

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE EMPLOYEES - LOCAL ONE - ANNUAL REPORT
IS TIME RUNNING OUT FOR AUCE?? (AGAIN!!)

It has been a rather confused and turmoiled year at Local 1. In June 1980, we signed a 2-year contract with the University, our membership having voted to accept a general wage increase of 10 and 9.5% over 2 years, after a month of selective strike action. No other significant gains were obtained in this set of negotiations, other than very strong wording in an article providing job security for our members serving salaried positions in the union. Strategical errors in strike action became evident - selective strike action did nothing to instill a strong sense of participation in our membership, the vast majority not being affected by the strike. Only 200-300 out of approximately 1400 members regularly showed up at union meetings to make the all-important decisions governing the strike. A pivotal meeting of over 900 members at the end of May ended strike action, and we went back to work. There was no mistaking the colour to be of our new contract; it has a black cover, with white lettering. The single consolation of an additional year's respite, provided by a 2-year contract, has been quickly shattered: already, we are going about 5% behind the current rate of inflation; the recurring problems of our totally inadequate pay-grade/ classification system can no longer be ignored, and a growing dispute of marketability vs. "equal pay for work of equal value" currently rages; a trend towards the rapid attrition of our bargaining unit is becoming frustrating, as more and more of our positions are either eliminated outright, or as our higher-level positions are replaced with professional, management-level staff. Membership dissatisfaction is becoming keen: at our May monthly general meeting, a significantly higher than usual number of members turned out and voted to strike a strategy committee to negotiate a wage reopener.....

The trauma of the brief, bitter strike action was felt immediately. We began by battling a strike bill in the area of \$40,000. The Executive was aware of a need for a dues increase, and began to discuss ways of getting both a dues increase and a special assessment to retire strike-related debts passed by the membership. The ongoing affiliation referendum was not out of sight in the background. By August, we were faced with an additional financial burden due to a barely-passed increase in the Provincial per capita tax requirements, although Local 1 had in fact rejected the increase. By September, the Executive knew that the Provincial Executive did not intend to delay the effective date of the per capita increase, although they knew the financial instability of several locals; the Local 1 Executive however, prioritized the stability of the local, and pushed the dues increase and the special assessment to the membership, informing the Provincial Executive that we could only afford to pay the old per capita rate until such time as the dues increase referendum passed. The referendum was conducted in November, having been delayed due to a lack of time at our October membership meeting to discuss the issue of a dues increase, and a series of precedents relating to the amount of vacation pay the union owed the University for picketers. On December 16, the referendum was counted, and both the dues increase (\$9 to \$12) and the special assessment passed. The dues increase was implemented in January 1981, at which point we began paying the full amount of the new per capita rate.

The fall season was busy. The Executive began a project of planning badly needed revisions to our local bylaws to take to the membership. The first bylaw change, which made the two local representatives to the Provincial voting members of the Local Executive, was passed at our December meeting. A Benefits Committee, struck as a result of a letter of agreement signed in negotiations, began the task of obtaining an improved benefits package for our membership.

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October brought announced budget cutbacks, and 1.7% of the University's salary budget, campus-wide, was to be pared away. Numerous positions in our bargaining unit have already been eliminated, and the trend of replacing our higher paid positions with professionals still continues. It somehow feels like such unjust and unfair punishment for such a mediocre wage settlement. It not only looks like the University Administration is attempting to whittle away our wage gains, but it would appear that the University is (at least!) very true to their word: we were nicely informed in 1980 negotiations that for every 1% obtained over 9% offered in a wage settlement, at least 12 AUCE positions must go....So ended 1980.....

So began 1981 with some heartwarming improvements. The Local 1 union office was moved to the Armory building on campus, as per an agreement with the University. We are right next door to the new CUPE Teaching Assistant's local, and the rent is a nominal fee of \$1.00 per year, which will mean a considerable savings in rent. In February a bylaw amendment was passed changing the pay of our three salaried officers to a single rate of Pay Group 4, Step 6 (the former rate was the same as the officer's previous job). A step up for equal pay!! A further bylaw amendment deleted a 2-year limitation on the term of office in a salaried position. A similar move was taken by the 1980 convention for the Provincial salaried officer position.

