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THE ALLY

A PUBLICATION OF CUPE LOCAL 3906

Volume 2 Issue 1

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Photo by James D Schwartz via Flickr

Letter From the President

Hello Members,

Welcome to all new Teaching Assistants (Unit 1), Sessional Faculty Members (Unit 2), and Postdoctoral Fellows (Unit 3). You all make up the membership of Local 3906. It's important that each member take time to review their Collective Agreement (CA). The CA is an agreement between our union and the administration of McMaster University that outlines our rights, obligations, benefits, and other provisions related to employment. These CAs are available from your department or on our website. If you have questions about any part of the CA you can call, email, or drop by our office any time, located on campus in the basement of Wentworth House.

For those members who are returning, we are again starting a busy semester together at McMaster University. Less than one year removed from negotiating a new CA for our Unit 2 members, we are now negotiating on behalf of both TAs and Postdoctoral Fellows. Please see our website and follow our bargaining updates to make sure you know how negotiations are progressing. If you have any interest in assisting the Local during our bargaining please email me at president@cupe3906.org, we have many positions open and all volunteers are welcome.

Finally, allow me to congratulate all of our members who have just finished the final requirements for their degrees or completed their work terms. Many of our departing members have spent multiple years working as valuable members of the McMaster Community. Best of luck as you move on from CUPE 3906!

Nick Longaphy
President
CUPE Local 3906

CUPE 3906 Equity Statement

Union solidarity is based on the principle that union members are equal and deserve mutual respect at all levels. Any behaviour that creates conflict prevents union members from working together to strengthen the union and its initiatives.

As unionists we aim to achieve mutual respect, cooperation and understanding throughout our membership. We neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

A hostile or offensive environment includes discriminatory speech or conduct, which is racist, sexist, transphobic or homophobic and/or discrimination based on (in)ability, age, class, religion, language and ethnic origin. A hostile and intimidating environment also includes attempts to de-voice other members by ignoring GMM speaking practices or by talking over, yelling, rolling eyes at or shutting down contributions made by others.

Sometimes discrimination takes the form of harassment. Harassment means using real or perceived power to abuse, devalue or humiliate others. Harassment will not be perceived or treated as frivolous behaviour. The uneasiness and resentment that harassment creates hinder the growth of the union by hampering our capacity to work together on shared concerns such as decent wages, safe working conditions and justice in the workplace, society and in our union.

The above-mentioned components of a hostile environment hurt and divide the union and compromise CUPE's policies and commitments to equality. Members, staff and elected officers must be mindful that all members deserve dignity, equality and respect.



Volume 2 - Issue 1 - Fall 2011

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Will Jaques

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Bored of Governors' Meeting

Unfortunate Idle Talk

By: Nick Longaphy

A Board of Governors meeting is not nearly as useful as it sounds, although it could be. Instead of being a vehicle for positive change and improvement for students and workers, it has become a place where problems are recognized, poorly debated, and, finally, ignored.

The most recent McMaster University Board of Governors Meeting held on May 5th, included a brief and interesting discussion on a familiar motion: increasing student tuition. A handful of members went out of their way to ask stimulating questions and encourage others to consider the wisdom of these regular and escalating hikes. Prior to the meeting, yearly tuition rates stood at approximately \$6,000 for incoming domestic graduate students, \$14,000 for incoming international graduate students, a range of \$6,000 - \$9,000 for domestic undergraduate tuition, and finally a whopping \$16,000 - \$22,000 for international undergraduate students. In each of the undergraduate categories the Engineering Programme represents the high end of the scale.

I was pleased to hear not only student representatives bringing their thoughts to this conversation but also other Board Members who offered questions like: How long can we expect students to sustain regular tuition increases? At what point does the access to education drop below acceptable levels? Is the current funding model of Canadian universities adversely affecting the quality of education?

These are significant questions to pose to a Board of Governors at a university where tuition rates climb by the maximum allowable rate each year, in a city that in many ways is dependent on the influx of students and the money they bring with them, and in a province where escalating costs of living surge ahead of wage increases when we are able to negotiate them successfully. Recent attempts to mobilize undergrads against tuition hikes and in favour of a higher quality of education have been successful in regards to stimulating activism, but remain unable to sway members of the Board of Governors who set the bar on increases.

My sense that this issue was being appropriately considered quickly dissipated. Reductive statements suggesting the 'increased popularity' of McMaster is evidence of a superior quality of education, or that the McMaster student experience was unequalled by other universities seemed less informative and more like pandering, self-promotion, and/or unsupported assumption.

