

# BUFA Forum

OCTOBER 2007

Editor: Jeannette Sloniowski

Executive Editor: Kimberly Benoit

Unless indicated otherwise, the views expressed in *Forum* do not necessarily represent those of the BUFA Executive.

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## *Welcome to Fall 2007* *From the Editor*

Welcome to the Fall 2007 Issue of the BUFA Forum. In the usual way summer seems to have whizzed past with amazing speed and now we return to our colleagues and students, hopefully a bit refreshed, and certainly filled with new ideas from our summer reading and research. I for one am still somewhat breathless from last year's contract negotiations and the emotional roller coaster that we all endured. That we are entering into new negotiations this year is almost impossible to comprehend. But, older and wiser, and armed with what we learned last time, we move into the next round with eyes wide open.

In this issue of the Forum we pay tribute to two of our colleagues who passed away in the past few months. Both are terribly missed by colleagues and friends. As well we have articles by our new and energetic President Carol Merriam, and our hard working Grievance Officer Carol Sales.

Daniel Crow, president of CUPE 4207 has written us to tell us a little about the successful negotiation that his team worked on – down to the wire, as we did – this summer. As of the time of publication of the Forum, Daniel could not share too many details with us, but I am sure that he will do so in the near future.

As the new Forum Editor I welcome letters or short articles from the membership about issues of interest to BUFA colleagues. So, let it rain emails and articles upon my computer for the next issue!

**Jeannette Sloniowski**  
**Communications, Popular Culture and Film**

## ***Bargaining Update - CUPE 4207***

Dear Members of BUFA

I am writing on behalf of the members of CUPE 4207 to express our appreciation for the support that BUFA has shown to us during our most recent round of negotiations. Your support played an important part in our ability to win a good new collective agreement at conciliation. It is very clear that our unions are in a much better position to win gains at the bargaining table when we stick together. The support shown by your executive, and individual members of your union will be remembered when you go to bargaining next year.

Although we cannot divulge the details of the new agreement until after it is presented to our members on September 18, we can let you know that we made significant and above average gains in wages, the employer's contribution to our meager benefits plan will increase in every year of the agreement, and there are improvements to existing provisions in the contract in postings, hiring, job security and leaves of absence to name only a few issues.

It is important to note that our fight to get our wages up to the provincial average was central to our strategy. When salaries for the senior administration keep going up (sometimes in excess of 10% per year) the university is in a weak position to resist the argument that we all deserve at least the provincial average. We joked at the bargaining table that Brock's rallying cry "Surgite" really means "strive to be average". Our new collective agreement does not quite bring us up to average, but we are closer than ever before.

The members of CUPE 4207 look forward to working with you all in the future to make sure that all unions on campus are successful at the bargaining table.

In solidarity,

**Dan Crow**  
**President, CUPE 4207**

### **BUFA General Membership Meetings 2007/08**

**Wednesday, October 17, 2007 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Thistle 258**

**Wednesday, December 12, 2007 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Sankey Chamber**

**Wednesday, February 13, 2008 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Sankey Chamber**

**Wednesday, May 7, 2008 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Pond Inlet  
(Annual General Meeting)**

**Carol Merriam**  
**BUFA President**

## **Completely Average** **President's Message**



Welcome, and welcome back, to another fun-filled year of teaching and research at Brock University. Now that we are well launched into the fall term, I'm sure everyone is attracted to one of the two possible extreme reactions to being a professor: either 1) being a professor is the best job in the world, because I can think and talk all day about what I'm passionate about or 2) the best part of being a professor is that I get to choose which 80 hours of the week I work. The truth, as always, is somewhere in between.

That said, we can congratulate ourselves that so many of us are committed to pushing our own and our colleagues' lives at Brock toward the former. Dozens of members of BUFA serve on our various committees, as BUFA observers on Senate committees, and as members of the jointly appointed committees. This kind of service is extremely important for keeping the university running, and, more importantly, keeping the interests and contributions of faculty members central in the institution's progress. For this, you have my thanks, and that of your colleagues.

