

Local 556 Bursaries

by Tom Tomassi



Bursary recipients Katherine Gandy (left) and Shanell King (third from left) are congratulated by Lorie Budge (second from left), from the General Education and Access/Aboriginal Education Department and Local 556 President, Tom Tomassi (far right).

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Hi all and welcome to Spring. Although, at the time of writing this article it feels like anything but Spring.

I know that this is a really hectic time for all of us—the end of Spring Semester, exams, marks due and all of the stuff that keeps us going. But for some of us, it is also a sign of relief, as the end of this semester may bring about some quiet time. Here at the local union office we are as busy as any other time during the year, as issues have a tendency to present themselves in such a way that need to be addressed and resolved. The type of issues that we deal with fall within the full gamut of the spectrum. I must say that pleasant issues are not a normal occurrence. Recently

however, there *was* one of those days where the work that was done brought about that fuzzy and warm feeling that makes you feel really good about what you do. What I am talking about is the awarding of the Local 556 Bursary. As you know this bursary was established three years ago and even though it was limited to \$1,500.00, we have been able to raise money in other venues, such the GBC Golf Tournament, to double this amount. This year we split the money into two bursaries of \$1,500.00 each. Applicants for this bursary have to meet the minimum requirements set out by the bursary committee. We are pleased to say

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Cheers, Dave

by Tom Tomassi



This past January, the college hosted a get together to bid farewell to Dave Ivany, Manager, Labour Relations. Of course, the local was invited, and myself, Damian, Jennifer and Madeline attended on behalf of faculty. Why all the fuss about Dave Ivany? Well, for the past nine years, the local has worked closely with Dave in resolving many issues. He was always keen to try and find a local resolution to the issues, rather than third party decisions. In dealing with the business at hand, he always showed a good understanding and a real feel for the problem—especially when we dealt with issues of a personal nature.

At the time of writing this article, the college has not yet hired a replacement, although the position has been posted. Since we have not been asked to participate in the selection of Dave's replacement, we have no knowledge of what is happening. Hopefully, someone will be hired soon to replace him, since having a designated person dedicated to the resolution of disputes would make the work at our local much easier.

Dave is an avid golfer and regrettably I never had an opportunity to play golf with him—not even at the GBC Golf Tournament. Maybe now that he is retired, I may get that chance.

Please join me in congratulating Dave on his retirement and wishing him all the best in his future endeavors. ▼

Student Safety

by Ed Larocque

At a Health & Safety meeting we asked the college the question: “*Who is responsible for the safety of our students?*” The answer to the question is as follows:

Students on Campus: The employee who is facilitating, or otherwise teaching the class, acts as an agent of the college to ensure a safe working environment in that area. The ultimate responsibility rests with the college.

Students on Placement: The employer where the students are employed—either paid or volunteer—is responsible for ensuring a safe working environment.

Students’ Personal Responsibilities: Follow rules and procedures of the workplace or learning location, wear PPE (personal protective equipment), report hazards to supervisor, and watch out for fellow workers.

All accidents must be reported immediately to a Health and Safety office. i.e. First-Aid, or Security, including any accidents that occur while on placement. All ‘Critical Injuries’ must be reported to the Ministry of Labour.”

The following is a list of recommendations regarding best practices and procedures:

- Report any accident to First Aid and notify your immediate supervisor. If First Aid is not available, as is the case during the evening hours, call Security.
- When warranted, ensure that Health & Safety is in your course outline.
- Ensure that at the beginning of every class you “take five for safety”. This means informing the class of the procedures that are in place should an emergency occur.
- When Health and Safety is part of the curriculum, record in a personal

journal the topics discussed and who was in attendance.

- If students fail to meet the basic safety requirements of the course outline, you may want to consider that their presence in the class is unsafe and withhold participation until such time that they can satisfy the requirements.
- When appropriate, discuss the availability and use of PPE (personal protective equipment) and keep a record of participants.
- Maintain an open channel of communication with your chairperson vis à vis your delivery of the safety aspect. Invite the chairperson to suggest changes, should any be needed.
- Should you wish to obtain Health & Safety training, make this request to your chairperson and ensure that it is recorded on your SWF. If (for what ever reason) the request is denied, make sure it is recorded under ‘Faculty Comments’.
- Ask your chairperson if any changes are required to what you are doing to ensure student safety and keep records.

I hope that the above is clear and helpful to you in your everyday interaction with administrators, colleagues and students. ▼



The following declaration was adopted by a broad range of community and social justice organizations, unions and individuals across the Greater Toronto Area, and was the focus of the Toronto and York Region's GOOD JOBS SUMMIT in November, 2008.

The School of Labour at George Brown College has formally endorsed this declaration.

Declaration

Good Jobs for All—for a Greater Toronto Toronto—A Place of Hope and Challenge

from the Toronto and York Region Labour Council

Since the First Nations gave Toronto the name “a gathering place,” the city and region have been the destination of choice for generations of immigrants and refugees, who come with their skills and dreams of making a better life for themselves and their families. While many found those dreams fulfilled, opportunity and prosperity were never fully shared.