This downward spiral reached critical mass when only two members of the Board of Governors voted against the Graduate tuition increase, the Graduate and Undergraduate representatives. Despite references to the current system as "broken", despite several members questioning the soundness waiting for the government to restructure the funding formula for universities, despite at least one member suggesting that McMaster

could send a strong message regarding the need for a change (one that doesn't rely on continued tuition increases) only TWO Board of Governor members voted against Graduate tuition increases.

While we can appreciate the fact that not only McMaster, but the University system in general lacks funding that does not give the administration a free hand to continue taking from students. It also demands that we continue to question the priorities of this university. For example, we have Sessional Faculty taking a wage freeze for the next two years, a mandate from the Board that future negotiations seek a 0% increase in total compensation, as well as poorly maintained buildings (see Wentworth House), and yet the university has made off-campus construction a priority (see McMaster Innovation Park). Could one argue that McMaster is building a new deck while the foundation is cracking? Perhaps.

It seems logical that if the current economic plan being put forward by both the Federal and Provincial governments has caused an unfair burden to be placed on students, that we should be working together to press for change. But in reality the position that we workers and grad students find ourselves in is this: If the Local (or the GSA) were to work alongside the administration to pressure the government for a better funding formula, how can we be certain that WE will find ourselves in improved circumstances?

There was a feeling at this meeting (though as evidenced by the vote clearly not a strong one) that without a steady stream of alternate revenue the burden being placed on students would damage McMaster's quality of education, accessibility, and sustainability. The message being sent is: We know that there is danger ahead but we have to wait for the government to act before we can change our direction. Let me restate this plan. The Board of Governors is planning to *wait for the Provincial Government to recognize a problem with the current system, analyze it, find a solution that addresses our current problems, and implement that system.* Any thoughts on how long that might take?

The real question that needs to be put to the Board of Governors is: What are undergraduate students, graduate students, TAs, RAs, Sessional Faculty, Post-Docs, SEIU members, CAW members and the rest of the university supposed to do until that happens? The answer is to take 0% wage increases, pay the maximum allowable tuition increases each year, increase our co-pay for pensions (where they exist), watch our proposals relating to quality of education get shot down because of the price tag, and more. Apparently, all this must be done to keep the engine running here at McMaster so long as we continue on the same dangerous course.



Health & Safety Your Rights at Work

By: Bridie James

Indoor Air Quality

If you work in an office, you may think that workplace health and safety is something that doesn't concern you. After all, you don't work with chemicals or syringes, lab mice or radiation. However, hazards do exist in the office, they just aren't always as easy to identify.

For example, did you know that McMaster has a policy regarding indoor air quality? In winter, the indoor temperature cannot be below 18° Celsius, and in summer, indoor temperatures cannot be above 24° Celsius, with 60% humidity. If you notice that your office or work space isn't within this range, call the Facility Services Customer Service Desk (office hours 8.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri) at extension #24740.

Strong odours, dust, and other air contaminants can also pose a hazard, so if you notice any of these things, let your supervisor know and fill out an incident report form (available at www.workingatmcmaster.ca/eohss/forms). If you think the odour might signal something dangerous – like a gas leak – inform Facility Services immediately.

You have the right to a safe, comfortable work environment, and your input is essential in making that right a reality. If you have any questions, or health and safety concerns, contact me at healthandsafety@cupe3906.org.



Practicing Relations of Solidarity

By: CUPE 3906 Political Action Committee



Photo by Sally Carraher

On February 27th, 2011 members of Six Nations and various allies met in Caledonia and Kanonhstaton to contest a so-called 'truth and reconciliation' rally staged by a group of anti-native activists and to challenge their retelling, in racist tones, of histories of struggle in this place. Standing on the road outside Kanonhstaton watching and participating in the unfolding of this encounter prompted me to think about what it means to be not just an ally but a settler/ally and how the struggles of our relationships with those whose struggles we link to our own is itself part of the political practice of everyday life. Through the following reflections I hope to weave a story of these events, designed not to guide but rather to provoke our thoughts on being an ally, being a settler, and that difficult space ('/') that brings them together.

Let's begin with a question. When are you/we going to stop calling (y)ourselves settlers? When are you/we going to start calling (y)ourselves allies?

I heard this question posed to me and other settler/allies by a member of the Six Nations of the Grand River territories not too long ago. It and the discussion it provoked have stayed with me as a point to return to and start again from within these reflections. It is a powerful question and my intention in this piece is to reciprocate the insights offered to me by those who have posed it with some of my own, from my side of the Two Row as a settler living on Turtle Island.

