

# NewsBreak

May 2008  
Volume 18, Issue 5

## The Perfect Storm

OPSEU President Smokey Thomas has been holding meetings across the province this winter and spring to discuss what he is calling “The Perfect Storm.”

Smokey’s perfect storm is on the horizon as close to 94,000 OPSEU employees are in the final eighteen months of their collective agreements. A good part of that bargaining activity is in the colleges.

The current agreement for 7000 college support staff expires on August 31. They are currently in the midst of negotiations.

Academic bargaining for the roughly 9000 full-time and partial load faculty will begin this fall with local and provincial demand-setting.

In addition, the government has promised to introduce legislation this spring to recognize the right of college part-timers and sessionals to join a union and take part in collective bargaining.

## College Bargaining Timelines

### Support Staff

August 31, 2008 - Collective agreement expires

### Faculty

Fall 2008 - Local and provincial demand-setting

December 2008 - Workload Task Force reports

January 2009 - Notice to bargain

August 31, 2009 - Collective agreement expires

### Part-Time and Sessional Faculty and Support

Once legislation has been introduced, the process of setting up local structures and demand-setting will begin immediately.

## General Membership Meeting

**Guest Speaker: Jim Turk, Director of CAUT**

May 2008						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	<b>26</b>	27	28	29	30	31

**Monday, May 26**

**12:30 pm**

Humber Room

Buffet Lunch

*See back page for full agenda*

# Food for thought

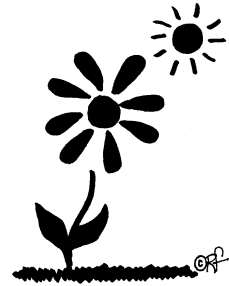
“The competition for grain between the world's 800 million motorists, who want to maintain their mobility, and its 2 billion poorest people, who are simply trying to survive, is emerging as an epic issue.”

Lester Brown, president of Worldwatch Institute, quoted in "Climate change and shortages of fuel signal global food crisis", *The Guardian Weekly*, Nov. 9, 2007, p. 3

## OPSEU is Greening

For information about green initiatives in OPSEU and to read and contribute to the new Green Stewards' Blog, go to

[opseu.org/notices/greeningopseu.htm](http://opseu.org/notices/greeningopseu.htm)



**NewsBreak** is a publication of the Humber College Faculty Union, OPSEU Local 562, intended to provide information and stimulate discussion. We invite your participation and welcome your contributions. All articles and letters should be signed, though in some circumstances the author's name will be withheld upon request. We encourage thoughtful discussion that respects human rights. We reserve the right to edit for libel, length, and clarity.

Articles reporting on union business will be signed and will include the author's position of responsibility in the local. Where an article has the author's name only, the views are those of the author. You may email the editor: [maureen.wall@humber.ca](mailto:maureen.wall@humber.ca) or drop materials at the Faculty Union office – H109, North Campus, ext. 4007.

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OPSEU Website: [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org)



# President's Notes

by Orville Getz, OPSEU 562 President

## Workload Task Force chair selected

The Workload Task Force chair has now been selected and work will finally begin on a study which will form the basis for the next round of bargaining on workload issues.

As you are aware, as a result of our strike in March 2006, Arbitrator William Kaplan recommended the establishment of a Workload Task Force. As set out in a letter of understanding, this Task Force would examine and discuss issues related to the assignment of work to full-time faculty under Article 11. The Task Force has a mandate to complete its work and report to Kaplan by December 2008.

I will keep you updated as information becomes available.

*(See also the report from Ted Montgomery, Negotiating Team Chair, on page 6.)*

## Strike-related overtime grievances

On another front, the arbitration panel has finally heard cases presented from a cross section of the 1200 return-to-work overtime claims. Fifteen faculty made presentations concerning their post-strike workloads. These individuals represented the typical circumstances of workload issues which many faculty faced after the 2006 strike. The panel must now deal with the College's preliminary objections and then must decide how to deal with the matter of compensation. More meetings are scheduled in May and June. We will keep you informed as we receive news on this issue.