Still looming in the air was an \$8000. debt to the Provincial due to the unpaid portion of the increased per capita tax from August to December 1980. To pay off this debt would have required yet another special assessment, which was unlikely to pass. It was hoped that the Provincial Executive would waive this debt, however, the Provincial Executive maintained a position of offering a loan. At our February meeting, the membership voted not to pay the \$8000. owing, a position which has recently been reiterated to the Local 1 Delegation to the 1981 Convention.

What does the future hold? Many things will be happening...our Strategy Committee has already had its first meeting to plan a course of action for obtaining a wage re-opener. CUPE 116 is still negotiating, and we can't rule out the possibility of a future strike. We should shortly be getting together our 1982 Contract Committee. Cutbacks will continue. Inflation will continue. Our Bargaining unit will become smaller and smaller. And then, and then, and then.....

Submitted by Suzan Zagar
Local #1 - Provincial Representative

The fall season was busy. The Executive began a project of planning body needed revisions to our local bylaws to take to the membership. The first bylaw change which gave the local representatives to the Provincial voting members of the local Executive, was passed at our December meeting. A Contract Committee was set up as a result of a letter of agreement signed in respect of the first of obtaining an improved benefit package for the membership.

The following pages were submitted by Local 1's Provincial Rep Suzan Zagar to supplement Local 1's annual report and are reprints from various issues of the Local's newsletter On Campus.

The Per Capita Tax Affair

Last August, as a Provincial body, we voted to substantially increase our Per Capita Tax per member from \$2.00 a month to \$3.25 a month. The Per Capita Tax is that amount of money deducted from a member's monthly dues which goes to the Provincial. Per Capita Tax for full-time members was \$2.00 a month as indicated above, and, the average monthly total remitted to the Provincial from this Local was (and is to date) \$2800.00.

With the new increase our monthly remittance to the Provincial should have increased to approximately \$4300.00 a month. But, there was a catch. Our financial situation prevented us from even considering the possibility of fulfilling our new commitments. More often than not, our monthly expenses exceeded our revenue. The strike and its related expenses had depleted our strike fund and we had just completed a successful referendum to retire a major portion of our outstanding loan with the BCTCU. Our liabilities far outpaced our reserves.

What was confronting us was the necessity of holding two future referenda. The first would be to retire the remaining strike-related expenses and to reimburse the University for the holiday time lost by our picketers for the month of May 1980. The second referendum would be concerned with a dues increase which was needed to cover the new Per Capita Tax, the increasing office expenditures, the building up of our Strike Fund, the increased office staff wages for April 1981, etc.

Against this backdrop, the Executive passed the following motions at its September 9th meeting:

That the Executive oppose the Provincial's apparent decision to make the Per Capita Tax retroactive to August and that should a dues increase be approved by the membership then Local 1 will pay the increased Per Capita Tax from that point in time.

Previous to the motion our Provincial representatives had informed the Executive that the Provincial expected that the Per Capita Tax would be retroactive to August. It was the feeling of the Executive that by the time we had presented the request for a dues increase to the membership that the retroactive Per Capita Tax owing to the Provincial would hover between \$6,000. and \$8,000. To repay that would probably necessitate another referendum.

Our primary concern was to have the strike debt retired and to have the dues increase passed -- if such a result was in the cards. Armed with those crucial successes, we could then turn our attention to the issue of the Per Capita Tax retroactivity. During this period in September and October it was the hope of the Executive that the Provincial, due to our financial situation, would agree to waiving our paying of the retroactive amount. As the debate continued during these months, the Executive maintained this position - but we did indicate to our Provincial representatives that at the very least we would take the retroactivity issue to the membership in the form of a referendum. It was our perception that we did not want to torpedo the first two referenda by raising the spectre of a further vote. A constant underlying theme was

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the possibility that the membership might reject a dues increase. If that occurred then we could not consider paying the increased Per Capita Tax - it was even possible that we might have to forego the payment of our old Per Capita Tax rate when our financial commitments to the Local so dictated.