Most impressive this year was the overwhelming response to our request for volunteers to serve on these various committees. Almost all the positions on committees this year were filled by volunteers, rather than by people importuned by the members of the Staffing Committee. And while an important result of this is that we on the Staffing Committee still have a few friends left, because we haven't put them all to work, an even more important result is that we are all demonstrating a commitment to contributing to the management of our own affairs.

As many of you know, our current *Collective Agreement* expires on 30 June 2008, which means that we are once again entering a negotiation year. Many of our members are still traumatized and embittered by the last round of negotiations, in which we were pushed to the brink of a strike. We have now seen one of our sister units, CUPE 4207, in the same situation, as they came to an agreement with the administration after a 26 hour marathon of conciliation. It is devoutly to be wished that this is not the tone negotiations at Brock will be taking in future; my Magic 8 Ball tells me "Reply Hazy, Try Again". But we have all learned a great deal from the last round and from the heroic efforts of our Negotiating Team and our Strike Action Committee last year.

As we progress into the new academic year, though, simply being able to do our work well and effectively is uppermost in our minds. The university has the obligation to enable us to do this and, most importantly, to provide the necessary facilities for us to perform. I urge you to check Article 32 of the current *Collective Agreement*, which states quite clearly what the university is obliged to provide for us. If you don't have a computer, or a telephone, or a projector in your classroom, ask for the missing articles. If you don't get them, ask BUFA: call the Association office (ext 3268) or call me (ext 3320).

BUFA has been a certified union since 1996, representing faculty members and professional librarians. In that time, our members, executive committees and negotiators have made great strides in improving life at Brock. In my own 5 years on the executive, I have had the privilege of working with three outstanding presidents. I am both humbled and inspired by their examples.

*Surgite!*

**Carol U. Merriam**  
**President, Brock University Faculty Association**  
**extension: 3320**  
**e-mail: merriamc@brocku.ca**

**Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA)**  
**Teaching Award Recipient**  
**Professor Zopito Marini**

When professor Zopito Marini of the Department of Child and Youth Studies was presented with the 2006 OCUFA Teaching Award for his commitment to student learning, outstanding educational leadership, and innovative approaches to teaching he remarked that, “...the pursuit of scholarship involves mindful reflection on the tension that exists on university campuses between research and teaching.” Professor Marini urged faculty to be mindful that both forms of scholarship can and must be pursued in higher education and that only by striving for a healthy and delicate balance between these two central goals does learning take place.

The OCUFA Teaching Award presentation was attended by Kimberly Benoit, Don Dworet, Carol Sales, and Tony DiPetta.

**Article by: Tony DiPetta, OCUFA Director**  
**Photos by: Kimberly Benoit, BUFA**



Dr. Zopito Marini



Pictured above are (L-R) Carol Sales, Tony DiPetta - BUFA's OCUFA Director, Zopito Marini and Helen Marini.



Pictured celebrating are (L-R) - Carol Sales, Kimberly Benoit, Zopito Marini, Helen Marini, and Don Dworet, Chair of the OCUFA Board.

## University of Guelph Faculty Association Consults BUFA

The brilliant sunshine illuminating the autumn foliage of Niagara gradually gave way to the sullen pall of dark rain clouds as we left the QEW/403 and turned north on Highway 6. BUFA Executive Director Kimberly Benoit and I had been invited to attend a meeting arranged by the University of Guelph Faculty Association (UGFA).

The clouds darkened and as we approached the university, it began to rain. We joked nervously, wondering aloud if this were pathetic fallacy that reflected the mood of labour negotiations at Guelph.

At our meeting, there were representatives from UGFA's Executive, Negotiating, and Preparedness Committees. They related an all too familiar tale of dealing with an unresponsive administration. They spoke of no movement in actual negotiations between March 19, when UGFA presented its non-monetary package until now. The only response UGFA had received was a flaccid declaration of the Administration's "aim to table all non-monetary language by the end of October 2007." The frustration amongst UGFA members at our meeting was palpable.

