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From the Executive

Kelly Pitman, CCFA President

Well here we are in November, leaves piling up, marking piling up, outrages piling up, and, thankfully, kindnesses piling up too.

The November Board of Governors meeting was eventful and well attended. Thanks to all the faculty members who came out to show support for the Applied Communications Program. Despite both a CCFA request that the program not be cancelled yet and an EdCo report recommending an extension of the suspension until sufficient consultation had occurred, the board voted to cancel the program, effective immediately. The college has pledged to consider a new digital media program that will replace ACP. Let's hope it considers it thoroughly. The board was told that no people will actually lose their jobs due to the cancellation. Say what? I tried to correct this misinformation in my comments in the Times Colonist article on the subject, which you can view [here](#).

Many neighbourhood residents also attended the board meeting, handing out information packages to board members regarding the proposed expansion of the cell tower on the Fisher Building. Though the proposed expansion and the consequent increased radiation meet Canadian safety regulations, concerned citizens point out that Canada's regulations are far laxer than those of other countries. The college has the power to do better than these regulations and place the health of the college community first, but it does not appear to be inclined to do so. The board made clear its position that this is a matter of operations, not policy, so the decision rests with college administration. Members of CUPE and the CCFA are urging the college to reconsider the expansion, but I fear that money talks louder than community in this case, I must say. We'll see.

And then there was more drama. If you've been following the board reports, you'll know that we have been seeking a stronger connection to the board and an opportunity to speak at board meetings. In the recent past, union reps could speak only if board members had questions regarding their reports. Well, this time, the student board member (who, by the way, is an impressive young woman: brave, principled, and articulate) had questions for me. I rose to answer the first one, aquiver with excitement—this was my big moment!—but the chair directed the question to the faculty board member. I did manage to get a few words out, but was cut off. The student asked another question, a very good question, about why the CCFA feels an employee survey is important. The chair suggested I could answer any questions in my next report. The student exclaimed, "She's right here!" but she, and I, were shut down.

Well, I did what any feisty activist does at such times: I walked out, as did most of the faculty members who were there with me. To be fair, the board chair did come after me to apologize. He noted that the board would be meeting in camera to discuss (again) the issue of union reps speaking to the board. Honestly, I think it would be simpler just to let us speak for ten minutes a month than to spend an hour or more speaking about us every month.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

CCFA General Meeting:

Thursday
December 13

1:00 - 2:30 Location TBA to be followed by a Wine & Cheese: 2:30 - 5:00.



On the Friday after the board meeting, I met with Kathryn Laurin to discuss my board report. It was a civil meeting. I urged Kathryn to be more in touch with our members and the college community in general and pledged to help facilitate that. If you have items of concern you'd like me to take to Kathryn or ideas about how you'd like to see her listening and responding to CCFA members, please let me know.

On November 7, Weldon Cowan from FPSE came to the college to give a workshop on the pension and the coming pension survey. The session was well-attended, but we were a bit disappointed not to see more young (youngish?) faculty members attending. Whatever changes are made to the pension plan, those retiring in ten or twenty years will be far more affected than those retiring in the next five. Erin Waugh has sent you all a PDF copy of a short pamphlet that outlines the options for change being considered; read this so that when you fill out the pension survey, you'll be more knowledgeable. And I can't stress this enough: complete the survey (see? bolding, and underlining—really can't stress this enough). Your input will help determine the fate of your pension, and nothing can be more important than planning for the time when you're not working. So I'm going to say it one more time: complete the survey.

On November 13, union presidents will meet with administration to discuss this year's budget process and the college's ideas about making it more consultative. In preparation for this, I have been trying to meet with chairs' groups to get their input, but we want to hear as many ideas as possible (and facilitate the college hearing them too). So, if you have ideas about how the budget process could/should look, please send them to [Erin Waugh](#).

You may know that the search for VP Education is underway. Paula Young is the CCFA rep to the search committee, so if you'd like to pass on ideas about what you'd like to see in a VP Education, please forward them to [Paula](#).