## Professional development days

Along with your two month vacation you are entitled to 10 days professional development days each year. If you do not use these days each year, they will disappear as they are not

accumulative. This is a time for your own professional development. Your professional development time can be used in several different ways and at various times during the school year. It is important to use these days at your own discretion during May / June, Reading Week, or at any other times which work for you. Some faculty in the past have attended important conferences during teaching periods by planning ahead with their deans and arranging to get class coverage while they were away. This can be done with prior discussion and planning.

*(See Art. 11.01H for teachers and 11.04B for librarians and counsellors.)*

These 10 days could be used to participate in events offered by your school, events offered in other schools in the college or in events which are offered college-wide such as Showcase. You may also want to participate in events or training sessions at other colleges or universities or in industry-related activities in your area of expertise. You could also use pro dev days for work on your own doing research to help with course development in your teaching area.

Don't give up your rights to these 10 days. If you don't use them you are missing out on opportunities which were fought for and are assured by your collective agreement.

## General Membership meeting

Please mark your calendar for **May 26** and plan to attend our **General Membership meeting**. We are meeting in the **Humber Room** beginning at **12:30** with a hot buffet lunch. *(See page 10 for the full notice and agenda.)*

Please make every effort to be there and take an active part in **Your Union**. 

# Life on the Shoulder: An Appeal for Fairness

by Steve Harrington, Liberal Arts professor on disability leave

Union contracts are living documents. How they are worded, interpreted and applied has major consequences in our teaching careers and in our daily lives. When they are applied badly, the consequences can create hardship. Unfortunately, I am living with the results of such a misapplication.

I began teaching full-time at Humber in 1970. I've loved being a part of the growth of our college and fully expected to be an active participant until retirement. However, in 2002, my world changed. After a lengthy battle with infection, my right leg was amputated above the knee and I was forced to go on Long Term Disability. I am now enjoying life in new ways and my days are filled with learning, coming to grips with both computers and a new prosthesis. However, I am also confronting financial hardship because of the way LTD is applied.

Our contract calls for LTD recipients to be paid "an amount equal to 60% of monthly salary." Fair enough! I could live with that if the contract language was followed. However, the committee that applies the contract has interpreted the language to mean a one-time adjustment to 60% at the beginning of the contract period.

The payment is then frozen until a new contract is negotiated. That meant a salary freeze at the 2003 level for two years, and means a salary freeze at the 2005 level for four years! During this time period, all active faculty members received interim salary increases and yearly salary improvements to keep pace with the cost of living.

The committee that decided on this payment method consists of Council and union representatives, but the power to make this decision resides mainly with the union. It should be noted that members pay the full premium for LTD. Providing the funding for the program is adequate, the Council should

have little concern with the payment levels since it costs them no money. It is also clear that there are adequate monies in the fund, since LTD premiums were reduced by roughly 40% recently.

So, why not pay LTD recipients at 60% of monthly salary and adjust that payment on a yearly basis, as is done for all active faculty? The reason lies with OPSEU head office. The President has never responded to my letter of November 2007 asking for revisions. Discussions with two head office representatives have resulted in resistance and the statement, "We've always done it that way." Months of attempts to redress this situation have proven to be useless and frustrating.

There is a fundamental lack of fairness that OPSEU head office is thus far insistent upon maintaining. Every CAAT faculty member, whether active or retired, rightly receives at least yearly salary adjustments to keep up with the cost of living. Except those members unfortunate enough to be on LTD!

Presently, my LTD payments are 56.3% of monthly salary. This disparity will become worse during the contract, AND I am denied movement to Step 21 because I am not actively teaching, leading to even further financial loss. I can say with authority that the costs of drugs and medical devices are high and increase frequently.

A rough calculation indicates I contributed well over \$25,000 in LTD premiums during my 32 years of active duty prior to my health issues. I badly need that money now and it is being arbitrarily denied.

The situation could be easily corrected and the reason it is not seems to be wrapped in a bureaucratic maze. Why my own union is denying me fundamental fairness at the time I most desperately need it is truly mystifying to me.