Although UGFA is not committed to taking any particular action at this time they did want to know what steps they'd need to be taking to move their negotiations forward at the table and if those were unsuccessful, what further preparations they would need to consider should they find themselves in a conciliation or a possible strike situation.

Kimberly and I eagerly shared our knowledge. For over two hours, we spoke in broad conceptual terms about preparation for mobilization, as well as in fine-grain detail about vital communication protocols, essential labour contacts, and important checklists.

As we discussed the Brock experience with our UGFA colleagues, I was astonished at the wealth of what we had to share. We at Brock had learned a great deal from the events leading up to our last contract. And talking about our experiences that day put into perspective just how far we have come as a Faculty Association and union.

Just one year ago this month, on October 18 2006, BUFA launched its first information picket outside the Sankey Senate Chamber.

By December 6, when a tentative Agreement had been reached, BUFA had been transformed. There was no more talk of collegiality in the bargaining process. It had been replaced by the cold reality of our experience. But gone too was any doubt about our strength and solidarity as a union. If we had received the word on that morning of December 6, BUFA would have been fully prepared to mount a decisive job action. In the anxious hours of waiting before the decision, we suddenly knew that we were ready and capable of taking the next step.

BUFA came of age in 2006. Our support and solidarity goes out to our colleagues at Guelph as they face the same challenges for 2007.

**Barry W.K. Joe, Digital Humanities**

## Optical Coverage for BUFA members



A memo was recently distributed with your benefits outline and there was some misleading information contained in it with regard to the coverage limit on eye exams.

The optical benefit, including coverage of eyeglasses, contacts, and eye exam is \$375., every 2 years. There is no limit on the amount that is covered by our benefits plan for the eye exam. If you were denied full coverage of your eye exam (and the overall limit of \$375. had not yet been reached) please contact Pauline McCormack who will take care of the matter.

Please be reminded that for BUFA members Eye to Eye Optical on Portage Road in Niagara Falls offers a 33% discount on eyeglasses. For more information on special offers for members please visit the BUFA website at [www.bufaweb.com](http://www.bufaweb.com) and click the 'Member Services' tab.

**Kimberly Benoit, Executive Director, BUFA**

# BUMPS ON THE ROAD TO A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

## *A Report from the BUFA Grievance Officer*

### ARE WE THERE YET?

No, we are definitely not there yet! By “there,” of course, I mean the respectful workplace. In fact, earlier this year, I posted on my office door a very colourful poster designed and distributed by the Office of Human Rights and Equity Services about the respectful workplace. To my amazement, by the next morning, it was gone!?

### COMPLAINTS APLENTY

By the time of the BUFA Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May of this year, as Grievance Officer, I had worked closely with 41 members to help solve 46 complaints. (As you can figure from the number of members and complaints reported above, several members had more than one complaint.) All indications are that this volume of complaints is unprecedented at Brock. Further, I wish I could report that, since the AGM, things have been relatively quiet over the summer - but I can't! This past summer matched the preceding academic year with respect to a heavy volume of complaints from members.

Here is a partial listing of the foci of the complaints I have worked on this past year:

- Discipline/dismissal
- Abuse of authority
- Academic freedom
- Harassment (before the New Agreement was implemented)
- Promotion and Tenure proceedings and appeals process
- Departmental Rules and Procedures
- Merit (before the New Agreement)
- Performance Review (since the New Agreement)
- Workload redistribution
- Accommodation policies
- Retirees' Rights
- Intellectual property
- Chairs' duties
- Interpretation of certain parts of the Collective Agreement
- Research Chairs' issues
- New computer policy
- Sharing offices
- Professional allowance policy
- Leaves

A real workout on issues covered in the Collective Agreement - both old and new Agreements - to be sure! I owe a debt of gratitude to the following for all their help in resolving so many tough complaints: Barry Grant, Carol Merriam, Francine McCarthy, Kimberly Benoit, and the many others who served on the BUFA Executive last year and those who are serving on the Executive this year. I must say that it's a pleasure to work with such dedicated and caring professionals.