Don't forget that the United Way campaign is on, with a closing date of November 23. The CCFA is proud to support the campaign again this year in line with our goal to increase the CCFA's connections to the local community. We were so proud of the members and friends who came out to the CCFA Day of Caring on November 3, where they made a whole bunch of apple sauce that was donated to The Anawim Companions Society and Sandi Merriman House. Please consider donating, and, if you want a fun way to participate, check out the fabulous UW auction at www.camosuncollegebookstore.ca/camo/uwauction. Lots of amazing items and services on offer there, so make your bid before it's too late!



Next month, we're hoping to get a big turnout to our General Meeting. It's scheduled for Thursday, December 13 from 1:00 to 2:30 and will be followed by a wine and cheese from 2:30 - 5:00 (yay!), because if we haven't earned a party by December, who the heck has? If you have items you'd like to see on the GM agenda, please forward them to Erin. And if you have any suggestions for increasing attendance at the GM, please forward these as well. These are your meetings, and we want them to be meaningful to you.

In the meantime, I hope your work is going well. Thank you for all you do to keep the college going. You may not always feel appreciated, I fear, but I certainly spend time reminding administration of how central your work is to keeping the college going. They're lucky to have you, and I tell them that on a regular basis.

Negotiating Corner

Judith Hunt, Chair Contract Negotiating Committee

Bargaining Survey Results

There was an excellent response to the bargaining survey last month, with 173 faculty members from across the college participating. The responses were far-ranging, but there were some definite trends in the answers. The percentages given below, unless otherwise indicated, are the sum of "high" and "moderate" answers.



The need for increased collaboration between faculty and administration was the top suggestion for improving the quality of work life at Camosun, and when asked directly, 93.5% of respondents said they would support establishment or improvement in collaborative decision-making between faculty and administration. In addition, 90.6% said the faculty role in appointment and selection of administrative positions such as deans and directors should be strengthened. Finally,

87.8% indicated a desire for increased role for faculty on education issues.

When asked to prioritize bargaining items for the upcoming negotiations, an overwhelming majority of faculty named salary as their top priority. In fact, 93.4% of respondents support a salary increase and 85.8% support an increase in the form of a cost of living allowance. When asked about what the top of scale for a faculty member at Camosun should be, the largest group (35%) said \$90,000 to \$95,000, and 63.8% believe our top salary should be \$90,000 or more. (For your reference, it is now at \$83,231).

The second priority for bargaining was job security. The specific areas most commonly supported were layoff and recall provisions, regularization in a timely manner, and protection against contracting out. Improvement in benefits was the third priority, with a strong response in almost all benefit categories. The highest was eyewear coverage with 51.2% of respondents seeing this as a high priority and 31.8% as moderate. Improvement in professional services such as physiotherapy and massage were next with 45.3% of answers as “high” and 31.2% as “moderate”. Next were eye exams (38.6% / 42.7%) and dental coverage (38.5% / 37.9%).

Retirement and pension issues were also seen to be important, no surprise considering that almost 42% of the participating instructors are 55 years old or older. Of all survey respondents, 84.7% would support improvements in early retirement incentives and 76.6% would support improved health and welfare benefits for retirees. In

Contract Management: Know Your Rights!

Debbie Gascoyne, Chair Contract Management Committee

Bill 14

We all have heard of, or know, someone who has taken time off for a stress leave. What you may not know is that there is new WorkSafe BC legislation that allows an employee to make a WorkSafe claim for stress-related illness related to the workplace.

In recent years, there is more and more awareness of how damaging workplace stress can be. Many wide-ranging employee surveys in both the US and Canada (one conducted by FPSE, for example) have shown that workplace stress is a huge issue for many of us. We are starting to examine the continuum between mental stress and mental illness and raising questions about the onus of an employer to guard against it. Recent important court decisions have started to bring regulatory reform that is catching up with societal awareness of the dangers of stress.

addition, 76.2% said the faculty association should lobby for inflation protection for pensions. I encourage everyone – no matter what your age – to fill out the current pension survey on this matter.

There is too much information to include in this summary, but some other areas of common concern were workload, job description, and definition for chairs, program and team leaders (84.2%), class size limits (83.7%), prep time for new faculty (78.7%), and prep time for all faculty members (76.8%). Many faculty members feel that their workload is difficult to manage (46.8%), and although 38% indicated it wasn't, there were several comments about workload being overwhelming at certain times of the semester. Finally, eighty percent of respondents support an individual choice to keep free parking (free but for the taxable benefit, as many of you pointed out) or to give up free parking in exchange for support for an alternate form of transportation.

