

Bite-size theatre packed with colour and punch

They came toward us, singing as they crossed the parking lot, wearing brightly decorated

masks and wigs and carrying a large banner with the words 'Sentinel Players' written in large letters.

In the tradition of travelling minstrels, this fifteen-minute theatre event created by five performers, included characters with names like Sheriff

So-and-So, Princess Apolitical and Money-cock, the Neoliberal capitalist.

The short satirical pieces raised political issues in an entertaining way. They included an interpretative dance entitled "The Death of Post-liberalism," humorous updates and rumours about the strike, sock puppets, Britney Spears and a tug of war between the "social action" half of the union and the "business half" of the union. Social action won!

When a pause was needed to let cars through,

the Players sang the theme song from Jeopardy- to the delight of the Sentinel picketers!

The Players' desire was to provide the picket lines with song and dance, satire and irreverence.

The response from the members picketing at the Sentinel were great. One member said: "What better way to address real issues than through the playful

guise of a minstrel show?" And a particularly enthused CUPE member said: "That singing just makes me want to stay on the line just one more hour. Any group that manages to weave in Tracy Chapman and Britney Spears' songs with the personal ordeals of us on the line is all right by me!"

The Sentinel Players have done over 20 performances over the last two weeks and if we're going to be on the picket line in January, then so will they!

- H.D.



Bargaining Success for CUPE 3913 at Guelph

On November 29, CUPE 3913, representing 1,200 sessional lecturers and teaching assistants at Guelph University, managed to reach a fair deal with their employer. The union bargained for a one-year contract with better wages, benefits, professional development funds, parental and sick leave. Highlights include:

- The ability to apply for professional development funds twice a year (instead of once).
- Improved job security for sessional lecturers,

in that, once a course is posted for sessional teaching, it must be filled by a sessional – not by a full-time faculty member or a TA.

- Elimination of fractional TAships under 0.5.
- 267 hours reported on the Record of Employment per sessional appointment – increases eligibility for unemployment insurance.
- A \$20,000 increase in both units' benefit pools.

Good work, CUPE 3913!

- C.S.



CUPE 3903 #11 Tuesday, Dec 16, 2008

On the Picket Lines

www.cupe3903.tao.ca • www.3903strike.ca • HQ: 635 Petrolia Road • 416 661 2628 • 3903hq@gmail.com

December 11 GMM Report

Approximately 400 members attended the fifth General Membership Meeting (GMM) of the CUPE 3903 strike on Thursday, December 11 at Meron Banquet Hall, Steeles Avenue West.

Membership first heard a holiday pay report from Treasurer Silvia D'Addario, urging active members to self-report hours (those banked in December and those anticipated over the holidays) for the weeks of 22 Dec and 29 Dec to holiday3903@gmail.com. There is an FAQ on the CUPE 3903 Strike website. Cheques will be distributed this coming week on the lines, at HQ, as well at actions. It was also confirmed that there would be three rounds of cheques brought to Glendon during the big BBQ bash on Friday, December 19. If you've self-reported holiday pay by 14 December, you may be able to pick up holiday paycheques December 19 as well.

Terry, a Unit 1 member picketing at Glendon, spoke about the "Red Patch Campaign" and encouraged members to "incorporate this

symbol of solidarity and unity" into our strike. The idea comes from the Quebec student strike in 2005 and shows us as "being squarely in the red" or in debt. At Glendon, picketers, faculty, maintenance staff and undergrads are currently wearing the red patch.

The Executive and Bargaining Team gave a joint statement focusing on the need to prepare for and defeat forced ratification (when it comes our way), the lack of movement at the bargaining table on behalf of the Employer, and their joint support for the Week of Action.

Members also heard the Executive Team report about the importance of the hardship fund, which was followed by a statement and motion read from one member of the 15 members hardship committee. The motion, for CUPE 3903 to match incoming donations to the fund (with a cap of \$25,000), passed; 373 applications have been processed in total and donations continue to flow in. It was also clarified that

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CORRECTION: HEALTH PLAN

The short FAQ on the move from Great West Life to Sun Life reported that those members who had receipts (for drug, dental or vision) issued prior to the December 1 switch can still submit those to Sun Life. That's correct. The incorrect part is that you can submit receipts from as long ago as Sept 2007, not 2008. To reiterate, you can submit receipts from 15 months ago, not just 3 months. We apologize for any inconvenience possibly caused by this printed mistake.



