

The Sentinel

UUP-Oneonta

The Sentinel

Volume 3, No.9: December 2003

New Solidarity at a Hundred Days

by Bill Simons, President

The New Solidarity of UUP Oneonta has now been in place one hundred days. We have started well, primarily because of an outstanding Executive Board, focused committees and rank-and-file activists—both veteran and new. Semester's end is a benchmark, marking the end of a strong beginning and preparations for a new campaign to save SUNY.

New Solidarity's first hundred days have been framed by two important events: at inception, by its participation on May 3, 2003, in a significant education rally; at the end, by the publication of the results of air tests undertaken on this campus. In between those events, individual crises found confidential and compassionate responses, Labor-Management meetings were reinstated and important understandings reached, new Committees were formed which established ambitious agendas, advocacy activities with local & state legislators took place, preliminary actions were taken to prepare for the upcoming budget fight through letter writing and lobbying campaigns, assertive public stands were taken on the issues that matter in the press and other forums, and ties to our parent union were strengthened.

Throughout this period UUP Oneonta has made the promotion of a "big-tent-welcome-to-all" its top priority. New Solidarity has endeavored and will continue to meet and respect part-timers as well as full-timers, professionals as well as faculty, the untenured as well as the tenured, and the active as well as the retired, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age or sexual orientation. Apathy, isolation and fragmentation are prescriptions for disaster; united, however, we can prevail in this historic struggle.

I owe thanks to many more than I can list. The acknowledgments that follow are emblematic of others much appreciated, albeit unmentioned here. Former presidents and incumbent vice presidents Ed Wesnofske and Norm Payne provide sage counsel and institutional memory. Richie Lee has transformed *The Sentinel* from a flyer to an important publication. Keith Fitzpatrick, with his passion and commitment, has emerged as a great advocate for professionals; Linda Randall has also lent her talents to this campaign. Steve Johnson has lent professionalism and formidable expertise to the design of survey instruments. Jay McDermott made Campus Equity Week a sin-

gular success and, supported by Julie Freeman and Bill Ashbaugh, is a powerful voice for part-time concerns. Bill Wilkerson, superbly assisted by Loraine Tyler, Nancy Cannon, and Michael Koch, is addressing workload issues with resourceful diligence. The indefatigable Rob Compton's official minutes of diverse meetings constitute an essential record. The invaluable and informative Mona Hughes serves as Benefits Officer with good humor and empathy. Janet Nepkie, Joe Baldwin, Tom DeMeo and Chris Bulson—delegates to UUP's statewide governance—are powerful links between Oneonta and Albany. Rich Tyler brings meticulous devotion to his stewardship of the treasury. President emeritus Fred Miller remains a superb political point-man with state legislators; another esteemed former president, John Carney, has brought strong commitment to the task of chapter development. Paul Conway conducts grievance matters with integrity and discretion. Karin De Waal and Francine Stayer have accepted appointment to an important educational concerns committee. Dennis Selzner is a superb labor relations professional. Denny Shea, our first chapter-president, and Dan Payne, devotee of literature and the law, provide indispensable advice. And Peg Carney, an incomparable office manager, loyally and expertly balances tasks and deadlines.