Obviously this summary includes only the most salient survey results, but rest assured that the negotiating committee will also be mindful of other objectives which, while they were not noted by the majority, may be of high value to particular elements of our membership. The committee is now preparing proposals for bargaining and in doing so is carefully considering the priorities and suggestions expressed by the faculty members who completed both this survey and the more informal survey that was distributed in the spring. Once again, many thanks for all those who participated.



Prior to the fall of 2011, the only cause recognized for claims for stress-related illness was a single traumatic event, like a fire, an explosion, an attack by a knife-wielding assailant. But workplace stress is more often based on months or even years of exposure, and a landmark case ruled that the WorkPlace policy was discriminatory if it did not recognize that mental stress could be cumulative.

So, the new regulations allow someone to make a claim for stress caused not just by a single event but by something like a poisonous work environment, bullying or harassment. The claimant must still be under the care of a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist and must pass the same test for mental illness that is used by insurance companies. The criteria include one or more traumatic events that must be documented and identifiable. Labour relations-related events are excluded, so you cannot claim for stress related to being fired, or disciplined, or laid

off. However, improper management practices such as unreasonable demands, lack of recognition of workload concerns, improper exercise of authority and so on can be brought forward as long as they are properly documented.

So what does this mean to us? You've always been able to take a stress leave, so this new WorkSafe regulation may not seem to make much practical difference. From a Contract Management perspective, however, what is important about this new regulation is the shift of responsibility to the employer. In the same way that employers must fix a rickety stairway that has the potential to cause injury, so too must they be responsible for maintaining a workplace that is free from harassment, bullying and other stressors. If an employee makes a successful claim, WorkSafe can conduct an investigation,

CCFA Professional Development News

Kathy Lokhorst PD Committee Chair



Continuous Improvement is my byline this week...

One of the roles of the PD committee is to make sure our short-and long-term forms contain all the information you need to design the best development activity and contain all the tick-boxes and options we need to make sure your application can be swiftly and easily reviewed and approved.

We updated the short-term application form last Spring, and will soon be looking at the long-term application form in preparation for our information sessions on professional development (date to be announced). In the meantime, we're checking into our web presence.

Erin, our CCFA Administrative Assistant, has been working hard to make the camosunfaculty.ca site more appealing and easier to navigate...so we felt we must do our part to similarly improve the PD pages. Stay tuned for updates.

Finally, Erin did ask me to remind you about our finance policies with respect to travel claim advances:

and there is the potential for the employers to be fined or have their premiums increased if they do not clean up the situation. There is a new onus on the Committee for Occupational Health and Safety to be aware of these issues and to work towards improvements. Employers are expected to have a plan to combat poisonous work environments, and it can be the union's role to ask questions about that plan and how improvements will be implemented.

You can be sure that the Contract Management Committee will be keeping an eye on all these new developments and continuing to ask questions about anything that threatens your right to a safe work environment.

"Claims for travel advances should be submitted within 10 working days of return to the college."

This is a policy that hasn't always been emphasized but should be. Erin says it beautifully:

"Despite the college policy being in place for some time, this will be NEW practice for us with the PD fund. We generally have a three month grace period AND faculty are notorious for being late with that. We have decided that starting this year, we will hold them to the current guidelines (which, it would appear, will have to be changed), thereby eliminating the several, very late claims."

As Erin said, we now have another project to update the guidelines to make this more clear as our PD fund practice...

Spending a quiet weekend in remembrance, your PD chair, Kathy

<p><u>PD Committee Meetings:</u></p> <p>November 20 December 4 December 18</p> <p>Short Cut to PD Form</p>
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Your Turn

In response to *Adventures in Scheduled Development, Volume 2, Issue 4:*

Hi Bronwen,

Just a very quick, off-the-top-of my head, note:

Your well-written article in *Confluence No 4* raises some big questions that I don't have time to go into just now. But first, an observation: You should have invented a more appropriate name for your anonymous subject--Jasper is far too neutral for this moron. How about Dim (the diminutive Burgess gave to Dimitri, one of Alex's droogs in *A Clockwork Orange*)? I also wonder what dictionary provided those definitions of rape: did you, perhaps, consult Tyler McTewitt's *Online Dictionary of One-syllable Words for Gamers and Class-cutters*? No reputable dictionary would give such a definition. I hope I am right.