To give us some context, the term settler is used to identify non-indigenous people living in settler societies. Settler societies like Canada are those where colonizers displaced indigenous populations from their lands and subjugated or destroyed their political and

social structures in order to build settlements and cities that later became constituted as colonial (and white) nation-states. Unlike other colonial states, settler societies have never been decolonized –that is, political authority has never been ceded to or won back by the indigenous peoples of these lands. This is not to claim that indigenous struggles with dispossession are unique to settler societies, indeed many if not most formally decolonized states exist in relations of both external neo-colonialism and ongoing internal colonialism. But it does call into question our common and misleading belief that Canada's colonial past is indeed past and not fundamental to the organization of our society.

Returning to our question, at times I have heard this posed in other forms by settler/allies. I think when asked by settler/allies the question reflects a desire to move beyond these histories of settler/First Nations relations to construct new ways of being in common. The 'when' here speaks in particular to our shared desire to imagine a political future in which our relations are not founded on colonial oppression and dispossession. Yet the term settler reminds us deeply of our colonial privilege, enshrined and secured through the oppression and dispossession of indigenous peoples. It is the privilege of choosing not to see, not to hear, as many of us do, our continuous complicity in the taking of land, dignity, and autonomy of those who were here before us. Indeed, it is often this privilege that enables us to engage at all in certain kinds of actions, work, or challenges to state authority. We need only think here of our privileged access to recognized forms of education that accredit or authorize our voices with the state or the substantial difference between what we put on the line when engaging in direct action as settler activists and what already marginalized First Nations activists do.

I want to suggest, then, that the bond that ties settler to ally runs deep and is not something to be discarded with a sense of enlightened knowledge of our history. Rather, I think it is only through grappling with the paradoxes and responsibilities of this relationship that non-oppressive and non-colonial alliance can be formed and, most importantly, practiced. In other words, this is a question about our future, but one that is intimately tied to how we got where we are and how we struggle today as settler/allies.

Let me continue with a story. This is a story told in the language of a settler by someone who has made a home here in Hamilton for the past two years. There are other stories and other ways to tell this story which members of the Haudenosaunee can tell you; my voice does not replace or substitute for theirs. Indeed First Nations' scholars and activists, for example at the Polytechnic Institute on the Six Nations reserve and here at McMaster through the Indigenous Studies programme and elsewhere, actualize alternative ways of telling these histories and linking theory to practice. As allies we have a responsibility, not to appropriate, but to listen and respond to these voices.

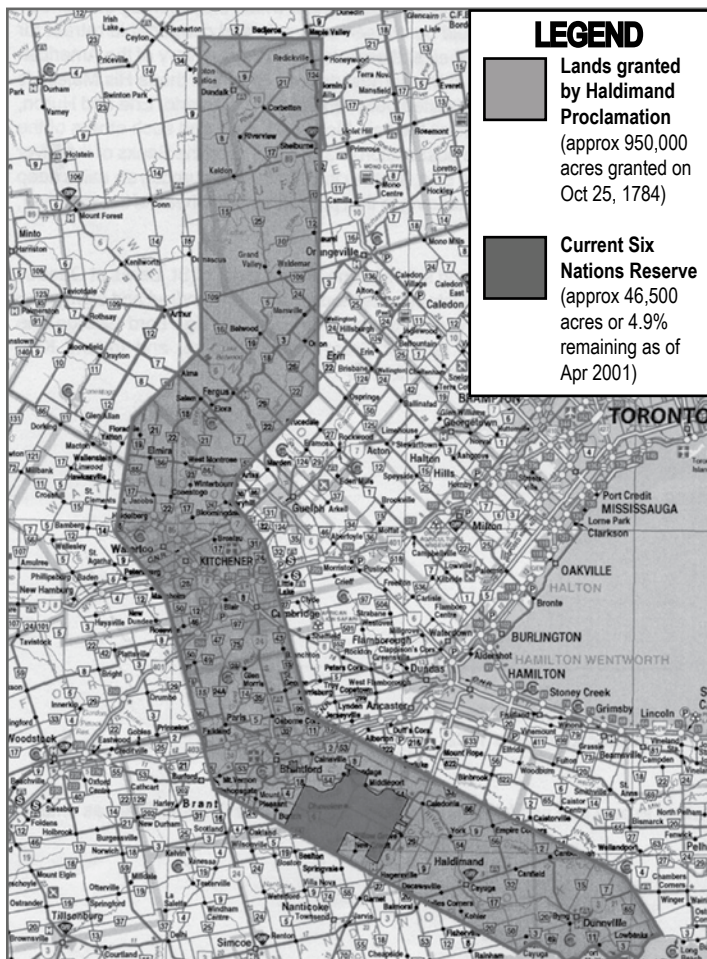
The six nations of the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse) are the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneidas, Cayugas, Senecas, and Tuscarora. These nations are united as a confederacy under the Kaianerakowa, or the Great Law of Peace and live in territories across southern Ontario and New York State. The Six Nations of the

Grand River territories, located near Caledonia (just outside Hamilton) are currently engaged in a dispute with the federal government over the settlement of land around the Grand River known as the Haldimand Tract that is the designated territory of the Six Nations.

