

THE

BUDGET

Newsletter of the Association of University and College Employees, Local 3

"All the news that fits, we print."



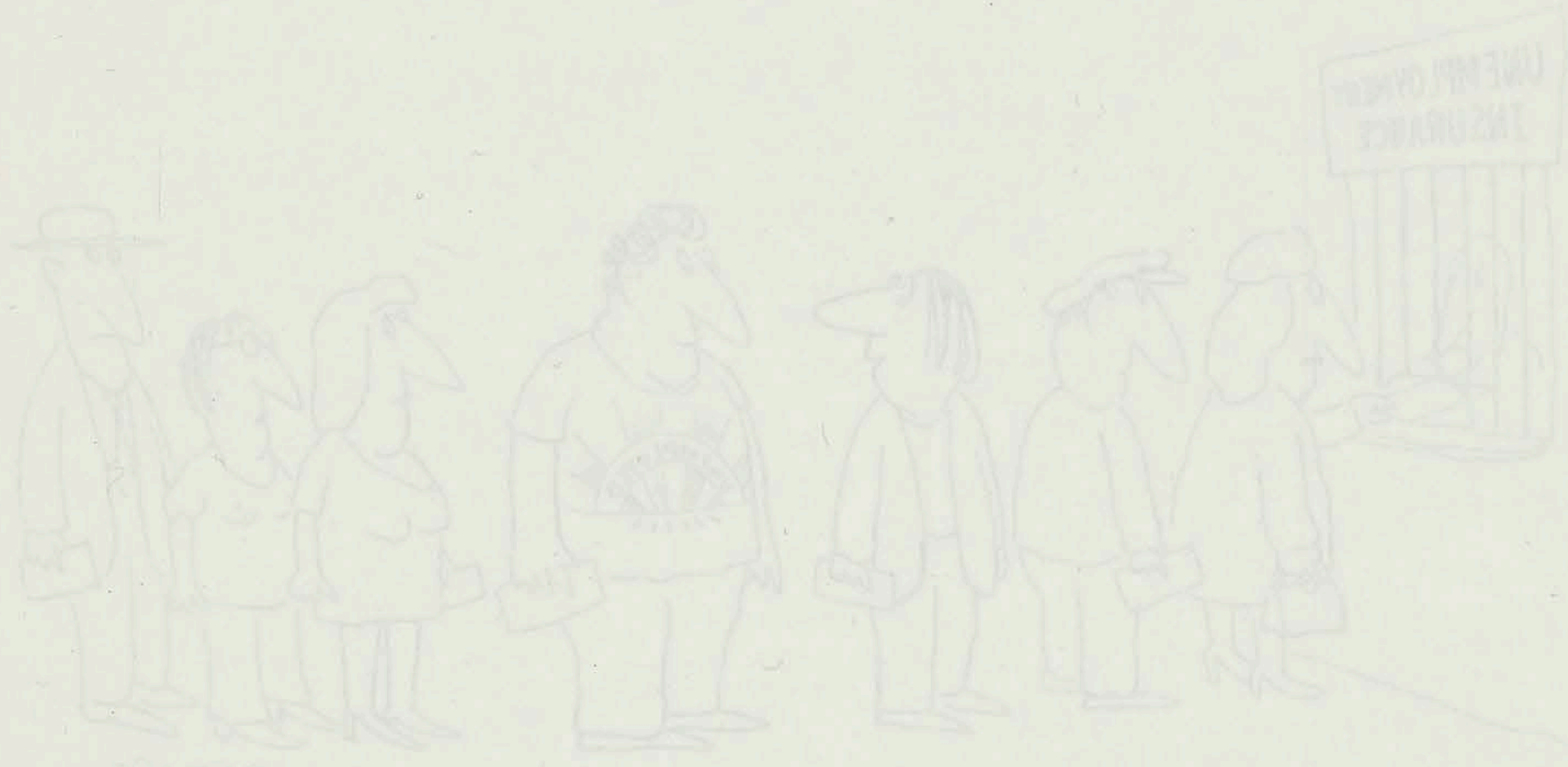
"Gee, where'd you get the nifty T-shirt?"

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Call for more than 1000 copies



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EDITORIAL

"Let us hang together or we shall surely hang separately."