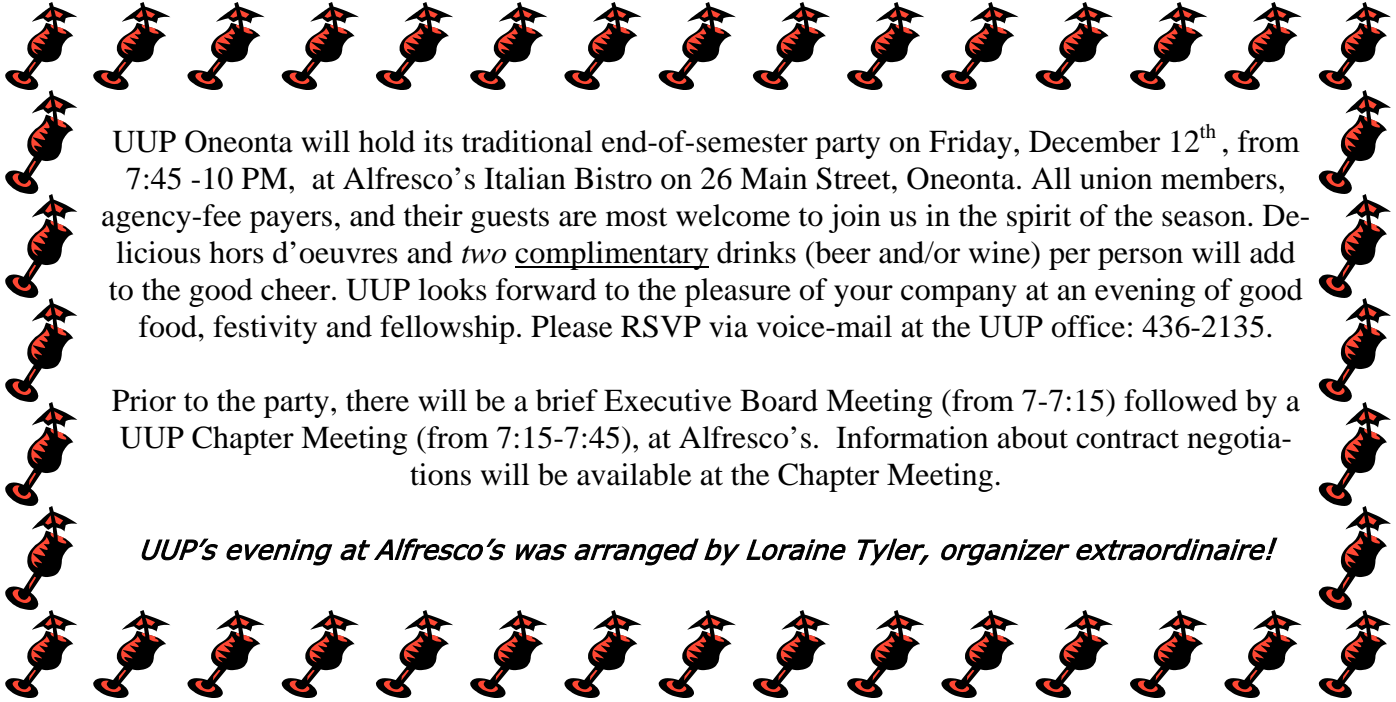
Make no mistake, however: UUP leaders and rank-and-file cannot rest on their laurels. We must confront the serious challenges that threaten SUNY, our students, working conditions and job security. We need to maintain patience, courage and perspective as UUP negotiates a new contract. Be ready to travel to Albany in the spring to fight for a strong SUNY budget. And, in every forum available to you, advocate against proposed SUNY-wide testing that will degrade education.

An abridged version of the final report of John Van Raalte concerning air quality in Netzer, the IRC and Shumacher prior to abatement-work begins on page 5. The complete and unabridged copy of the report will soon be available on line at the UUP website, in the UUP campus office (206 HECO) and at Milne Library.

Finally, regardless of your faith, or lack thereof, may the holidays and the year ahead bring health and happiness to you and yours—and to all humanity.



End-of-Semester Party!



UUP Oneonta will hold its traditional end-of-semester party on Friday, December 12th, from 7:45 -10 PM, at Alfresco's Italian Bistro on 26 Main Street, Oneonta. All union members, agency-fee payers, and their guests are most welcome to join us in the spirit of the season. Delicious hors d'oeuvres and *two complimentary* drinks (beer and/or wine) per person will add to the good cheer. UUP looks forward to the pleasure of your company at an evening of good food, festivity and fellowship. Please RSVP via voice-mail at the UUP office: 436-2135.

Prior to the party, there will be a brief Executive Board Meeting (from 7-7:15) followed by a UUP Chapter Meeting (from 7:15-7:45), at Alfresco's. Information about contract negotiations will be available at the Chapter Meeting.

UUP's evening at Alfresco's was arranged by Loraine Tyler, organizer extraordinaire!