Many factors contributed to our quality of life: active government engagement; a strong industrial base with middle income union jobs; a well-funded education system; cohesive public services and social programs; the struggles of women, immigrants and racialized communities for equality; the dedication of community activists for social justice; and a deep desire for environmental sustainability. However, the growth of inequality and environmental degradation challenges us all.

A Shared Vision

We are living in a special moment in history. The dominant economic model of recent years is leaving many behind. We know from real experience that other ways are possible, even in a period of rapid globalization. ***Together we can build an economy with good jobs for all.*** Working people know those factors that are critical in providing good jobs:

- The right for every worker to be treated with respect and dignity
- The ability to have full-time, stable employment
- The right for everyone to have a living wage
- The need to have work that is safe and healthy
- The enforcement of labour rights and standards in all forms of work
- The right to have a collective voice at work through unionization
- The investment in public education and life long learning
- The recognition of diverse qualifications, skills, learning and creativity
- The provision of benefits for medical, dental, vision and disability needs
- The equitable access to work, extended training and advancement
- The opportunity to participate in a greener economy
- The ability to retire with dignity

Good Jobs for All

Decent work is central to our fulfilment and well-being. Decent work provides people with a livelihood, an identity and a sense of real belonging to the community. We must ensure there are good jobs for everyone, today and for the next generation. We reject policies which undermine and erode decent work.

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that there are two successful candidates this year. They will both be able to use these funds to continue with their post secondary education.

We are proud to announce that Katherine Gandy and Shanell King are this year's bursary recipients.

Katherine Gandy is a first year student in the Assaulted Women and Children Counsellor/Advocate Program (AWCCA). Katherine is very involved with the George Brown College Sahkitcheway Aboriginal Student Committee, she is a member of the GBC Aboriginal Student Association and a volunteer with the Aboriginal Achievement Music Awards.

Shanell King is in her second year of the Child and Youth Worker Program. Shanell is a first generation student here at the College and we all recognize how difficult and stressful this can be. Shanell's aspirations for the future are to graduate from GBC and inspire other native students to be the best they can be.

I am sure you join me in congratulating both Katherine and Shanell and wish them well in their pursuit of their chosen studies. I want to thank you all for making this bursary program possible. ▼

Annual General Membership Meeting

Thursday May 14th
4 pm - 6 pm

St. James Campus
Auditorium
Room 315A

*To be followed
by a social get together
at Betty's*



THE GREEN CORNER

Green Thumb

The poet spoke the truth—“April is the cruelest month”. Although the sun may be shining, it is still cold. However, we have our dreams to keep us warm. At this time of the year, when many of us dream of gardening—we should be dreaming in ‘living green’.

Don't use pesticides and inorganic fertilizers. They can kill many of the creatures and organisms on which a healthy garden depends. Here are a few tips that will help ensure that your garden will be truly 'green':

Improve the Soil Naturally

Healthy soil produces vigorous plants which can easily fight off pests and diseases. It also helps them

to flower and fruit in greater abundance. Improve the soil by adding organic material to your soil at the beginning of each growing season. You can never add too much organic matter to soil. Add well composted materials—a balance of 'brown' (dead leaves, wood shavings, etc.) and 'green' (fresh grass clippings, kitchen waste, etc.) is best. You should also add things such as blood meal, fish meal and bone meal. You can add seaweed to the soil to reduce transplant shock and increase frost resistance. (For more on composting see VoLo Vol. 2, No. 1)

Use Mulch

Use any organic material such as leaves, straw, pine bark, pine needles and wood chips. These mulches, when placed on the soil surface around plants, preserve moisture and suppress weeds.

Insect Pests

Think about pesticide-free controls for some of the more common insect pests that you may find in your garden.

Water

Use barrels to collect rain water. Water plants well, but only when necessary—before they wilt or show signs of distress. Water plants in mid to late morning.

There are a host of books and internet sites which can provide lots of additional tips for gardening successfully—naturally.

Now, roll up your sleeves & enjoy the season!

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With this Declaration, We Call on People from all Walks of Life:

1. To demand an economy with good jobs for all.
2. To build social solidarity in our communities, our workplaces, our organizations and public institutions.
3. To insist on public policies from all orders of government that support the goals of a just, equitable and inclusive society.
4. To require all with power in our society to exercise that power for the common good.
5. To ensure that economic activities are sustainable, enabling future generations to meet their needs while living in harmony with our planet and with each other.

What can we do at George Brown to shape the future of Toronto? Here is a partial list of what we can do as a community to further this vision of “Good Jobs for All”:

- Educate ourselves about what the labour movement has done for working people not just in working for stable, well-paid employment, but also social benefits for all
- Support people's rights to unionize
- Challenge myths about unions
- Discuss this declaration with students in classes and special events
- Join with students in actions promoting a living wage and stable, full-time employment
- Work with laid-off and unemployed workers and disadvantaged communities to expand access to training and education
- Integrate sustainable, green practices into all aspects of the college community and our local communities
- Advocate within the college and the broader community for all of these rights and benefits. ▼

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The Vocal Local is a publication of the George Brown College Faculty Union, OPSEU Local 556. It is intended to provide information and stimulate discussion among its members. We invite your participation and welcome your contributions. We reserve the right to edit for libel, length and clarity.

Send your comments, articles, letters to the editor, praise, etc. to:
 VoLo Editor at opseu556@gmail.com