The Haldimand Tract was given through treaty to the Mohawk and Six Nations of the Grand River in 1784. Originally it covered 955 000 acres, but today only 48 000 acres remain exclusively under Six Nations' control as much of the land has been sold or leased with much of the money then used by the Crown and never repaid. Pressure has continually been placed on this land as non-indigenous settlements grow around in direct violation of the treaties that bind all of us. As just one example of the ways dispossession has been codified in our history, Section 141 of the Indian Act, passed in 1927, set up provisions that effectively prohibited First Nations people from filing claims against the government. This section was repealed in 1951 and between then and 2006, 29 claims have been filed regarding the Grand River territories of which only one has been resolved.

This contestation can also be seen as a broader dispute between the principles of the Indian Act and the original treaty negotiated between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch in 1613. This treaty, the Guswhenta or Two Row Wampum treaty was designed around principles of equality, friendship, and mutual respect. The Two Row symbolizes two paths, a canoe and a ship, travelling down the same stream, equal and separate yet travelling together. Respect on both sides was to mean that neither side would speak as an authority in the business of the other or attempt to steer the other's boat. In contrast to this, the Indian Act of 1876 which continues to govern most official settler/First Nations relations, has been built on a paternalistic relationship wherein the fiduciary Canadian state is seen as a 'guardian' above First Nations, reflected in processes of 'giving' land and 'civilizing' through the residential school system.

In February of 2006, acting with the support of the Clan Mothers, members of Six Nations and allies set up barricades to block further development on Kanonhstaton ('the protected place'), also known as the Douglas Creek's Estates, which had been going forward without permission from Six Nations. Standing up to violent police raids and significant pressure from all levels of government and developers, the reclamation succeeded in having the federal government recognize Six Nations' legitimate claim. However direct occupation of this place is necessary and ongoing in order to forestall development as members of Six Nations continue through the government's lengthy negotiation process. Under current federal practice, the return of land will not be negotiated for land that has already been developed, indicating both the injustice of a system that is complicit in encroachment



and then protects that theft from being reversed, and the importance of this kind of direct action to halt development.

February 28th 2011 marked the 5 year anniversary of the reclamation at Kanonhstaton. Since beginning in 2007, negotiations have not progressed significantly with the federal government using what have become standard delaying tactics to postpone any kind of resolution to the particular issues, or more generally coming to terms with treaty responsibilities. In the meantime, and in response to general misunderstandings of colonial legacies and current practices in Canada, certain groups with ties to white supremacist movements have been filling up much of the visible space around this situation with spurious calls for 'justice' and 'law and order'. The claim here is that the reclamation was an act of illegal criminals and that the OPP and Provincial Government failed in their obligations to protect the citizens of Caledonia. Those who have taken up this claim most forcefully have demanded a 'respect for the rule of law' and most recently an apology from Six Nations. This has culminated in an attempt to place a monument on Kanonhstaton at the so called 'truth and reconciliation' rally on February 27th, which included an apology made on behalf of Six Nations by this group to the people of Caledonia.

Standing on the road settler/allies and members of Six Nations effectively halted the erecting of this monument. Designing our response had begun with exchanges of ideas between members of Six Nations and allies and ended that day with the Clan Mothers giving direction to our action as the guiding voices in the political structure of the Haudenosaunee. Although not free of its own tensions and shortcomings, this practice of listening and respect was for me one of the most powerful parts of the response of settler/allies to those settlers who would dictate the place and indeed the very words of those they claim to seek resolution with.

Our future that we practice today

There is so much about what those rallying with this monument claim and do that needs to be challenged. How can we claim entitlement to an apology for five years of occupation, when the injustices exist on our side of the Two Row for over 500 years? Indeed, how do we continue to colonize the language of this action by defining it as an occupation when for First Nations the relationship to land is not one of ownership, but shared stewardship? How can anyone claim to close this story through a final apology while the Canadian state continues its practices of dispossession and oppression? Our list of questions could go on and on. By way of re-turning, then, I want to take us back to standing on the side of the road thinking about being a settler/ally.

