given to a "tiger team" of volunteers who would meet over the summer and refine the feedback into specific action items the college could enact.

I attended the "tiger team" presentation in August, and when the team members were introduced, many of whom I know as well-respected colleagues, I thought that the recommendations might actually be substantial and comprehensive. However, I was dumbfounded by the timidity and disconnection of the recommendations, and others in attendance shared with me their sense of underwhelmedness.

However, in talking to one of the tiger team members later, it

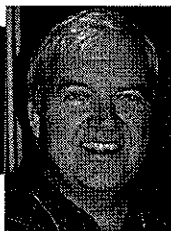
became apparent to me that what the tiger team was given to consider were not the same recommendations that emerged from the May town hall. In short, to continue with the tiger analogy, if the May meeting produced red meat, the tigers themselves were given just the bones, and not necessarily the correct ones at that. Otherwise, how does one account for these tiger team recommendations:

1. Count part-time hours toward Lifetime Service Awards
2. Open nominations for college awards year round
3. Accountability for low-performance

Of the issues of most concern to part-time staff – compensation and equitable hiring practices – not a single recommendation came forward. On addressing the inequitable access to PD – nothing.

For me and others, it was a deeply disappointing report. It is not that the tiger team members did not do their work, for I sincerely believe that they did the best with what they were given. My disappointment, however, resides with a process in which staff took time in November, February, and May to provide feedback on what they thought would be the engagement priorities only to find very few of those priorities in the August recommendations.

The irony in all of this is that a process intended to improve employee engagement has only served to make staff more cynical. Furthermore, many staff are less likely to become "actively engaged" in the future when they see their contributions so blatantly ignored and/or distorted by those in senior administration.



## A word from Pat President, Local 415

### Ministry pushing for “differentiated” colleges

The next round of bargaining is approaching as the Collective Agreement (CA) expires August 31, 2014. The bargaining team will be elected later this fall to be followed by local demand setting meetings. There are significant issues such as on-line teaching but also the idea of curriculum being used in other locations without any compensation or permission.

#### “Differentiated” colleges

Recently the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities has indicated a significant transformation to “differentiate” colleges. We see this as problematic for all colleges as this is rolled out. I asked the college president that a Joint Task Force be established, an action which is provided for in the CA to address the changes to the college mandate. Before he could reply, the College Council representing all 24 colleges responded by indicating that they would not agree to the establishment of a Joint Task Force. And when our college president did reply, he also declined.

The document that references the differentiation is called *The Diversity of Ontario Colleges*. Page 3 makes reference to “co-ordinated planning between neighboring colleges to avoid unsustainable duplication.” The colleges have submitted strategic mandate documents which were sent to the Ministry last year. They read like show and tell presentations. You can review these at <http://>



[heq.ca/an-ca/about%20uspolicyadvice/pages/smsd.aspx](http://heq.ca/an-ca/about%20uspolicyadvice/pages/smsd.aspx). They do nothing to address duplication of program offerings raised by the Ministry.

Then upon reading the strategic mandate documents, ask yourself how the wording of page 135 of the CA is not relevant. The CA states that, “When a significant change to the College’s mandate or objects is directed by the Government, the parties agree to establish a Joint Task Force made up equally of representatives of the Local Union and the College.

The functions of the Joint Task Force shall include making recommendations to

1. achieve the objectives of the changed mandate or objects;
2. facilitate any necessary reassignment of employees;
3. facilitate any retraining that may be appropriate;
4. reduce any negative impact on employees.”

It is quite clear: to be pro-active in the face of significant changes to a college’s mandate, there ought to be a task force.

It is interesting that the college devoted much time and college resources for the SPSP initiative four years ago which had the college examined for possible realignment of resources for services and programs. Consider how stressful that was for all staff. The Ministry initiative is not unlike SPSP but now it is province-wide and you just have to ask yourself, if I am in a program that is offered in neighbouring colleges, what will the “avoiding unsustainable duplication” mean for me, my program, and the community my program serves. And *our* college does not feel this warrants our being proactive in the face of such a challenge?

#### New role: pension plan sponsor

On another matter, I was elected to the CAAT Pension Plan sponsor group as the faculty sponsor starting last month. My responsibility as the sponsor is to ensure appropriate benefits and funding are in place. I will monitor the service provided to OPSEU and OPSEU members. Issues of plan design (“appropriate benefits”) and total cost (“appropriate funding”) are the final say of the sponsors.

You will have already received positive communication from the plan with respect to part-time faculty staff getting immediate access to the plan.