December 2003

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Schedule of Events for December

- 12/1** Labor-Management Meeting
3:00 pm in Netzer 341
- 12/12** 7:00pm: Exec Board Meeting;
7:15pm: Chapter Meeting
&
7:45pm: Holiday Party at
Alfresco's (26 Main St.)
- 12/19** Last day of fall semester
& an era ends as
Jim Devlin retires. Jim says,
"Apres mois, le deluge..."



Negotiators Tackle Key Issues

An innovative idea in the negotiations process is yielding results on a number of key issues, as the union's Negotiations Team continues its progress at the bargaining table.

Seven negotiations subcommittees began meeting with the state in mid-November, and their work is well under way, said UUP Vice President for Academics Phillip Smith, the union's chief negotiator. Smith said progress made at the subcommittee level will provide a solid foundation on which the full Negotiations Team can build when it focuses its attention on monetary issues at the bargaining table next month.

"The purpose of these subcommittees is to keep negotiations going forward and focused on areas where we have made, and continue to make, progress," Smith said. "Our goal is to keep the negotiations process moving along and keep our eyes on the prize—a new contract that guarantees our members a well-deserved salary increase and the protections they deserve, in a supportive, creative work environment for all. It's important to remember that many of the issues of concern in this process are non-monetary issues."

The topics being addressed are professional issues; joint labor/management; grievance and discipline; health benefits; privacy; part-time concerns; and protection of students, which is an initiative of the state.

UUP President William Scheuerman said the negotiations process is on schedule and moving at a deliberate pace that ensures the best chance of avoiding layoffs and achieving a good contract. "The areas these subcommittees are addressing are of paramount importance—health care, grievances and part-time concerns, to name just a few," Scheuerman said.

"But equally important to our members, they are laying the foundation for overall progress as we continue our work at the bargaining table. We are once again at a point where we can talk about issues of interest to both sides."

The subcommittee members are drawn from the Negotiations Team and will be reporting regularly to the full team. The Negotiations Team, in turn, will provide guidance and feedback as the subcommittees address their assigned topics.

The time is right for such a step, Smith said:

"The subcommittees are working in areas in which we believe we can reach agreement with the state," he said. "When we accomplish our goals for these issues, it improves the tone for the overall negotiations process. The subcommittee topics are critical areas of interest to both UUP and the state, and it helps to be exploring mutual interests rather than significant differences."

Scheuerman said that members should have full confidence in the Negotiations Team, which has already demonstrated that it will not settle for anything less than a strong, progressive agreement.

"The progress we are making now will stand us in good stead as we prepare to tackle the critical monetary issues in the negotiations process," Scheuerman said. "Our members can be assured that we have the patience, the determination and the collective skill to achieve an excellent contract for them."

"The negotiations process is on schedule"





November 10 Labor-Management Meeting Minutes

by Rob Compton, Secretary

For Management: Dan Larkin, Nancy Nash and Tom Rathbone

For UUP: Bill Simons, Rob Compton, Keith Fitzpatrick and Dennis Selzner

I. Air Quality Report and Follow-up

- A. UUP: the report is now available and we reiterate our appreciation for management cooperation and partnership on this issue
- B. Management notes that the following was done:
1. Schumacher, Netzer and the IRC: entrances tested for mold and asbestos
 2. Mold tests of most common types
 - a.) Entrance area
 - b.) Mold colony count
 3. The mold results show
 - a.) Outside count of mold higher
 - b.) IRC area: 350 count (*wallemia sebi*), but still below outside environment
 - c.) Above associated with food and sugar in the buildings. This is no more than a standard home would have, whereas a barn's count would be in the millions.
 - d.) Will repeat protocol for mold
 4. The asbestos-test results show:
 - a.) No problems outside of tunnel
 - b.) Painters will be back
 5. Smell
 - a.) Door-sweep installation for smell containment will be done
 - b.) Vent work started
 6. Bottom line is that there are NO PLANS to reactivate use of tunnel except for maintenance-related work.
- C. UUP commended industrial hygienist John Van Raalte for his excellent work including the narrative of the report
- D. UUP asked for reports as subsequent abatement work takes place and stated that we may still return to these issues, especially as it pertains to odor
- E. Management stated that the odors are molecular in nature and not harmful
- F. UUP noted that this testing issue should be a good precedent for cooperation and stated that the results will be published and copies of report will be made available in the UUP office and the library
- G. Management agreed on placing report in Milne Library