This adage must have been in the minds of most of us at NDU and in the greater Nelson community as we joined forces these last few weeks to pressure the B.C. government--notably the Universities Council and the Department of Education in the person of Education Minister Pat McGeer--to grant continued life to Notre Dame.

Life would come from regular funding and the chance to become the province's fourth public university. Serious doubt about our funding, whether as a public or "private" institution, arose because of the buck-passing between the Council and McGeer and the all too political and evasive "answers" given NDU by McGeer and Council Chairman William Armstrong.

Though McGeer claims to be decentralist, he, with Armstrong, seems to suffer from "interiorphobia," or perhaps from that interesting syndrome, peculiar to the Lower Mainland and especially peculiar to Socreds, known as "screw the interior," more specifically as "screw the NDP strongholds in the interior." It is a malady that may well kill NDU.

As politicians debate our "future," and the university endures what has come to be its annual crisis, one might almost grow blasé about it, almost, simply as a relief from the strain of not knowing whether one will have a job, or a school, to go to in the morning.

But boredom, or cynicism, isn't the danger now, it is something more insidious. It is the gradual breaking up of the unity achieved during the early days of this latest crisis. It is yielding to internal bickering, to putting the blame on each other, as the strain continues, as the evasions, the political doubletalk, persists from Vancouver and Victoria. The power boys would like nothing better than to have us solve their problem for them--and it is their problem, as well as ours--by self-destructing.

The "Save NDU" campaign of a couple of summers ago presented a united front to the NDP and got results. This present campaign, to which the students have lent so much spirit and organization (AUCE, sad to say, was a little slow in joining the struggle), has caused the Socreds to reassess, at least, their easy assumption that NDU can die, that an interior university isn't really needed. The double-talk continues. Meanwhile, let's not break under the tension; let's not turn on each other and self-destruct.

NDU will be saved as a result of a united effort--students, staff, faculty, yes, even the administration (not to mention the town), all pulling--and pushing--together.

NDU will live if the university community hangs together.

If the university dies, we won't have much to squabble over.

GRIEVANCE REPORT

So far most of Local 3's grievances have come out of the Physical Plant, and a good many have dealt with "harmonious relations," "mutually satisfactory working conditions," etc. The substance of these grievances, with examples of the problems, complaints, and general bad feelings that gave rise to the grievances, was discussed with Carl Catton, Physical Plant manager, on 31 January. Here is a brief summary of our beefs, together with a few comments of my own.

The practice of keeping temporary and part-time employees confused as to their status, prospects for a permanent position, hours of work, schedules, etc. This was considered not his responsibility by Catton and referred to the Personnel department. The grievance of Bill Watt, filed some time ago, was successfully resolved by placing Bill in a permanent, full-time position. But the general problem remains, and will have to be looked at by the Union as other cases arise.

Hard feelings generated by the withholding from some employees of keys to work areas, more or less at the whim of Catton. This is not, in my opinion, a good grievance on two counts: 1) if we can't get in to do a job, we don't do it, period. Management is the loser, not us; 2) keys relate to security and accessibility of specific areas, which are management's concern, not ours. The beef comes from the manner in which decisions are made and implemented: very changeably, arbitrarily, and implying some kind of reward system. If we bow out of the whole silly business by not being concerned with it, it loses its sting. That is what I recommend. The alternative is to demand a uniform statement of policy and insist that it be adhered to, without playing games.

Use of personal vehicles. Similar to the foregoing. I don't recommend pursuing a grievance since the time spent in getting around the campus is paid time, and some folks are very slow walkers! But, since Worker II's are compensated for use of their vehicles to transport their tools and supplies, we might ask for expansion of this to cover all maintenance workers, or when specifically needed, or again, a uniform policy.

Lack of supplies. Same as the key business. No supplies, no work. Why grieve? This situation may improve, however, once we have a custodian supervisor.

Large turnover. Catton says it ain't so, we say it is. Stating it in a grievance helps serve notice that the Union holds this manager responsible for the turnover, but I don't see how we can formally grieve it.

Confusion over whether custodians should, or should not, take their breaks in the maintenance shop. This has been resolved with a policy statement to the effect that they should not. How this sits with the custodians has not been determined, but the policy is at least clear for the first time.