# Chief Steward's Corner

by Robert Mills, OPSEU Local 562 Chief Steward



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## Your Fall 2008 Workload

The Standard Workload Forms (SWFs) for the Fall term should have been issued by Friday, May 16.

1. Ensure that the evaluation factors for your courses haven't changed since the last time you taught them. Lower evaluation factors allow for more students in the classroom and often don't reflect the type of evaluation used in the course.

2. The total hours cannot exceed 44 without your agreement. Even if you agree to more than 44 (more than 44 is overtime), the hours can never exceed 47 total hours. The other limit on overtime is that there can be no more than 1 extra teaching hour.

3. There should be no more than 18 teaching contact hours, or 19 only if you agree to do the extra hour as overtime.

4. Check that there are no more than six sections unless you have volunteered to do more than six.

5. If you are required to do Blackboard, ensure that there are hours for curriculum development or extra preparation under the complementary hours section.

There is no volunteer work. The SWF is designed to record all the work that is assigned. Volunteer work is extra, unrecorded, unrecognized work. Don't do volunteer work; it just encourages management to push for more.

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## You asked us

**Q** In your CWMG bulletin on Blackboard you suggested that Blackboard training sessions need to be SWF'd. Can you clarify?

**A** If you are assigned the full training session for Blackboard, that work should be SWF'd. That means if you have a SWF for the May/June period, the hours should be on there under complementary or professional development. If you are expected to take the training in the fall, the hours should be on the fall SWF.

The general training session is about 16 hours, so more than one hour a week on the SWF is

necessary to cover the class work and any homework.

If you are required to put your teaching material on Blackboard, you also need extra time for preparation. Courses that need Blackboard should be labelled *New* so that the preparation factor is 1.1. Also, because preparation for electronic teaching takes more time than traditional preparation, extra time in the complementary section is needed.

If you have any other questions about your workload or Blackboard issues, please contact the Union office at 4007.

# Workload Task Force

Report by Ted Montgomery, CAAT Academic Negotiating Team Chair

At last, I can report that a chair for the Task Force has been selected. It is Mr. Wes Rayner, an Ontario Arbitrator. OPSEU and the Council each originally submitted a candidate to Arbitrator William Kaplan to select, as was set out in his award and the Letter of Understanding. The colleges first submitted the name of an individual who is currently the president of a college in New Jersey and who had previously held university administrative and legal counsel posts in Ontario. The Union then submitted the name of a person who is currently engaged in a study of university faculty workloads across Canada for the CAUT [Canadian Association of University Teachers] as an officer of that organization. He was previously the representative of the American Association of University Teachers on their standing committee on Community Colleges.

Mr. Kaplan wrote on Feb 4<sup>th</sup>:

*While both XX and YY are clearly distinguished individuals, I cannot, in fairness, choose either one because, in my view, the choice of a CAUT employee to be head of this study would not be acceptable to the Colleges, while the choice of a full-time university president with a long background in university*

*management, would not be acceptable to the union. The Task-force requires a chair who is independent of both management and union interests and who would reasonably be seen as such by the parties and the community. In these circumstances, I simply cannot choose as between the two individuals who have been proposed.*

Mr. Kaplan arranged a conference call for February 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss how to proceed.

In the interim, on behalf of the union, I contacted the Council representative to discuss a way of proceeding that might find more likelihood of success. We agreed to each submit a list of names from which Mr. Kaplan could make a choice, and that we would discuss those names first to see if we might find a mutually acceptable candidate. We were not able to find such a candidate but did submit names to Mr. Kaplan. This time, he has selected and the parties have now contacted Mr. Rayner to ascertain the next steps for the Task Force.

OPSEU will appoint an individual with a very strong research background as our nominee to the Task Force.

