

National Campus News

From University Newsrooms Across Canada

MUN faculty strike now in second week

Anne Tiller

The Muse

Negotiations to end a faculty strike now in its second week at Memorial University of Newfoundland have hit a brick wall.

Last Wednesday, parts of the negotiating teams, one representative from MUNFA and one from the Administration, reconvened at the Department of Labour at the Beothuk building on Crosbie Road.

MUNFA's chief negotiator Jon Church said, "I'm not sure whether they're actually going to negotiate or whether they're going to talk about how to get negotiations productively restarted."

When questioned about the lack of leeway in negotiations on both sides Church said, "That's not true. That's not true from MUNFA's position at all."

MUNFA submitted a counter-proposal last Tuesday which covered many of the outstanding issues. It included settlement offers on salary, per-course payment for sessional instructors, severance pay and on teaching norms.

Church said, "What we got back

from the administration was something that was non-negotiable. They essentially just said, 'NO.' And when you're faced with 'NO' there's just no room to negotiate."

MUNFA uses the example of the plan for severance that would give those retiring or resigning faculty one-half of their salary. They say they are quite willing to negotiate that number but that the administration must first admit the notion of severance.

Another sticking point is the issue of front-end loading of salaries. MUNFA has asked for salaries to be adjusted for September 1999.

"We've waited ten years. We don't want to have to wait another year. All that is entirely negotiable. There are many dates between September 1999 and March 2001 that could be considered when these payments start," said Church.

At the time of MUNFA's first salary demand in March 2000 the proposal was front-end loaded.

"We wanted most of the money up front. We have been entirely consistent through the whole process that we wanted money effective in 1999. Suddenly we are confronted

with the university who are acting surprised that we want front-end loaded salaries!" stated an obviously frustrated Church.

"That's a crock! We have been entirely consistent the whole time through. We wanted the money up front. We are not changing that position now, but we are willing to negotiate it," he continued.

When asked if the university was aware of MUNFA's willingness to negotiate, Church responded, "Absolutely. We have been at this for thirteen months!"

Church's views are in conflict with those expressed earlier by Chief negotiator for the administration, Jack Strawbridge, who said at that time that the students could be returning to classes as early as Friday, pending MUNFA's acceptance of their latest offer.

"Negotiations are kind of at an end. I think we've given them an offer we think is good as we can give," said Strawbridge.

"If they say yes this afternoon I think we could have classes going by Friday, if they say no I advise them, buy some long underwear," said Strawbridge.

Students ingest potentially dangerous bacteria

Michelle Osborne
Heather Ennis*The Ontario*

GUELPH, ON (CUP) – How seven students who didn't eat at the same place and don't live in the same location all fell violently ill on the same day has Guelph health officials baffled.

On Oct. 18, seven students reported flu-like symptoms including severe bloody diarrhea, vomiting, stomach cramps, fever and nausea. Five provided stool samples and were positively diagnosed with *Campylobacter* – a spiral-shaped bacteria that public health inspector Cam Clark says can be vicious. He believes all the students got ill on Oct. 16, but just how the students were all exposed is still a mystery.

"I've never seen anything quite like it before, given the similar onset date," said Clark. "I thought this would be a straightforward case, but now all I can think is that it was a fluke. We're dumbfounded by this one."

Most people become ill with the bacteria within two to five days following exposure and usually remain sick for a week. For people with weak immune systems, the

bacteria can be life threatening.

"It's a pretty lethal bug, people lose 10 to 15 pounds. It is really serious with young and old people and the next thing you know they can die. The dehydration factor is deadly for old and immuno-compromised individuals," said Clark.

All seven of the students have received medical care and are recovering at home or in residence.

The Wellington-Dufferin Guelph Health Unit and the University's Student Health Services are still trying to identify the source.

Of the seven who fell ill, few have something in common – they live separately, they are in different programs and all but two don't know each other.

So far, they've discovered that the victims did not all eat at the same place, but that all the students had a meal plan. Of the three food outlets the students ate at, two have been inspected and found safe, while a third is still under investigation.

Campylobacter is the most common bacterial cause of diarrheal illness in Canada, says Clark. Most cases occur from handling raw poultry or eating raw or uncooked poultry meat.

Acadia University and alumni association take dispute to court

Caroline Skelton

The Athenaeum

WOLFVILLE, N.S. (CUP) – As part of a three-year-old rift between Acadia University and its alumni association, the university's Board of Governors filed a counter-lawsuit last week claiming that the alumni group wrongly used a database of graduates.

The accusation was made in response to a lawsuit filed last month by the Associated Alumni of Acadia University claiming ownership of more than \$550,000 in bequests, gifts, funds, monies and memorabilia presently being held by the university.

The dispute between the two groups began in 1997, when the university severed ties with the alumni association. The university has since set up a new alumni office.