Violation of the sex discrimination clause in the contract. A grievance has been brought against the Physical Plant manager because a male custodian was told he could not work in the women's residence. Catton has replied that if the occupants of the residences and the custodians have no objections, he has no objections and will assign men to work in the women's dorm. He admitted it is only his personal opinion that male workers should be barred from the women's residence. It is the feeling of your grievance committee chairperson that we should discuss the matter with resident students, residence supervisors, and among ourselves before pursuing this grievance further.

Failure to post job vacancies. A list of 10 hirings without the required postings was presented and discussed. The upshot of the discussion, which included a brief consultation between the Personnel manager and Catton, was that there has been some confusion about who is responsible for job postings. A procedure, however, was agreed upon: The department manager notifies the Personnel manager of a vacancy in his department; the Personnel manager prepares a posting. A Union representative then posts the vacancy in all departments. It is hoped that adherence to this procedure will eliminate any further breaches of the contract regarding postings.

Emergency advances in pay. The complaint was that an employee had to

request an emergency advance from the department manager rather than (as is the practice) from the accountant. Mr. Catton replied that he has never required that such requests go through him and that he understands that the Accounting/Payroll department handles them. It remains for the Union to verify with Accounting that the traditional practice is in fact acceptable to Accounting.

Failure to allow employees to be accompanied by a Union steward when a discussion of unsatisfactory work is to take place. This is a general problem, and I will get to it shortly.

In addition to the foregoing grievances, problems in the Food Services and Student Services departments are in the preliminary discussion stages.

Some general remarks. It's probably clear from this report that we have a lot to learn about grievance procedures, and that some of what we must learn has to do with technical, contractual (i.e., tedious) stuff. What we should remember is that grievance business is one of the ways we as workers exercise control over our day-to-day life on the job and assert our right to have some say as to the kind of place NDU will be to work for. If we don't enforce the contract, if we don't push our complaints, these questions become the "prerogatives of management."

Here are some notions on how we can get the most service out of our grievance procedures:

1. Use your Union steward. The contract puts it as an option--you may be accompanied by a steward when a discussion of your performance is to take place--we put it as an absolute necessity. Complaints against employees are public property, not private harassment sessions. When the Union makes a case, it goes on record, and so it should be for management. If your supervisor has a problem with you, he has one with your Union, which means he has one with your steward, who should be present during any discussions of problems on the job.

2. Act as though you belong to a union. Airing complaints against fellow employees to, or in the presence of, management is just plain suicide. If a serious problem with another Union member arises, take it to your Union; don't offer it up to be used against all of us. We are quite able to wash our own linen.
3. Be ever vigilant!!! It is a sad fact that some of our managers would just as soon we went away. Don't go away. Pay a lot of attention to how you are treated on the job, how problems are dealt with, and how well the contract is working. If you have complaints, make them without hesitation. The faster a grievance gets into the works, the better its chance of successful resolution.

A final word. The mark of a good grievance setup is that it is seldom used. This is because when a union is really together, it has the power to solve its problems with management right away, without bogging down in legalistic red tape or hair splitting over contract language. We are not that together. We have many grievances to go through, and many other kinds of hassles to go through, before management and we realize that we are part of the running of this university.