There is little more to add at this point. We are ready to proceed. The work of the previous workload Task Force will, of course, be available to the revised Task Force. ✍

“The strike was ended on the basis of an opportunity to have an independent third-party examine the workload issues. . . . He [Kaplan] has set up the mechanism to establish reliable findings on a wide range of workload issues. Kaplan used the framework and the list of faculty issues from the 2004 Collective Agreement as the mandate for the Task Force he has established. The first responsibilities of the Task Force are to examine the ‘time spent in preparation, evaluation and feedback, and complementary functions, the impact of e-learning, the impact of class size, and the impact of total student numbers.’ ”

- from Ted Montgomery’s memo to faculty in June 28, 2006, when Kaplan issued his award

# PhacPhone: Back to the future

by Arthur "Two Sheds" Jackson, Slumber College Correspondent



A message from the Dean, May 2011:

Welcome faculty and staff to our annual end-of-the-semester general meeting. This year, 2011, has been very successful for us in the School of Really Silly Walks.

Let's get down to what this meeting is really all about. As we all know, we have been using a learning management system – "**Blackbored**" as it is called, here in the School of Really Silly Walks. We have met with some success since we implemented it back in 2008, but I am a little disappointed that more faculty haven't used it. Anyway, it is getting "a little long in the tooth" and needs to be replaced.

Everyone is aware that our students really don't use their computers that much except for online gambling and Facebook. Those who have computers that is. But we all do know how much they use – no, make that rely on their cell phones and we need to take advantage of that! Therefore, this coming September, we will be using software called "**PhacPhone**" that has been developed by Necrosoft to take advantage of cell phone technology.

This learning management system allows you to place your course outlines, lessons, tests and assignments right on their adorable little cell

phones. Of course there is a little bit of a learning curve for faculty to master this new medium, so we are setting up sessions next week in the Studio for all to attend. Make sure you book a session that doesn't conflict with any of your other duties in May and June. You should be able to put the new software to work this fall. Aren't you excited? I know I am!

There is just one thing that I would like to add to this. For the system to be effective you will all be required to either wear a "beeper" or carry a cell phone with you at all times. You will be "on call" so to speak. Students will be able to reach you at all times for help and guidance. This means, by the way, that each student will be given your cell phone number so they can reach you with ease. The School of Silly Walks will even purchase cell phones for any faculty who don't already have them.

Our students will no longer be deterred by bad weather, illness or part-time jobs. Heck, they'll be able to multi-task you and your assignments from anywhere, anytime. Who needs classrooms? This will change Slumber College as we know it.

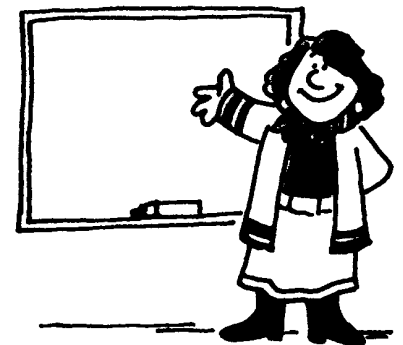
Remember what the great Canadian teacher once said. "The medium is the message!" ☎

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## Ten ways in which a blackboard is better than Blackboard

by John Steckley, Liberal Arts and Sciences Professor

- 1 Easier to program
- 2 Rarely crashes (You really have to lean on it.)
- 3 Does not require complex operating instructions
- 4 Much more user friendly
- 5 Gives better access to students who can't afford their own computer
- 6 Doesn't require a Help Desk
- 7 Doesn't have to be updated or upgraded
- 8 Lasts longer
- 9 Has a much wider screen (It's the original flat screen.)
- 10 Has proven to be effective



# Support team returns to table

*Adapted from support staff bargaining bulletins  
([opseu.org/caat/caat\\_sup/bargaining2008/bargainingindex.htm](http://opseu.org/caat/caat_sup/bargaining2008/bargainingindex.htm))*

Thousands of support staff in every college across Ontario went to work in their Monday blues on May 12 to show their support as their team returned to the bargaining table.

Their message: Everyone needs support.

The provincial support staff contract expires on August 31, 2008. The support staff team, chaired by Rod Bemister, Seneca College Support, exchanged proposals with the employer on February 12.

## What is on the table from the employer?

College management has proposed several changes that would erode the rights of individual support staff and weaken the bargaining unit as a whole. Management proposes the creation of a new category of “term-specific” employees, who would be full-time for a limited term, with no job security, no benefits, and no ability to accrue seniority.