Impressions to the contrary, the early stages of the debate were not couched in anti-Provincial terminology, although on occasion we did issue the occasional storm warnings about the Provincial's future. The Provincial Executive was to have attended our October 7th Executive meeting, but that meeting was delayed to the 28th. At the meeting of October 7th, Susan Zagar, one of our Provincial reps, reported that it was her perception that the Provincial would only go so far as to extend an interest-free loan to the Local to repay the retroactive Per Capita Tax. Unfortunately, the Provincial Executive did not make it to the October 28th meeting at the scheduled time and the quorum was lost. An informal discussion ensued as well as an exchange of financial information. Those Executive members present reaffirmed the motion of September 9th while the Provincial indicated that they would not waive the Per Capita Tax retroactivity for the August to October 1980 period. The discussion also touched upon some of the anti-Provincial sentiment that existed at our Local.

Delays were encountered in the preparation of the referenda. One was our inability to have the issue of the dues increase discussed at the October meeting - there just wasn't sufficient time. We also stumbled upon a series of precedents in regards to holiday pay for the picketers which to us meant that the amount we owed to the University plummeted from approximately \$12,000. to a sum in the area of \$5,000. Ensuing discussions consumed a substantial portion of time. By the time you have this article, the ballots for the aforementioned referenda will probably have been sent to and returned by our members.

On October 28th, Sheila Perret, the Provincial Secretary-Treasurer, wrote to us and informed us that the following motions had been passed:

That because AUCE Local 1 incurred extraordinary strike expenses this summer, which have made it difficult for the Local to meet the Constitutional obligation of the \$1.25 per capita tax increase since the effective month of August 1980, the Provincial shall lend the Local the amount equal to the per capita tax increase portion of the monthly remittance, for August, September and October 1980.

The repayment schedule for Local 1's current per capita tax loan, shall be fixed by the Provincial Table Officers after consultation with the Local 1 Executive and that the arrears portion of the per capita tax increase shall be fully repaid by June 30, 1981.

At our November Executive meeting, the Executive decided to answer the letter from Sheila - which we did at the end of the month. In that correspondence with the Provincial we welcomed them to attend our December 16th Executive meeting and we indicated that our two referenda would be counted. With those results our discussions with the Provincial on the issues in question would be more meaningful. In late November we were informed by one of our Provincial reps that the Provincial had made the decision that at some point in the future it might be necessary to suspend AUCE Local 1's voting privileges at the Provincial.

What had initially been discussed in September was still kicking around in the form of a motion by December. Through a series of misunderstandings and due to the Provincial's handling of the affiliation ballots, a feeling of "mistrust" developed. A cursory glance by the Provincial at our past financial statements
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and an appreciation of our tactical position due to the debts and the necessity of a dues increase would have gone a long way to reducing some of the tensions. For our part, our unwillingness as an Executive to live up to our commitments to the Provincial - at least in principle by agreeing to repay the retroactive Per Capita Tax - muddied the waters. We pointed out to our reps a probable scenario which would develop if the \$5.00 assessment was passed by the other Locals (which it has). We said that we would end up accepting the cheque from the Provincial and promptly returning it as payment to cover our Per Capita Tax arrears.

If the dues increase does pass then our discussion with the Provincial on December 16th will be simplified somewhat - our concern will be the retroactivity issue. If the increase does not pass then we have opened a can of worms. It is possible that our future participation in the Provincial will have to be examined. The underlying theme of the debate over the past few months has indeed been the future of the Provincial.

Ray Galbraith
Secretary-Treasurer

At the meeting held on 11th Dec 1974, the Provincial Executive discussed the proposal to increase the per capita tax to \$5.00. It was noted that the Provincial Executive had agreed to pay the per capita tax arrears of \$5.00 per local. It was also noted that the Provincial Executive had agreed to pay the per capita tax arrears of \$5.00 per local. It was also noted that the Provincial Executive had agreed to pay the per capita tax arrears of \$5.00 per local.

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