## Welcome to new members

Jack Wilson

Twenty-six new full-time faculty have been hired since last spring. Many have been hired into positions that have been the result of grievance settlements negotiated by the union. We welcome them to the college and to Local 415.

The new hires, as reported to us by the college, are as follows:

- Jennifer Carroll (Nursing)
- Shelley Charlong (Career Access)
- Frank Christinck (Health and Community Studies, Pembroke)
- Caron Fitzpatrick (Hospitality and Tourism)
- Andie Fournier (Child and Youth Worker)
- Sandra Fraser (Centre for Students with Disabilities)
- Wei Gong (Information and Communications Technology)
- Andrew Greenhalgh (Mechanical and Transportation Technology)
- Henry Gruder (Mathematics)
- Chelsea Honeyman (Advanced Technology)
- Sara Jordan (Centre for Students with Disabilities)
- Wael Ismaeil (Electrical Engineering Technician)
- James Lord (Game Developer)
- Angela Lyrette (Financial Services)
- Kirstyn McGauley (Accounting)
- John McKinlay-Key (Cabinetmaking)
- Janceess Pinnock (ECE, Perth)
- Scott Randall (English, Business)
- Jill Reeves (Police Foundations)
- Bruno Rocha (Mechanical and Transportation Technology)
- Jeffrey Ross (Welding and Fabrication)
- Tanya Sadler (Accounting)
- Gabriela Speck (Health and Community Studies)



- Martin Taller (Tourism and Travel)
- Ameet S. Tyrewala (Hospitality and Tourism)
- Heidi Upson Ferris (English, Business)
- Anna Wilson (Media and Design)

The local wishes the new full-time faculty all the best for a long and fulfilling career at the college.

### Questions?

If any new members have questions about their workloads, rate of pay, or any other issue, they should contact the local steward (see the list of stewards on page 2 of this newsletter) or call 7716. They should also check the college digital directory to ensure their contact information is up-to-date.

Finally, new members are invited to drop by the union office (Room C215B) at any time. Diane Brulé, our very capable office administrator, staffs the office from 8:00 to 4:00, Monday to Friday.

## Bargaining in 2014

Jack Wilson

Although our Collective Agreement does not expire until August 31, 2014, the process for bargaining is about to begin later this month. Representatives from the 24 locals will meet in Toronto for a provincial pre-bargaining meeting to elect a bargaining team and to consider how the bargaining preparations will be undertaken before formal bargaining commences in June 2014.

As with previous rounds of bargaining, faculty will meet at their respective locals for demand setting meetings in the new year at which time they can give voice to and vote on what they see as the priorities for the next round of bargaining. These meetings are critical to the bargaining process, for the results from the 24 locals explicitly dictate what the bargaining team may have as their bargaining agenda.

In the last round of bargaining, our local had workload issues (as they related to technology), academic freedom, compensation, and workload for coordinators as the top four demands. Given the freeze on annual increases, compensation may figure more prominently this round.

As well, the college support staff will also see their collective agreement expire at the same time. The fact that both bargaining units will be bargaining at the same time creates a new dynamic and presents a unique opportunity for both units to work in concert to achieve their respective demands.

Stay tuned!

# Why are we in Saudi Arabia?

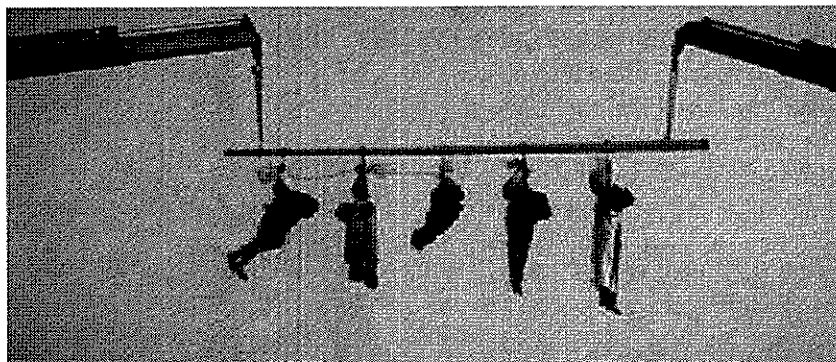
Jack Wilson

Last spring, the citizens of Jazan in south-western Saudi Arabia were treated to a most gruesome sight. Dangling from a crane in full public view and across from the campus of the University of Jazan were the headless bodies of five Yemeni nationals. They had been beheaded and “crucified” by Saudi authorities; their heads had been placed in sacks and tied to their bodies. According to Amnesty International, the beheadings and “crucifixions” took place in front of the university where students were taking exams.