The whole sorry episode makes me want to remind you (all of us, really, in this rate-my-professor era) that college profs must stop trying to outdo Mother Teresa and Albert Schweitzer in the humanitarian league tables. Your big mistake was encouraging this amadawn in the first place. Why should you think he deserves more than the bare minimum of your time?

So you see, I would have shown the clotpole the door before I ever had a chance to hear about his results in Sociology, which is a matter of interest only to him and his Sociology professor. I'll stick to English. It is impossible not to be sullied by mindless violence and general bilge on the internet these days. But thoughtful and amusing personal essays like yours, keep them coming.

As for Dim (or shall I say, Jasper?): "Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination."

Jim Sexton, English

Hi Bronwen,

It took me a while to realize a student was bullying me. Yes, a student can bully a teacher. A lot of it was behind my back. The student decided she disliked, well, everything about me, and one assignment in particular, and apparently dedicated quite some time to talking ill about me and trying (without success) to get other students to complain about me. I only learned about all this at the end of the term when another student, a mature one, filled me in because she felt sick about what was happening. But you know, I always had a feeling...I could sense the student's hostility from Week 1.

Anyhow, in a case of bullying, code of conduct regulations and consequences apply.

Elizabeth Monk, ELD

Hi Bronwen,

Very interesting article. Your writing style is a pleasure to read. What would I have done? I need to reflect on it a bit...and, yes, I would have been very dismayed. I am teaching nursing, so the perspective might be different, as we are teaching classes on relational practice, stigma, marginalization, etc etc...and going out into hospitals with the students. I likely would discuss with him about his use of language, and the impact it has on me, and why.

Interestingly, I was shocked just a short while ago, reading a facebook posting from a young male cousin who works on the oil rigs. He posted a picture of his brand new truck. Another guy posted a note asking how much he got "raped for it". My cousin said, "not as much as you got raped for your 07 truck". The other guy's response, "Yeah, I really got raped without lube on that one". My stomach is still churning. Should I insert my own comment declaring my disgust for what I find utterly disrespectful? Hmmm

Kathy Bartlett, Nursing

In response to Biking With Beaker, Volume 2, Issue 4:

Erin,

I've been biking to work for the past 16 or so years. It is really the only way I know how to get to school. The only time I don't bike is for a couple of weeks in January/February if there is snow or early morning ice.

As for the rain, I am Mr. Doppler. The teaching schedule allows me to vary my departure times, so on rainy days I keep a close eye on the doppler radar and look for breaks. Not much of a fan of any type of rain gear, so if I can get to school dry I don't mind biking home in the wet.

My commute is only about 15 to 20 minutes one way, most of it avoiding busy roads.

My biggest problem with the rain is of course the cars. They're dangerous enough without the rain, but so much more distracted with it.

I definitely try to avoid biking home when it is both rainy and dark.

Darrell Pfeiffer, Computing Science

Hi Erin,

I am, so far, a diehard cycling commuter... alternating between Lansdowne and Interurban, including 2 evenings per week. So far so good... I am not so concerned about my abilities... it's the yahoos in cars on a dark rainy night that will probably make me reconsider my transportation choice... which leads me to this bit of news...

Did you know that Camosun staff can now get a red employee sticker for their vehicle that allows them to park in staff parking lots? I do not subscribe to employee permit parking benefit because I prefer to ride; however, on days where I do need to drive, and bought a ticket from the dispenser, I still had to park in the general parking lots. This really frustrated me because I was taking precious space from students while there were plenty of spaces in the staff parking areas.

After a couple of parking tickets and a few conversations with the college parking powers...we now have the new parking system for staff. I am not sure who is aware of it but it may be helpful to put the word out to other cycling staff – now you can park in staff parking lots (you still have to buy ticket from the dispenser).