As allies we strive to create non-hierarchical relations, to relate to those we work with as equals rather than

making demands from a position of authority. We do not speak on behalf of those we are working with, we work to listen to what they have to say and, yes, we sometimes even disagree.

The Two-Row symbolizes two communities, moving together separately yet through mutual respect, along the same stream. This is a symbol of distance that does not symbolize solitude –rather each side of the Two Row implicates the other and must live, share, and reciprocate as equals. In some ways, the Two Row speaks of what it means to be an ally not just in the sense of respect and equality, but also in how it reminds us of the distance between ourselves and those whose struggles we support. As settler/allies we need to be cautious of our desires to invest ourselves so deeply in the struggles of others that we forget our responsibility to our own histories. That is, being an ally might mean both being part of the struggle and outside it. As a friend reminded me recently, we may stand in solidarity with indigenous struggles, but their struggles are not our own, to define, to practice, or to use as our identity. We are settlers - there are no easy ways out.

This might seem abstract, but it is not. My point here is about the daily practice of relating in ways that speak to the political future we imagine in our opening question. This future is not a utopia, it is not a place free of conflict. Indeed I want to suggest that it is a political future that exists in the present, in those moments where we practice settler/First Nations solidarity in ways that do not replicate colonial hierarchy. It is the difficult practice of solidarity that can touch and grow with but never consume.

I want to close, then, by suggesting that we do not choose between being a settler or an ally. Instead the '/' can indicate the tension between the two, and the need to always be reflecting on the one in conjunction with the other. In other words, standing on indigenous ground, which means standing anywhere on Turtle Island, I cannot stand as an ally without also standing as a settler, mindful and respectful of all that entails.

This piece is offered to reciprocate insights that have been offered to us and to open up these ideas for you to return your own. If you have any thoughts you'd like to share with us, you can reach us at politicalaction@cupe3906.org.

For those interested in exploring these issues further, here's a list of some resources:

Tekawennake News: www.tekanews.com

Turtle Island News: www.theturtleislandnews.com

Six Nations Polytechnic Institute: www.snpolytechnic.com

Six Nations Solidarity Network: 6nsolidarity.wordpress.com

For more information about the PAC, or to find out when we will hold our next meeting or how you can become involved visit pac3906.wordpress.com.

Laurentian TAs Organize

By: Laurel O'Gorman

University administrations have been cutting budgets for many departments, libraries, services and non-unionized salaries; pretty much anywhere they can conceive of ways to save money - except for their own salaries, which have been growing at alarming rates. At Laurentian University, the president received a wage increase of \$79,000 last year despite the wage freeze that is used as an excuse not to raise wages for the recently unionized Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs).

In their 2009/10 budget, administration at Laurentian University proposed a pay cut of 11.5% as well as the removal of all summer fellowships. GTAs at Laurentian University are already the lowest paid in the sector, earning only \$6,950 per year. The Graduate Student Association tried to meet with administrators, but they were told in no uncertain terms that because they were not a union, they did not have bargaining rights.

Graduate students across the disciplines took up the fight. We began with a letter writing campaign, explaining to admin and the community how these cuts would affect our ability to complete our studies. Then, we converged on a Senate meeting and spoke about the cuts and held a public rally that was covered in a very positive way by the local media. GTAs, undergraduate students, faculty and even members of the community then attended a Board of Governors meeting. They agreed to maintain our wages, but only for the next school year. We only managed to maintain \$1000 of our summer fellowship and only for students who displayed financial need, despite the fact that we are contractually obligated to work no more than 10 hours a week through the summer months.

We realized then that we needed a union. It was no longer optional, we had one year to organize before the next budget. Luckily, we had momentum from the recent activism to build upon in order to get this done. In January, we began an educational campaign and card signing blitz. Graduate students are difficult to find on our campus, as they are spread throughout the city (and province), but almost every student we did approach was eager to sign a union card to protect their wages. The university tried to respond, sending an email to each student saying that their wages were comparable to wages at similarly sized universities. A brief follow up email presenting the actual figures was all that was needed to get students to vote in favour, including facts like GTAs at Laurentian would need a 44% wage increase to reach the provincial average.

Previous to this experience, I was often angered by what I saw as apathy from students about the social and political environment in which they lived. What this experience showed me is that students are not apathetic, but are not sure how to get involved. Organizing was hard work and it was a huge time commitment, but it changed what I thought was possible with regards to solidarity. We do not yet have a collective agreement, but I am confident that with the power of workers as well as solidarity and support from other locals across the province, nobody will have to settle for subpar working conditions.