Just a few kilometers away, Algonquin College was preparing to open up its Jazan Campus. Given the state-sanctioned barbarity of the regime in which the new campus is opening, one might fairly ask how appropriate it is for a publicly funded, taxpayer-supported Ontario institution such as Algonquin to be doing business abroad with distasteful regimes, especially if the regime’s values run contrary to the values we hold as Ontarians?

## “Distasteful” partners

Indeed, this was the gist of the question posed by an external member of the Algonquin College Board of Governors in early 2012 when it was first proposed that the college would partner with the government of Saudi Arabia to deliver a millwright program at an all-male school. The governor questioned how comfortable the college was supporting an institution that excluded women. The then chair of the Board of Governors, sensing the discomfort of the other board members, sug-



Five Yemeni nationals beheaded and on display in the city of Jazan (photo courtesy of France24)

gested that it would be appropriate at some later date to discuss overseas partners whom the Board might find, in his words, “distasteful.”

## Ministry complicity

Fast forward eighteen months, and the college is now committing to a deeper partnership with a regime that by all measures runs contrary to three of the college’s oft-touted core values of “caring, integrity and respect.” What is more, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities seems to be complicit in encouraging such arrangements and is poised to sign off on an agreement confirming the college’s partnership with Algonquin’s new Jazan Campus.

By any reasonable measure of basic human rights, how can the government Saudi Arabia not be deemed distasteful?

## Gender apartheid

Would not the fact that women and men are segregated in most aspects of public life, the equivalent of gender apartheid, be reason enough? Would not any state that denies basic political rights to half

of its population be more deserving of our contempt than our business?

Under Saudi law, women are denied the right of self-guardianship, meaning that they must be represented in court by men, and in cases of divorce, they may easily lose rights to their home, children, and finances. In general, women are prevented from doing many things common in other societies. Women are not permitted to mix with men in public places, such as mosques, shopping malls, dining areas, hospitals, and schools, nor to drive or to travel outside of the country without a male chaperone. Women cannot vote. Furthermore, under Sharia law, one man’s testimony is equal to that of two women.

## Religious intolerance

But it does not stop there. There is the blatant denial of religious freedom. According to a report from the US Department of State, religions other than Sunni Muslim are specifically prohibited from being practiced freely, and in fact, Saudi law provides for anyone who converts from the state sanctioned religion to be executed. The same

report states the Saudi government has subjected Muslims who do not adhere to the government's interpretation of Islam to political, economic, legal, social, and religious discrimination. Non-Muslims have faced harassment, detention, and death. Although the Saudi government has revised some school textbooks, many Arabic and religious textbooks still contain overtly intolerant statements against Jews and Christians as well as intolerant references by allusion against Shia and Sufi Muslims and other religious groups.

### Homosexuals at risk

And what about sexual orientation? According to the International Gay Alliance, Saudi Arabia is one of the most homophobic states in the world. In 2002, three men were executed for homosexual practices. In 2010, Amnesty international reported that a 27-year-old Saudi Arabian male was reported to have been sentenced to 500 lashes and five years' imprisonment by a court in Jeddah for the criminal offence of homosexuality.

### State executions

And what of the regime's application of capital punishment and use of state sanctioned death? According to Amnesty International, the regime has already performed 47 state killings in 2013. It is also one of the few countries along with North Korea, Iran, and Syria that allows for public executions. In the case of the Jazan crucifixions as with many executions, the "confessions" of the accused are often extracted through torture, intimidation, and coercion.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of crimes

armed robbery, apostasy, drug smuggling, kidnapping, rape, witchcraft, and sorcery.

And let us not forget what happened to Canadian William Sampson who was imprisoned and tortured for two years and seven months, forced to sign a false confession before he was released, and who died of ill-health and a broken man in 2012.

### Support for human rights abuses abroad

Finally, it should be noted the Saudi regime has had no problems suppressing human rights beyond its own borders. During the Arab Spring of 2011, the people of the tiny nation of Bahrain who called for democratic reform were met with a brutal crackdown by the nation's authoritarian monarchy, supported by hundreds of Saudi soldiers in dozens of armoured personnel carriers. And the Saudi authorities were only too happy to provide financial backing to the Egyptian military after its coup against the democratically elected government of Mohammed Morsi.