Cheers,

Anne Borrowman, School of Business

A computers-for-education project in the Philippines

Submitted by Francis Yee, Geography

My involvement with this project began last summer when I was busy packing up the computers for shipping to Ghana when Ricardo Tana, who works in Physical Resources, came by and wondered what I was doing. I explained to him that the African Awareness Committee was shipping the computers to support a teacher training centre in Ghana. He got interested in our project and told me that his cousin Susanna Flores, who is a teacher in Beunlag National High School in the Pangasinan Province of the Philippines, would like to start a computer training program but there were no computing facilities available there. I subsequently received a letter from Susanna who outlined her plans to teach students in encoding, computing and doing presentations with computers. This plan was fully supported by the school principal, the teachers' club, and the parents association and it will benefit the school's 500 students.

With the assistance of one of my Geography students, Alisha Bronaugh, we started the first step of the project by collecting some used computers from various sources. Our plan is to collect 20-25 computers and so far we have about 10 collected. We would appreciate everyone's support by donating any surplus computers (with a minimum of Pentium 3 processor and a 512 mb RAM), flat screen monitors of any size, and keyboards and mouse to this project. Please contact me by email to yee@camosun.ca if you like to donate any of the above items.

Our tentative plan is to ship the computers to the school by next summer. The cost of the project, including shipping, purchase of additional used monitors, set up and networking, is about \$3,000. We just received a generous donation of \$500 from CCFA to help us to kick-start the

project. A couple of students also indicated their interests in taking on this as their service learning project in our new Service Learning and Global Issue course to be offered in Winter 2013.

I hope this will be another successful project that demonstrates Camosun faculty, staff, and students' collective spirits to address global disparities in education and digital divide. Let me know if you are interested in helping out in this project.

What Matters

Kelly Pitman, Citizen

“We are cups, constantly and quietly being filled. The trick is, knowing how to tip ourselves over and let the beautiful stuff out.” (Ray Bradbury)

I first read these words years ago, but they have come into my mind many times since. They come close to the heart of my way of being. I consider my life's work to be learning to tip myself over. But more than that, I believe that we can, and should, help tip each other over. I believe that eliciting “the beautiful stuff” from each other is the basis for almost everything.

To me, every person has a precious particularity. It is my purpose and pleasure to seek it, or rather, to pay attention to it when it appears, as it will. For me, this feeds the vibrancy and solidity of each relationship I have. When people say “relationship,” they tend to focus on the more obvious ones, between spouses, between siblings, between parents and children, between old friends. These are, of course, fundamental. To me, though, every interaction is relationship, for every interaction has the potential to reveal the spark within us. So whether I am talking to a woman at the bus stop or discussing process with an administrator or helping a student with a research essay or laughing with a colleague about slips of the tongue, I am engaged with that person's personhood, with, for lack of a better word, that person's soul.

How often, however, do we bypass or even block connection? We get locked into opinions, positions, judgments. More than anything, we get locked into our own essences, and we may, in this state, find it difficult to recognize or listen to the essences of others. We do not help them tip themselves over, and we don't see their beautiful stuff. Our loss, and theirs too.

When I remember, each time I encounter another, to be fully alive to his or her humanness and to look for the beautiful stuff, the days are full of meaning. That is what matters to me.

Updates from FPSE

FPSE-Education Policy Committee Update – October 2012

This is a quick update to let our membership know what is happening within the Educational Policy Committee of the FPSE. The role of the Education Policy Committee is to identify and express concerns and issues that need to be addressed during the next round of bargaining for all member institutions. Some issues that have been discussed are the lack of consultation processes between management and faculty associations regarding educational changes, the institutional accreditation process, the effect of international education on faculty, changes in administrations throughout the province and the lack of continuity for faculty and, the technological challenges that are occurring within the changing delivery of education.

At our latest meeting we discussed which issues have

come up from each of our locals and the changing outlook for post-secondary education with an election upcoming in BC. We spent the time as a working group to update the FPSE document Post-Secondary Education in BC: A Blueprint for Change. This updated document will give the incoming and existing legislators a glimpse of the full-value of post-secondary education in BC and of the need for government investment in our sector. The updated document will be completed early in 2013 and once finalized will be circulated amongst all FPSE faculty in the province.