II. Media Policy

- A. UUP provided the wording as requested by Management at the last Labor Management meeting pertaining to point #7:
"The Office of External Affairs occasionally refers representatives of the media to members of the college community and appreciates the cooperation and response of the college faculty and staff to such requests."
- B. Management will confer on this. UUP and Management agreed to return to this at the next Labor-Management meeting

III. Labor Day

- A. UUP noted with concern that some campuses schedule no classes for Labor Day; at SUCO, students and instructional faculty work.
- B. Management noted that the Calendar Committee plans the calendar well in advance:
1. It is impossible to accommodate all holidays
 2. It is impossible to adhere to the 37.5 hours contact rule for 3 credit classes (for accrediting purposes), schedule the breaks during the semester, and have all the holidays
 3. It would require an earlier start or possible continuation of a semester in January semester; neither would work.

(See "Minutes" on page 7)



INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY SURVEY

(Editor's note: due to space limitations, UUP is publishing the abridged version, edited by UUP, that follows; the full and unabridged report, complete with tables, will be available to all interested parties on the UUP website, in the UUP Oneonta office and at Milne Library.)

1. SUMMARY

The investigation consisted of an initial meeting with Tom Rathbone, Bill Simons and Norm Payne and a walk-around inspection to areas of concern, especially the occupied areas outside the three steam-tunnel portals in Netzer, the IRC and Schumacher. Bioaerosol sampling of these areas for fungi and bacteria was conducted to determine the levels of potential particles which could have originated in the tunnel. Indoor air quality indicators of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, temperature and relative humidity were used to gauge general ventilation adequacy in the three areas. Asbestos in air sampling in the three occupied areas was also collected to determine if asbestos in the tunnel was affecting air in these buildings.

Recommendations for improving the indoor environment & summary of results:

- 1. Control water infiltration into tunnel**
- 2. Remediate water-damaged materials in tunnel**
- 3. Levels of fungi found in the air in the occupied space were typical of indoor levels, although some indicator species of moisture were noted.**
- 4. No asbestos was detected in any of the three occupied areas, at the level of detection of the test method.**
- 5. Ventilation and slight negative pressurization of the steam tunnel after remediation will prevent any potential negative impact of air from the tunnel into the occupied space.**
- 6. To insure that potential impacts from past conditions in the tunnel are mitigated, areas around the tunnel portals in the three buildings should be HEPA-vacuumed and wet-wiped.**
- 7. Employees with concerns about illness should obtain diagnoses from medical providers**

Some employees had concerns about tunnel-related illnesses. If allergies are suspected, allergists should be consulted to determine causative allergens. Many environmental allergens are ubiquitous, including fungi and pollen. Levels of fungi found in these buildings are typical of levels found in schools and homes during past sampling. Allergy and irritation are the potential effects of fungal contamination at low to moderate levels, such as those found in the steam tunnel. Irritation would be expected to end after the removal of the fungal material. Odors are not particles such as fungal spores, but are organic solvents and in the air in the form of molecules, which are rapidly (minutes to hours) removed by the general ventilation system, once the source is removed. Particles such as fungal spores and asbestos fibers can settle out onto surfaces and carpets, but they are removed by HEPA vacuuming and wet wiping.

8. Indoor environmental quality measurements were normal and at acceptable levels at the time of the visit

Measurements made of carbon dioxide levels, humidity, temperature and carbon monoxide were within recommended ranges, indicating that adequate outdoor air was being delivered to the space during the site visit. Carbon dioxide measurements were all at or below 800 parts-per-million in occupied areas on a warm, late-summer afternoon. No carbon monoxide was detected. Interior temperatures were 72-76 degrees, with relative humidity from 35- 50%.