Hamilton Activists Welcome Harper to Mac

By: Blake McCall

On the cloudy morning of Wednesday August 3rd a coalition of activist groups gathered at McMaster University in front of University Hall to protest the presence of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Visiting Hamilton for the first time since his win on the May 2nd Election; he was here to announce the winners of the Vanier Scholarships. His trip was shrouded in secrecy up until the day before when Graduate students who have offices in University Hall were told they were not allowed in the building for the day. That announcement set a scramble of groups to plan a confrontation telling Harper that he was in no way welcome on our campus and in our community.

The groups who were present included CUPE 3906, Students Resisting War and Occupation, The Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War, Hamilton for Steel and the Communist Party of Canada as well as other non-affiliated citizens.

Issues that were raised were as diverse and many as the problems that Harpers reign has already caused Canada. This included our continuing role in Afghanistan, the bombing of Libya, the increasing militarization of Canada, free trade agreements, union busting and attacks on the poor, and defunding over-stretched women organization (an only too real comparison of rape rates in Canada to that in Saudi Arabia was particularly disgusting).

The protesters were loud and passionate giving the small and quickly planned rally real passion and concern. It is clear that the problems and crimes he is committing against Canadians cannot be swept under the carpet by the announcement of teeny tiny amounts of funding. We can see through that veil and we're still not happy.



Fundamental Freedoms on the G20 Anniversary

By: Will Jaques

On June 25 2010, hundreds of protestors were arbitrarily detained, beaten or both by Canadian police officers. Many of these individuals met this fate in Queens Park, a site the Government had called the 'Free Speech Zone'. It was to be an area where individuals were permitted to exercise their right to free speech. It is bad enough that there was a designated area where free speech was to be tolerated, it is far worse that this zone quickly became one of the most dangerous places for active or dissenting Canadian citizens to be on the G20 weekend. There have been many words written about the horrors that took place against protestors during the 2010 G20 Summit at the hands of Canadian police. I would be surprised to hear of anyone who is not familiar with the gruesome imagery of bloodied protestors. Those interested in a fairly candid look at the events surrounding the 2010 G20 protests should watch *You Should Have Stayed Home*, a special episode of CBC's *The Fifth Estate*. The entire episode is available on the CBC website.

I wish I could offer you a firsthand account of what happened in Toronto that weekend in 2010, but I was one of the few normally politically active individuals who did stay home. Well, not entirely. The truth is I was working. As a matter of fact I was working in an office that was located just outside of the inner security area and inside the outer security area. My office building was between the two fences. For all of the chaos and human rights violations that were taking place around Toronto that weekend, Front Street and

the 'secure' area were like ghost towns patrolled by heavily armed police-soldiers. I remember going into work on Sunday morning. As I started to approach the outer fence the police presence became more and more blatant. Every ten or twenty feet around the fence there were officers standing with very large guns. Every gate was accompanied by a group of five to ten officers, also brandishing very large weapons. As I approached my gate I was greeted sternly with "What are you doing here?" After a quick mini-interrogation and upon showing my credentials I was allowed through. I remember hearing the gate close and lock behind me and how my heart began pounding. I don't really know why I felt so nervous. I had a legitimate purpose for being there and it was the same street I had been down thousands of times before.

As I walked through the empty streets, streets normally filled with tourists taking pictures and hotdog vendors and panhandlers, my eyes couldn't help but drift up, though I wish they hadn't. A couple of times I caught a few glimpses of snipers on the tops of buildings. I remember thinking that since I was the only civilian on the street the crosshairs had likely landed on me a few times. Once at the office I locked the door behind me, I don't really know why but I did. After my uneventful shift I went home. Leaving the lockdown area was a bit more worrisome. As I approached the gate a new group of officers intercepted me along the way and immediately asked me how I got in and what I was doing. I explained again and they escorted me



Photo by James D Schwartz via Flickr

to the gate and told me exactly which route to take on the way out. That is really the extent of my rather tame G20 experience. Other than that I watched with horror as police heinously 'dealt' with protestors by removing their badges, charging through crowds with horses, bashing with batons, using pepper spray, kettling, shooting rubber bullets, releasing tear gas and arbitrarily arresting anyone who was willing to speak out against such horrors.