If you would have any concerns regarding issues related to Educational Policy or would like to discuss more about the work the FPSE is doing, please come on by Young 205 for a chat or e-mail me at fisherb@camosun.bc.ca

*Blair Fisher, Criminal Justice
Educational Policy Committee Representative*

The Union Reel

By Kelly Pitman

Norma Rae
1979, Dir. Martin Ritt



Norma Rae tells the story of a young mother working in a textile factory in small-town North Carolina. Into this town comes an organizer from New York with the intention of unionizing the factory, and Norma Rae joins forces with him. Sally Field plays the title character, and she's the epitome of the spunky heroine: brash, wry, argumentative, energetic, and cute as a button.

The movie is perfectly paced, and the story arc is textbook stuff. The first time I saw it, I was a college student and peace activist, blockading roads, writing letters for Amnesty International, making picket signs in people's basements. I was not particularly spunky, nor cute, but I was earnest and had a streak of chutzpah, though of a more intellectual and probably more boring type. Not for me talking back to bosses and shutting down factories—my activism was primarily behind the scenes. Still, perhaps I wanted to be a little like Norma, not only because we all, when we're young, dream of being heroes, but also because I too was a young mother from a working class background.

At bottom, though, this is a film I enjoyed watching but that left me unsatisfied. For one thing, despite references to the violence and spite that often attend attempts to organize, despite one fist fight and one arrest, the film often makes unionizing seem a little like a high school election. The truth is, organizing in small towns in which the livelihood of most the residents is dependent on a single, powerful employer can be bitterly divisive. Ritt does address this, but in neat scenes that don't have enough tension to make the conflict authentic. This failure to delve in is repeated throughout the film: each time it gestures toward the cultural tensions that will always underpin and complicate political actions and conflicts, it ends up cauterizing them with a too easy resolution.

First, Ritt includes several scenes in which American prejudices are brought to the fore. It's a Baptist town, and the visiting organizer, Rueben Warshowsky, is treated with suspicion not only because he's an outsider but also because he's Jewish. A reverend refuses to allow Norma to hold a union meeting, with blacks and whites together, in the church. When she holds the meeting at home instead, Norma's husband worries about what the neighbours will think of them having black men in their house. And most tellingly, the company bosses put up a notice warning that a union would be dominated by black workers, which results in a gang of white workers beating up a black colleague. These scenes speak to the complexity of politics in a country rife with racist attitudes and policies, but Ritt tends to pick up the topic, look at it a moment, then put it down gently. No real analysis occurs, with the result that we can come away from the film with the impression that prejudice is a side issue, easy to disentangle from our systems of power and relationships.

Second, the film addresses the role that gender politics can play in determining our responses to female activists. This happens openly, as in the scene in which the union bigwigs come from upstate to tell Rueben that Norma Rae is a liability for the campaign due to her loose behavior. The sexual behavior of the men never comes up. Presumably their affairs are private and can be neatly separated from their public lives. Ritt mocks this inequity, but he also falls into the trap seemingly awaiting anyone who makes a popular film with a female protagonist, focusing just as much on the effect Norma's activism has on her role as a wife and mother as he does on the powerful story of a worker who finds her voice and speaks out for social justice. And, of course, there's the requisite "two suitors" theme, in which the attraction between Norma and Rueben threatens her marriage. Ritt does not entirely fall prey to cliché, for he resists turning the story into a straightforward romantic comedy. Rueben and Norma do not fall into bed—they part with a handshake—and Norma's accomplishments are not reduced to a Cinderella story. Then again, the film ends with an expression of strong, albeit unfulfilled, sexual attraction between the protagonists as well as with assurances that her marriage is secure. Norma's femininity is preserved.

What most disappoints me about the film, though, is that in its focus on the transformation of one woman, it de-emphasizes the collective. This is one of the great tensions in political films that are bound by the plot conventions of the Hollywood feel-good movie. We experience life as separate and autonomous beings, and popular film feeds that sense of ourselves. And, of course, one person can make change—we who have our heroes and our leaders know that. Still, when groups organize to seek stronger rights, the individual is to some extent subsumed in the collective, and Ritt doesn't really go there. Can't go there, in fact, without throwing a wrench into the Hollywood machine. The result is that we come away from the film with only a vague notion of what the labour issues might be or what the good of the collective would look like.