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*Continued...*

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*In Memory of ....BCLA members*

*John Michielsen, Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures*

*Danielle Parks, Classics*

On September 29, 2006, Professor John Michielsen, Brock colleague in the former department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, passed away peacefully at his home in Montreal. He had just celebrated his 64th birthday.

In his scholarly career of more than 30 years at Brock University, John was an active teacher and researcher with acumen, clarity of thought and a finely honed sense of justice and fair play. His years of dedication to our community were reflected in his service as a Senator, his terms as Chair of Germanic and Slavic Studies and as Resident Director of the Freiburg Exchange Programme on site in Germany. Not only did he contribute significantly to the field of *Germanistik* in his field of 19th-century literature (Theodor Storm and Fontane), he also embraced an acquired expertise in detective fiction (Jan van de Wetering). John was a founding member of the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies (CAANS). His learned contributions to the CAANS journal were balanced by his terms as President of that association and as a member of the editorial board of the journal.

A joyous memorial service was held for John on June 23rd in Gananoque, Ontario at which an original composition by Brian Cherney, a childhood friend of John, was dedicated to his memory. The composition was inspired by a Rilke poem, *In Gottes Gärten schweigen die Engel (In God's Gardens the Angels Fall Silent)*.

Professor Michielsen is survived by his wife, Dr. Trudy Michielsen, his children Emma, Dennis, Dan, and Dean, and his several grandchildren.

Written by: Prof. Barry Joe, Digital Humanities

The Department is saddened to report the death of friend and colleague, Dr. Danielle Parks. Danielle passed away at home surrounded by her family on the morning of July 31, after a 2 ½ year battle with leukemia.

Danielle was an energetic researcher of international stature, who stayed well connected to students and active in their development as scholars. She participated in over ten excavation projects and is the author of a book and numerous articles, book chapters and excavation reports. Her research focused on the island of Cyprus, where she excavated, and was related to trade, economy and identity in the Roman, Late Roman, and Early Byzantine periods. She was recently engaged in an examination of the transition from paganism to Christianity on the island. She shared her interests with students, involving them in her research excavations and teaching our field school. Her enthusiasm inspired many to continue their studies at graduate school and her mentoring and training enabled them to succeed there. At Brock, she was key in developing the Department's MA programme and served as its first director. Her research and publication have been supported by the *National Endowment for the Humanities*, *American Schools of Oriental Research*, the *Canada Foundation for Innovation*, the *Ontario Innovation Trust*, and Brock University internal grants. She is remembered as a dedicated scholar and teacher.

A well-attended memorial was held at Brock on September 25 in the Rita Welch Meditation Room.

Written by: Prof. Alison Glazebrook, Classics

**BUFA Contact List**  
**905-688-5550**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Extension</b>
President	Carol Merriam Classics	3320
Vice-President	Eli Levanoni Organizational Behaviour, Human Resources, Entrepreneurship and Ethics	3450
Past President	Barry Grant Communications, Popular Culture and Film	3215
Secretary	Linda Rose-Krasnor Psychology	3870
Treasurer	Uwe Brand Earth Sciences	3529
Grievance Officer	Carol Sales Organizational Behaviour, Human Resources, Entrepreneurship and Ethics	3905
Health and Safety Officer	Jonathan Neufeld Graduate and Undergraduate Studies	3771
OCUFA Direc- tor	Tony DiPetta Pre Service Education	4729
Forum Editor	Jeannette Sloniowski Communications, Popular Culture and Film	4065
Member-at-large	Kimberly Cote Psychology	4806
Member-at-large	Dave Hughes Computer Science	3516
Member-at-large	Dan McCarthy Earth Sciences	3864
Executive Director	Kimberly Benoit BUFA Office, MCC-D402	3268
Executive Assistant	Leslie Dick BUFA Office, MCC-C409	4643