To be frank there were those involved in the original protests back in 2010 who thought the best way to deliver their message was to smash windows or start fires, but these individuals were truly a very small minority in the larger crowd. Whether you agree with their tactics or not, the true mass crimes that took place were a result of the "Police Riot" that unfolded. The individual officers were the ones who lost their minds to the grip of the herd mentality of their ranks and with their minds they seemed to have also misplaced their accountability and respect for the public they so often claim to serve and protect.

On June 25 2011, after a year of horror stories being revealed I wasn't staying home again and I didn't have to work either. At 2PM I rode my bike to Queens Park to join the G20 Redux: Fundamental Freedoms Festival. The festival was organized by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Ontario Federation of Labour and the Council of Canadians. It was a very interesting and eclectic crowd. The participants seemed to range from those who were very politically active to those

who were not, there were infants and elderly people and everything in between. In talking to many people it became clear that while many of the participants were left leaning in their politics, there were also many who were right leaning or conservative. The one commonality was outrage at the blatant disregard for fundamental human rights and due process. There was performances by Canadian artists Lynn Harrison, Tiny Danza, Allie Hughes and David Borins as well as addresses given by

author Judy Rebick, Sid Ryan from OFL, Nathalie Des Rossiers from the CCLA, a variety of activists, arrestees and legal teams. Even Brigette DePape (dubbed by the media as "the rouge page" for the now infamous 'Stop Harper' protest during the thrown speech) gave an address. All delivered great words and each in turn called for a legitimate full public inquiry into the Policing of the 2010 G20. The overall message of the festival was that we as Canadians, as human beings, should not allow human rights violations anywhere but especially not where we can prevent them the most: our own nation.

The name of the event, G20 Redux, was very fitting. In many ways the festival proceeded as the G20 protests should have. People were allowed to voice their opinions, share their stories, relate to one another and come together for a shared goal. And let's not forget all of the bubbles! People were actually handing out bubble sticks and soap to anyone who wanted to partake in some fun (although "Officer Bubbles", made famous for arresting a protestor for blowing bubbles, was nowhere in sight). It was a peaceful yet passionate event. I was truly amazed with the fact that even given the sombre and horrifying events that led to the need for the festival, the participants were in high spirits and even jovial at times.

After the performances and addresses a group of people announced that there would be a march. A small crowd of about fifty people soon met at the South end of Queens Park and we began to march. As we marched with our

banners and placards streetcar drivers started cheering, as did many commuters. This march was a bit different than many I have participated in. It was not openly planned and thus was much less like a parade. There were a few individuals near the front who would call out a location and that is where we would go. Our first stop was the intersection of Queen and Spadina, the site of the kettling where a number of harmless protestors and bystanders were boxed in by police and forced to stand in the rain even though many were simply trying to go home. We occupied the intersection for fifteen minutes or so, some recounting their experience one year ago in the very same spot.

As the group carried on something else rather different began to happen, our numbers grew larger. People were leaving the sidewalks and entering the streets. Some would join for one or two blocks, others would join and stayed until the end. To me this was a sign of the overwhelming public outrage against the G20 policing tactics and the great deal of support for a full public inquiry and genuine police accountability. The march carried on along Queen Street past City Hall, up Bay Street, over to Yonge Street and finished in front of Police Headquarters. Along the way each intersection was occupied and all who passed by were invited to join.

I will give credit where credit is due. The officers that were assigned to accompany the G20 Redux march on June