The most moving scene in the film makes this conflict between individualism and collectivity acute. Norma Rae, about to be dragged from the factory, writes the word “union” on a piece of paper, gets up on a table, holds the sign aloft, and turns in a slow circle, watched by all the workers. One by one, they shut down their machines, and as the noise of the factory diminishes switch by switch, our hearts swell at Norma’s courage and the effect it has on her compatriots. At the same time, she alone turns the tide: no Norma, no union. Later in the film, when the vote narrowly delivers the victory to the union side, it is clear that while individual actions, such as casting a ballot, do matter, they tend to have significance primarily when counted with the actions of others. But the image we carry away from the film is of spunky Norma Rae, arms raised high, one woman above the crowd.

Well, it’s entertainment, after all, and it does please. As someone who feels pretty darn serious about trying to “make a difference,” I can be easily seduced by Norma Rae Webster. Wouldn’t it be great, I muse, at the next Board of Governors meeting, to climb up on one of the Boardroom tables and hold up a sign, to brave the spotlight? I like performance as much as the next person. I can be feisty, I can! Yes, it might be thrilling, but when it comes to the crux, it’s all about joining forces, about committees and conversations and votes and deciding what’s best for the collective. I place a lot of stock in individual connections, but I know it’s not about me. It’s about us.

Adventures in Scheduled Development

by Bronwen Welch

I don’t know if any of you read The Globe and Mail article about Queen’s University instructor Michael Mason, a history professor with over forty years’ experience?

If you haven’t heard of the case, here’s a quick summary: Queen’s Administration has “banned” (as he puts it) Mason from teaching because of accusations (from one person) that he made racist remarks in class. Mason’s course was a second year history course on imperialism and neo-colonialism after the Second World War, and his comments, were, it turns out, contextualized within the body of a lecture. Thus, when Mason referred to “little yellow sons of bitches,” he was teaching from John W. Dower’s book, *Cultures of War* (2010), and was, in fact, quoting directly from the text. Within the context of the same lecture, Mason also used the following racial epithets: “fucking rag head,” “towel head,” and “japs.”

At any rate, the case was taken to the Canadian Association of University Teachers investigatory committee. The Committee, after an investigation, has demanded that Queens University’s Administration apologize to Mason. The administration has not complied, and has stuck to its original issue, that Mason violated the principle creating a “safe space” for his students.

As usual I have a series of jumbled feelings about this. I agree that a classroom should always be a safe space, and I strive to create a feeling of safety in my own classrooms. However, that being said, I will come right out and tell you that, within the context of my own lectures, I have veered into territory some might find questionable or even offensive. I try to always preface such lectures with both an explanatory note in my course outline, as well as a verbal reminder to the students that I will be

discussing social issues, language, or literary works that some students might find provocative or even distasteful.

In other words, I cover my bottom.



But how much of one’s bottom need one cover? Okay, let me rephrase: where is Academic Freedom in all this? Is Academic Freedom not the right to teach, in the best way we know how, free from discrimination and punishment? Let’s say I really play it safe and so I cut out all the moments in my lectures and all the readings in my syllabus that might cause offence? My classroom might indeed become “safe” under the strictures of Queen’s University’s orthodoxy, but do we choose safety over richness and variety? Does fear not then take over, and when fear takes over, what is left?

Dr. Michael Mason, as far as I understand it, was not shying away from history’s unpleasant truths. He decided to illuminate some of the world’s ugliness rather than veiling it in euphemisms. I applaud his bravery, while at the same time taking a good hard look at what I teach and how I teach it. What should we be willing to risk in order to teach according to our convictions? My belief is that we should be willing to risk everything. Yet, if it came down to my reputation, my job, could I stand up and continue to teach according to my principles, knowing that I could lose so much because I might cause offence to someone? We all want to trust our own integrity, but I honestly don’t know what I would do. I wish I did know.

What do y’all think? I would like to know.