2. BACKGROUND

The Occupational and Environmental Health Center of Eastern NY (OEHC) was originally contacted by

Bill Simons of UUP-Oneonta for assistance in investigating conditions in the occupied areas of the tunnel portals. Following negotiations between UUP and SUNY-Oneonta administration, the College contracted with OEHC to carry out the survey and airborne monitoring for asbestos and bioaerosols in the portal areas. This tunnel is T-shaped and connects to three different buildings. Follow-up sampling is planned after all changes and cleanup is completed. On 10/21/03, UUP had John Van Raalte to a meeting to discuss the results of the survey and to answer questions about the findings.

3. DISCUSSION

A. Mold and Fungus: Fungus, also known as mold, is always present in buildings in the form of microscopic seeds known as spores. Normally, fungus cannot grow in indoor environments due to lack of moisture. However, if moisture from leaks, condensation, high humidity or other sources is present, fungal spores normally present can germinate and grow indoors. Active fungal growth is never desirable indoors, and some people may be allergic to fungal species. Fungal growth can cause building deterioration, odors, respiratory irritation and asthma. Evaluation of fungal growth is difficult for several technical reasons, such as the generally lower levels found during periods of low relative humidity such as the winter months, and the inability to effectively evaluate the amount of growth in hidden void spaces of the structure. In addition, soil fungal spores enter on the soles of shoes and in the outdoor ventilation air, which should be filtered to reduce the levels of spores. Whenever the doors or win-

See "Air Quality" on page 6



Air Quality (continued from page 5)

dows open, spores enter with the outdoor air. Most fungal material inside the building is in the form of dead fungal growth or non-viable spores. This material cannot grow but can still cause allergic reactions or irritation.

Visual and olfactory inspections are the primary means of evaluation. Tests for bioaerosols—living-organism-derived materials suspended in the air—can be done for fungus, bacteria, and other allergens and materials. Tests were done for fungus and bacterial spores in the air. These “viable” spores are capable of germinating on an agar plate, and are indicative of more recent accumulations of fungal material in the building. Fungal growth in an area can lead to higher levels of viable spores if the spores are aerosolized and collected by the sampling mechanism. In fact, these materials are so small that they will follow air currents. Normal custodial care and ventilation should hold the material to low or moderate levels, and visible fungal growth should never be allowed in interior spaces.

Bioaerosol levels of living fungus in the building were low to moderate, with levels found being typical of offices; genera and species found were unremarkable with two exceptions. *Wallemia sebi* is an unusual species to find as the predominant interior fungus—as it was in sample number 4 in the IRC. This species seems to be more associated with food than water damage, and it is not strongly associated with allergies, although there are reports of allergic reactions in the literature. A description of this species (by P & K Microbiology) is included as Appendix 3. None of the adjoining hallways were entered, but there may be a source in the building to account for these levels. The species was also found at lower levels in Schumacher Hall. Tracking the level of this species post-cleanup should prove enlightening.

Levels of *Aspergillus versicolor* were also somewhat elevated from typical levels. This is a common indoors species, but typically it is found at levels below 10%. It was also found outdoors on the campus, indicating that it is a background species. Somewhat elevated levels were found in Schumacher. This is a soil fungi that is an indicator of moisture. Outdoors levels of both *penicillium* and *aspergillus* were higher than is typical: this indicates that these species will both be found indoors, if only due to foot traffic and opening doors. Again, post-cleanup levels of this species should show a reduction. The *Aspergillus* species that is most associated with fungal infections and illnesses, *Aspergillus fumigatus*, was not found in the sampling.

These indoor levels were well below the levels found outdoors, indicating that the air-filtration system is working. Typically, outdoor levels of *Cladosporium* are elevated, and this was the case here. Numerous species found outdoors were found indoors, as is expected. Bacterial levels were moderate, indicating reasonable custodial care. The same dominant bacteria indoors were also dominant outdoors. In general, bacteria found indoors are derived from the people in the building; they are a normal indicator of human habitation.

B. Water Leaks: Water leaks can lead to fungal growth. Aggressive action to immediately dry the wetted materials should be taken whenever there are leaks. Specialized contractors can supply dehumidifiers of extreme size for severe water damage, but response must be very prompt. In the tunnel, ventilation and prompt removal of water by the floor drains should prevent a recurrence of the fungal growth.