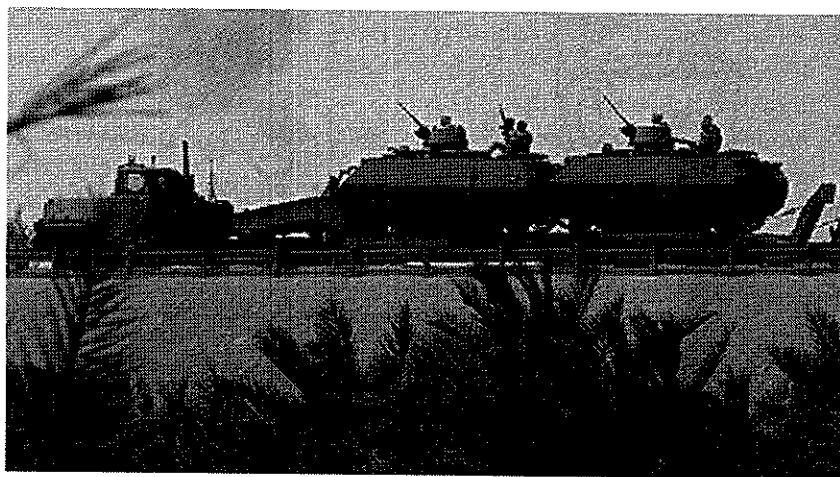
### Time to withdraw

Last month, the Ontario legislature out of concern for freedom of

expression and inclusion passed a motion critical of the proposed Quebec charter of values. This is the same Ontario government that is supporting Algonquin as it does business with a regime with well-documented serious human rights abuses.

Therefore, until there are clear guidelines governing what the minimum standards of human rights ought to be for those countries with whom publicly-funded Ontario institutions seek to do business, the college should either voluntarily withdraw from Saudi Arabia or the Ministry ought to intercede on behalf of all Ontarians and cancel the partnership.

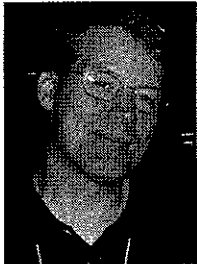
(Side note: repeated requests of the senior college administration concerning the conditions attached to the agreement have been stonewalled. The union, on behalf of concerned faculty, explicitly requested whether any college employees would be barred from participating in Jazan based on gender, religion or sexual orientation. The college would neither confirm nor deny such conditions were part of the agreement.)



Saudi armoured vehicle and soldiers en route to Bahrain  
(courtesy of flickr)

# NSDP (45 Weeks) programs disadvantaged by retention funding

Rod Bain



If you teach in one of the many non-semestered diploma programs (NSDP) at the college, you should be

aware that the college has placed your students at a disadvantage to their counterparts in the more traditional two-year programs.

Back in February, the college sent out an email calling for retention proposals. In examining the structure of the retention-funding program (available at <http://www3.algonquincollege.com/student-retention/>), some very interesting things have come to light.

The first is that the proposals for funding are limited to \$5000. This amount is for the academic year, not just for a term. While it seems to be a very common sense

approach to have a cap on the funds, you need only scratch the surface to realize there are some glaring problems. When looking closer and thinking about the effects this blanket policy will have as it is implemented, it is obvious that it actually creates a second class of students in the college. These students are the ones in the NSDP programs.

By way of example, let's assume that when a standard two-year program applies for retention funding, it is eligible for \$5000 in each of the two years, or a total of \$10,000. A two-year program has a total of four terms, while an NSDP only has three terms. It is here that the problem arises: \$5,000 for a two-term academic year or \$5,000 for a three-term academic year -- who gets the better deal? Whose students are more likely to be retained?

What we have is a system that disadvantages an entire group of

students when it comes to retention.

However, as with many problems, there is a very simple solution. Since the two-year programs are eligible for \$2,500 per term, all programs should be eligible for \$2,500 for every term they have in an academic year. In this way, total expenditures would be as follows:

- Two-year program: \$5,000 per academic year.
- NSDP program: \$7,500 per academic year.

I pointed out this problem when I submitted a retention proposal back in February, but to date I have received no acknowledgement from college management that they intend to address this issue in any way.

If you teach in an NSDP, I suggest that you ask your manager what he or she intends to do to correct this inequity.

## NOVEMBER



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Local Executive Meetings @  
4:00 in P107



## DECEMBER

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???



## You asked us by Jack Wilson

### Copyright

**Q.** I have been asked by a publisher to do a textbook, and I want to do it on my own time. However, I am concerned that the College will have rights to royalties and ownership. What should I do?

**A.** First, get written permission to do this from your manager. Assuming the manager grants permission, it is an admission by the college that all work performed was done outside of the role of an employee of the college, and as

such the college would not have any claim on that work. However, be careful not to use college resources or do the writing at the college as this makes ownership more confusing.