Last week, the university's Board of Governors, spearheaded by Chair George Bishop, filed a counterclaim against the alumni group, claiming that the organization wrongfully used a database of alumni contact information created and owned by the university, "infringing on the university's copyright."

According to Vincent Leung, President of the Associated Alumni, the database was created when the two groups were on friendly terms, giving the alumni the right to use the database.

"The Associated Alumni and university were close, hand-in-hand [and the database was] generated through total co-operation," he said.

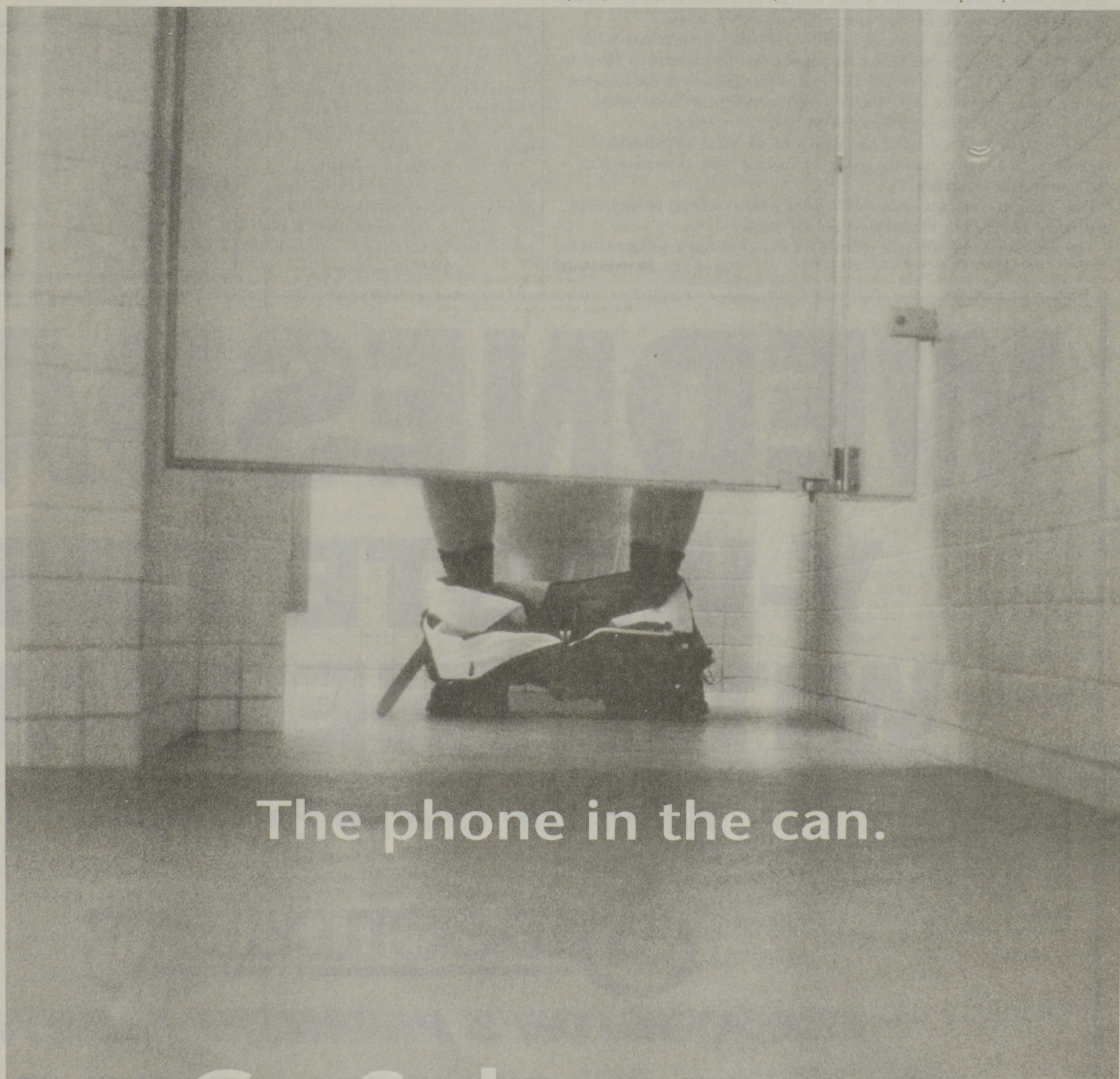
Leung recently initiated an attempt to settle the case out of court by binding arbitration, fearing the cost to both the alumni group and students that is sure to be incurred by the long and arduous process of courtroom settlement.

Bishop said he hasn't responded to this proposition because he is waiting to confer with the executive of the Board of Governors.

However, university President Kelvin Ogilvie, who supports the Board of Governors, said he wanted to see the case debated under oath.

"We will see some very different explanations of what has happened in the past than has been in the press for the past few years."

"These things are never cheap," acknowledged Ogilvie. "Hopefully it should be resolved quickly."



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