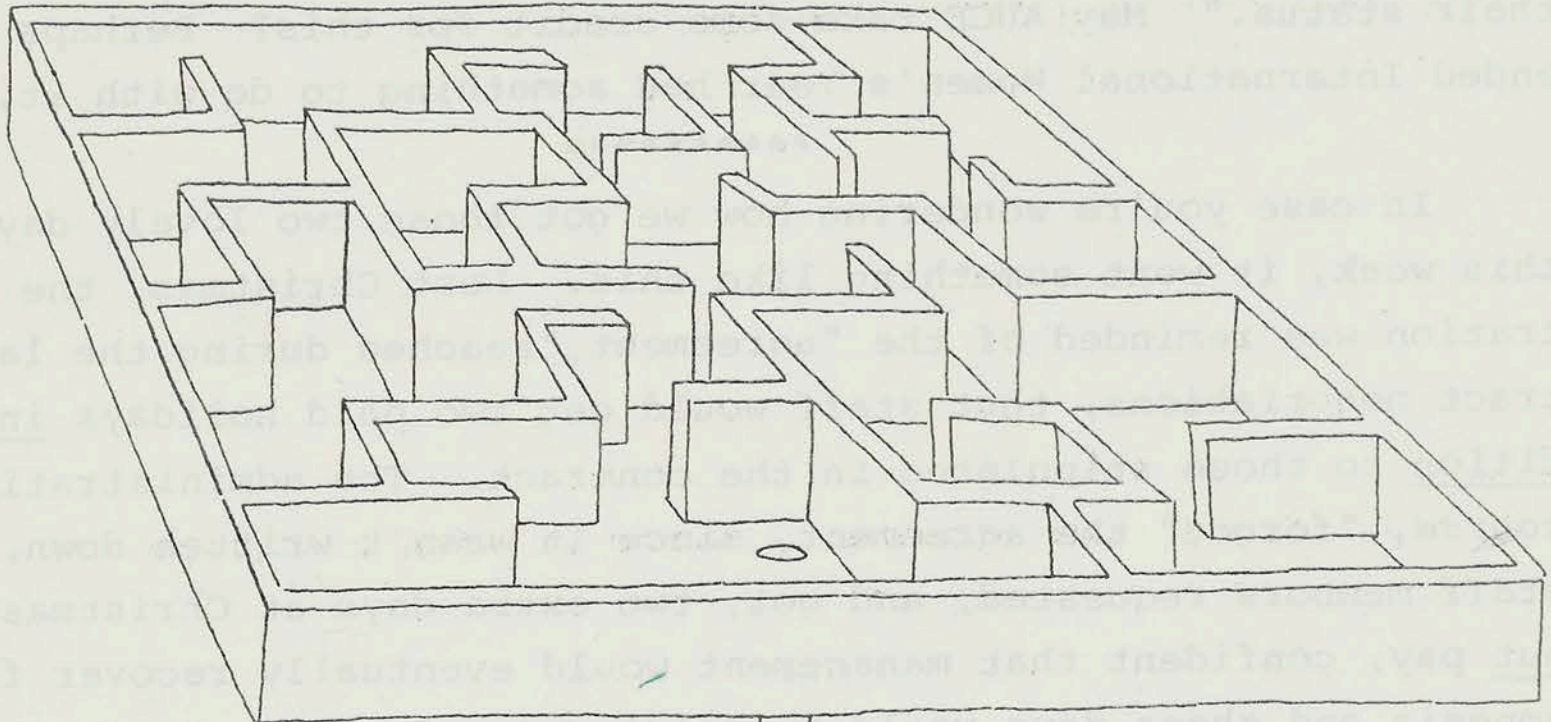
Steve Geller
Chairperson
Grievance Committee

According to their newsletters, UBC and SFU seem finally to be catching up with one of the founding tenets of AUCE: "President Douglas Kenny of the University of B.C. has launched a series of far-reaching initiatives aimed at improving conditions for women throughout the University community" "President Pauline Jewett has established a committee to examine the status of women at Simon Fraser University and to make specific recommendations on ways to improve their status." May AUCE take some credit for this? Perhaps the just-ended International Women's Year had something to do with it, too.

In case you're wondering how we got those two lovely days off this week, it went something like this. Last Christmas, the administration was reminded of the "agreement," reached during the last contract negotiations, that staff would get two paid holidays in addition to those stipulated in the contract. The administration, of course, "forgot" the agreement, since it wasn't written down, so staff members requested, and got, two extra days at Christmas without pay, confident that management would eventually recover from amnesia and these days would be retrieved. Guess what? That's almost exactly what happened. The Union asked for an investigation of the matter, an investigator was appointed by the Labour Relations Board, but management's argument collapsed under the embarrassing testimony of Mediator Phillips whose memory of the affair was as good as ours. Somewhat miffed, the administration accused the Union of using "feminine guile" on the mediator.

Happy holidays.

According to their newsletter, USC and SPD seem finally to be
battling up with one of the founding fathers of AUC. President
Douglas Kegan of the University of S.C. has launched a series of far-
reaching initiatives aimed at improving conditions for women through-
out the university community. "President Pauline Jester has
established a committee to examine the status of women at Simon Fraser
University and to make specific recommendations on ways to improve
their status." Mrs. Kegan



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