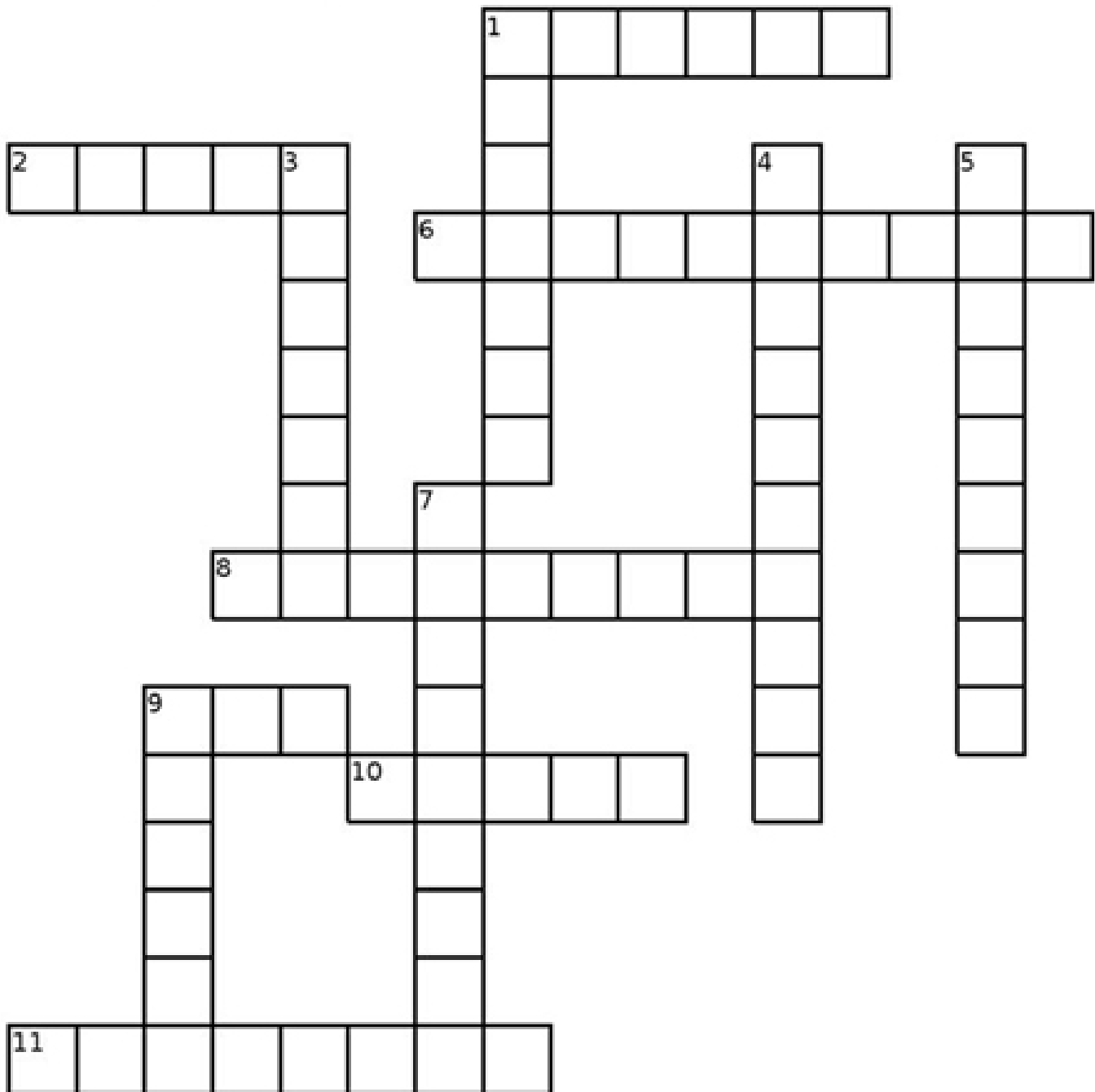
25, 2011 were respectful and allowed those involved to voice their opinions freely. They also allowed the group to march without a planned route. However, this is not all that surprising given the nature of the event. In the end the G20 Redux: Fundamental Freedom Festival was both a success and a failure. It was a success because it was a great show of solidarity and of the resilience of the human will for justice. It was a failure because there has yet to be a full public inquiry launched and only one officer has been officially charged to my knowledge (that officer is suspended with pay pending his court date in September). I guess this is not really the failure of the Festival but the failure of the Canadian government and police to be accountable to its public. This is largely due to the unwillingness of police to come forward, an action that might be obstructing justice were it not carried out by someone with a badge. There are many good officers out there and I am sure that some of them were working the G20. We need them to come forward and we need our leaders to conduct a full public inquiry. If nothing else, G20 Redux: Fundamental Freedom Festival has sent the message that the Canadian public will not let this atrocious violation of human rights in our own nation slip through the cracks. Or will we? Only you can decide. Send a letter or email demanding a full public enquiry to your MP and your MPP and to Stephen Harper and encourage others to do the same. Their contact information can be found at www.canadians.org/action/contact_reps.html.



Photo by James D Schwartz via Flickr

Crossword

You'll find all the answers in this issue of The Ally and the accompanying Welcome Guide...so get reading!



Across

- 1 Canadian Prime Minister
- 2 Which Hamilton street hosts Art Crawl?
- 6 This university does not yet have a collective agreement with their TAs
- 8 Board of _____ Meeting
- 9 Number of units currently in bargaining at CUPE 3906
- 10 The G20 anniversary festival
- 11 Where can you try the beers of the world?

Down

- 1 Reporting _____ is an important part of workplace health & safety
- 3 Popular sushi restaurant on King St W
- 4 The Harper protest was held outside _____ Hall at McMaster
- 5 Disputed Six Nations territory located around Grand River _____ Tract
- 7 What month is Grad Student Day?
- 9 An alternative to Value Village