The employer also wants to “enable the colleges to respond and resolve unique issues and circumstances within their own environments.” This language is code for local bargaining, allowing colleges to bargain local agreements that may be contrary to the central collective agreement. The union is clearly opposed to local bargaining, as a strong central agreement and central bargaining provide power at the table and protection during the life of the collective agreement.

## What are the Support Staff priorities?

Key non-monetary priorities for the support staff are to address bullying/psychological harassment in the workplace and to improve job security and protections against job loss through contracting out.

Eighteen more days are scheduled for bargaining before the contract expires:

May 13, 14, 15  
June 10, 11, 12  
June 24, 25, 26  
August 12, 13, 14  
August 27, 28, 29, 30, 31  
Sept. 1 (if necessary)



*“We are trying to ensure there are good jobs at the colleges, not more precarious ones. And, at a time when part-time workers are signing union cards, the colleges are still trying to . . . reduce our job security, while hiring workers with no job security and no benefits. . . . We need to rebuild the college system with good jobs, not contingent labour.”*

Support Staff Bargaining Bulletin, Issue 2



## Legislation on its way this spring

When the Ontario Labour Relations Board declined to order a quick vote in response to OPSEU's April 14 application for certification of college part-time and sessional faculty and support staff, campaign organizers were disappointed but undeterred. They shifted gears and started phoning.

After a week of calling individual MPPs, college part-timers spent the day at Queen's Park on April 29. They came away with a promise from top Liberals that legislation to recognize their right to bargain collectively will be introduced within a matter of weeks.

"The Legislation will be introduced this spring," said Colleges minister John Milloy.

Part-timers from colleges as far away as Fanshawe and Algonquin took part in the marathon 11-hour lobby day, making their case in person to two dozen MPPs.

Cabinet ministers John Milloy (Colleges and Universities), Chris Bentley (Attorney

General), and Brad Duguid (Labour) were among 14 Liberals who stopped by to talk.


"We couldn't have asked for a better reception," said Roger Couvrette, president of the provincial organization of part-timers and sessionals (OPSECAAT).

"It was just a superb day. As the day progressed, our people just got more and more excited and happy with the way it was going.

"We significantly pushed our cause and very effectively advanced our agenda in terms of getting closer to collective bargaining."

Labour Minister Brad Duguid was among those who said the lobby was important to keep the issue on the front burner for the government.

"Every MPP knew that parttimers were watching from the gallery," said Couvrette.

"Every MPP knew we were voting Ontarians who play a role in the political life of this province." 



Part-Timers Sabrina DeGirolamo, Dave Shaw, Candy Lindsay, Sherry King, Roger Couvrette, and J.L. Roy with John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, (centre)

### OPSECAAT sets June 14 date for historic meeting

OPSECAAT is calling on college part-timers and sessionals to apply as delegates to their Annual General Meeting.

For more information about the meeting and for an application form, interested part-time and sessional faculty and support can contact the Local 562 office, H109, ext. 4007, or go to [www.collegeworkers.org](http://www.collegeworkers.org).

**OPSEU 562**  
**General Membership Meeting**  
**Monday, May 26**  
**12:30 pm**  
**Humber Room**  
***Hot Buffet Lunch***

**Guest Speaker**

**Jim Turk**, Executive Director, Canadian Association of University Teachers, speaking on *College / University relationships—opportunities, problems and concerns.*

**Agenda**

- Buffet lunch 12:30-1:30 pm
- Local Elections:
  - Officers  
President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President,  
Chief Steward, Secretary, and Treasurer
  - Local Trustees
  - Delegates and Alternates for OPSEU Meetings

- Guest Speaker - Jim Turk
- Financial Report
- Motion to Remove Cap on Strike Fund

*“That the special 0.25% local dues levy, which was established in November 2004 for the Local 562 Contingency Fund, not terminate when the Fund reaches \$500,000 but continue until it is cancelled or modified at a general membership meeting.”*

- Bargaining discussion

**Please contact the Union Office at extension 4007  
to confirm your attendance.**