## “Together fairness works”

Chris Wojcik

As a representative of OPSEU 415 and the Ottawa District Labour Council, I attended two significant conferences held by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in April and September of this year. The focus of those conferences was the current “Together Fairness Works” initiative of the CLC. Perhaps you have seen some of the commercials on TV.

The CLC is educating unions and their members about “Together Fairness Works”, which has as its aims to

1. renew union strength and solidarity
2. reconnect members with their unions and
3. remind members about the good things that happen when working people stick together.

The strength of a union is in its membership, but today, unions are under attack. By reaching out to members, unions will build the strength to fight threats, such as the anti-union legislation, called “labour flexibility”, that the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, if elected, promises to enact. To read more about Tim Hudak’s White Paper, go to <http://timhudakmpp.com/wp-content/uploads/Flexible-Labour-Markets.pdf>.

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) response to Hudak can be reviewed at <http://ofl.ca/index.php/sid-ryan-flexible-labour-means-cheap-labour-guest-column-sid-ryan/>

### Labour Day 2013

Another successful Labour Day Annual Parade, the largest in the

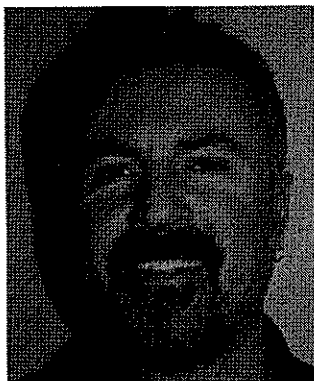
history of the ODLC, took place this year. The Labour Day Parade is the oldest annual parade in the city of Ottawa. It was followed by a picnic in McNabb Park, at which the ODLC served 1500 cobs of corn, 3000 hot dogs, 3000 cans of pop or juice, 1500 bags of chips and 36 kg of cheese. Free festivities of the day included face painting, pony rides, the bouncy castle, the balloon guy, and prizes for all children at the children’s games area. Many local unions contributed to the success: free shuttle service was provided by ATU 279, and the MUSICIANS LOCAL 180 provided live music.

The atmosphere throughout the day was one of solidarity and confidence. As a participant, I felt great pride in being a member of a union in the city of Ottawa.



# Health and Safety JP Lamarche, Woodroffe Health and Safety Rep

## Firearm discharged at Woodroffe



**New faculty rep on JOHSC**  
I would first like to announce that Chris Wojcik has joined the Joint

Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) at the Woodroffe Campus as a replacement for Alain Peyrun-Berron who retired in June after serving the committee very well over the years. Thanks Alain for all of your hard work!

### Discharged firearm

The president of the college announced to the college community, through a memorandum dated August 14, 2013, that a firearm had been discharged in P-building on April 2, 2013. The subject line of the memo was "Setting the record straight." The president apologized for not reporting the incident to the college community as soon as it had happened and acknowledged the fact that communication channels had broken down. He also pledged to work to ensure that this type of situation would not occur again.

At the JOHSC, Colin Bonang, Associate Director of Safety, Security and Emergency Manage-

ment, briefed the JOHSC about the incident. A number of troubling items came out of his presentation. Firstly, Ottawa Police Services (OPS) did not formally report the incident to Mr. Bonang for nearly two weeks. It was only after OPS conducted their own internal investigation of the incident did they report it to the appropriate college representatives. This represents a significant breakdown in the communication process between the college and OPS and an even more serious breakdown in communications with the greater college community. After all, it wasn't until the August 10 *Ottawa Sun* report about the incident that the college decided it better let the rest of us in on the story.

### Failure to report

My first question for Mr. Bonang was as straightforward as possible: Why wasn't this incident reported to the JOHSC? His response was a troubling one. Technically, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), unless an incident is of a "critical" or "fatal" nature, then it need not be reported to the JOHSC. I reminded Mr. Bonang that the OHSA speaks to the bare minimum that an employer/employee is responsible for reporting. Given the college's commitment to being, as the college president puts it, "...an open and transparent institu-



tion..." this incident, in my view, was certainly serious enough to be reported to the JOHSC and the college community as soon as it occurred.

You'll recall that early in the fall semester the college warned us all about some warm weather that was coming our way and to be sure to drink plenty of fluids. I know what to do when it gets warm. I don't know what to do when a bullet is discharged in the college.

When I pressed Mr. Bonang about the seriousness of the incident, much to my surprise, he didn't see it as being as serious as I suggested. No one was injured, so the risk was minimal, and that was that. He seemed to be more interested in talking about moving forward than discussing the past. I mentioned that the faculty member who approached me (very troubled by the incident) and who indicated that the bullet had ended up in the classroom he teaches in thought this was serious indeed. Again, the