Growing the Phone Tree Project

Keeping all 3,500 member of CUPE 3903 in the loop has been a massive co-ordinated effort, which has required the hard work of writers, videographers and, last but certainly not least, a dedicated phone tree team. Phone tree is a contact network between the members of our local – something like a pro-union call center. Its team is comprised of over 50 members assigned to alternative duties, which have been co-ordinated by Tanya and Deborah.

Obviously, the most recent push has been to keep members informed about the possibility of the employer forcing a ratification vote on a sub-standard deal but, from its inception in the first week of the strike, it's been an invaluable opportunity for members to ask questions which might otherwise have been left unanswered.

While nobody underestimates the importance of the strike bulletin, strike news updates and blogs, the phone tree is a unique form of communication, in that it provides a live, one-

to-one forum for interaction between members who may be unfamiliar with issues and strike procedures and those who are informed and ready to inform.

For five weeks over 50 members working on the phone tree project have been working tirelessly and systematically to inform and mobilize all CUPE 3903 members – a task made all the more challenging by the fact that the list of the union members given to us by the university was grossly incomplete and outdated (less than a quarter of information was accurate and the rest needed to be rapidly researched and updated – just one of the great accomplishments of the phone tree team).

The list of home phone numbers is, of course, confidential, which is why only members of the phone tree project are calling around. But, there's nothing stopping the members from calling their friends and colleagues with the contact information they already have – in fact, additional calls are encouraged. – C.S.

TFAC Works to Improve Processes in the Union

TFAC (Trans Feminist Action Caucus), a group of CUPE 3903 members committed to equity within the union, assembled at the Concord Café on December 12. On the agenda was creating a space for the discussion of gender inequality and racism within union environments. While created for female, transgendered and gender variant union members, TFAC welcomes and encourages the participation of persons with disabilities, persons from racialized groups, Aboriginal persons, lesbian, bisexual, two-spirited, queer and trans persons. TFAC is working to improve our union by facilitating more open processes and

discussions.

At the December 12 meeting, TFAC discussed the correlation between the gendered division of labour and especially aggressive drivers crossing picket lines. Participants discussed action items, including anti-oppression training for meeting chairs and picket captains, as well as an ombudsperson to address Equity Statement violations. In light of Action Week, members also recommended guidelines for mass demonstrations. TFAC members and allies are welcome at the Glendon picket line on Wednesday December 17, 10am-2pm, to continue this conversation. – J.R./L.K.



Neil Smith, prominent Geographer from City University of New York, joined the Shoreham picket line on Wednesday, December 10 at 1:00 pm. He spoke to the group of more than 70 members about the continuing struggle against neoliberal capitalism in today's economic crisis, with a focus on the situation in Barcelona, Spain where students are protesting the privatization of university education. Deb Cowen (UoT Geography) and Tricia Wood (York Geography) joined Smith on guitar as he led the group in song to conclude his talk. Special thanks to Michael Andreae for preparing crepes and roasted chicken for the event.

« Dec 11 GMM, from PG. 1

members experiencing financial hardship after the strike will be able to access funds through the ways and means fund.

A Unit 2 member spoke about Unit 2 specific activities and mobilizing and thanked Units 1 and 3 for their continued support. There is now a phone tree and weblog (www.3903unit2.ca) devoted specifically to Unit 2 issues and activities.

Report were followed by a plenary discussion subsequently followed by a motion period. Among others, a motion was passed to withdraw CUPE 3903 funding from the Centre for the Support of Teaching as long as they continue to hold classes on campus and cross our picket lines.

The next GMM will take place on Wed. Dec 17 at 4:00 pm at the same location. – V.L.

3903 FOOD DRIVE THIS WEEK

CUPE 3903 will be running a food drive at the York Blvd. picket from Dec. 15-19. We encourage all members of the York community to participate in this initiative to alleviate hunger in Toronto by bringing non-perishable food donations. These will be divided between the York Tenants Coalition Food Bank (on-campus) and the North York Harvest Food Bank. To help or for further information, please contact Tom Peace at 041796p@acadiu.ca.

The next scheduled GMM will take place on: Wed., Dec. 17th, 4 pm at Meron Banquet Hall, 1600 Steeles Ave. W.

We invite members' contributions to the bulletin. Please send your stories, photos and artwork to: bulletin3903@gmail.com