(See “Air Quality” on page 8)

Join the UUP VOTE/COPE Drive



Your contribution shifts UUP's Political Action Agenda into high gear



Because No Good Deed Goes Unpunished...

Editor's note: a recent discussion on the ONEUUP listserv (oneuup@oneonta.edu) focused on the issue of teaching overloads and special projects insofar as they affect "past practice" for teaching faculty and professional staff. A recent posting by Janet Nepkie on the issue is excerpted below. Please note the underlined "could" on line 3. Obviously, if you have concerns regarding this issue that are of a personal or confidential nature, you should contact Bill Simons or Paul Conway, Grievance Officer.

... one of the problems that a heavy workload can create is to change "past practice" for an individual or a department. If an individual takes on extra work—for example, an electronic course—that "extra" work COULD become an expectation for the individual in the future. It could also become an expectation for the entire department. One way to avoid this situation is to make a statement in writing saying that this extra load or overload is a ONE-TIME-ONLY activity. Here is wording that was suggested to me a few years ago by someone on our own campus. I hope we'll consider recommending that the following be given to administration for each addition to workload:

Draft Agreement for UUP members performing new assignments/projects

Faculty/staff member is performing this task (teaching a class, doing a project, etc.) on a voluntary basis as a part of professional enhancement.

Performance of this task

- * does not represent a precedent for purposes of future assignments
- * does not represent a precedent for others on campus
- * may occur more than once without affecting any part of this agreement.

The above conditions will be in effect whether or not financial or other compensation is offered or accepted.

*The favors we do
can become the
burdens we bear.*

Minutes (continued from page 4)

- C. UUP raised this because of our strong connection to the symbolic importance of the day to the union
- D. UUP stated that Binghamton did accomplish the observance of all major holidays without the problems noted by management. We will obtain their academic calendar

IV. Budget Developments:

- A. Management and UUP agree to come back to this at a later date.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm 11/10/03

UUP ONLINE:

<http://uupinfo.org>



Air Quality (continued from page 6)

If growth is noted, this is an area where the moderate use of biocides may be helpful, since there are no occupants who could be affected. Scrubbing with detergent and a bleach solution before the growth is extensive should eliminate it and any accompanying odors.

Investigating intermittent odors can be problematic. Sophisticated air-sampling techniques are available for definitively identifying odors in the air, but they are less useful in situations where the problem is intermittent. Increasing levels of general ventilation will usually solve low-level contaminant problems when a source has not been identified.

C. Relative Humidity (RH) is important for several reasons. Expressed as a percentage, it will vary dramatically relative to the temperature. The levels will always track outdoor conditions unless equipment is used to change humidity levels. This is true in offices, homes, vehicles and outdoors. To prevent fungal growth, RH should be kept below 60-70%. This is generally a problem in the summer; the air conditioning system in the building can control humidity, however, the area must be kept sealed, without windows or doors open, if the equipment is to be effective. During the survey, RH was around the ideal value of 50% or below.

In winter, humidity levels can be very low, on the order of 10% RH if the air is very clear and cold. Drier air can cause several symptoms in sensitive persons, including nasal irritation, eye irritation, sinus symptoms, skin symptoms such as rashes and itching, and irritated throats and voices. There is no good way to increase humidity levels, since humidification systems have been linked to Legionnaires' Disease—a potentially fatal illness—and the promotion of both fungal and bacterial growth if the system is not cleaned and operated very carefully. Virtually no buildings open to public use employ centralized humidifiers today. Most homes are also not humidified and will have the same humidity levels as other buildings. Drinking a lot of water, using eye drops if necessary, and using other means to moisten mucous membranes will help with symptoms. Individual or smaller-area humidifiers are available and may provide some increase in the RH level if the air-stream is directed very near to the user's breathing zone. All wetted, functional parts must be regularly cleaned, however, to prevent the growth of algae (slime), bacteria and other micro-organisms.

Prepared by: John Van Raalte, M.S., C.I.H.

Director of Industrial Hygiene Services

Survey Date: 2 October 2003

Report Date: 31 October 2003

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