

# The Pioneer

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Photo by Shelden Rogers

Jenna Watt at the same spot where she stood in line in the wind and rain on Halloween pub night. She eventually gave up trying to get in.

## Long lines put damper on Halloween

By Shelden Rogers

Students at Loyalist College are frustrated with the latest lineup to get into pub, but when it comes to a solution, they may be out of luck.

Some students said they waited for over an hour to get into the Halloween night hosted by the Shark Tank Pub last Thursday. Weather conditions didn't make the wait any better, with cold winds and constant rain.

Jasmine Papoutsis waited for just over an hour before she got into pub. By the time she got in, her spirits had already died.

"By the time I actually got in I was freezing cold and soaking wet and I was just not in the mood to even be there or dance. And I'm normally so jacked up to be there and I was not in the mood, so I left after being there for 20 minutes," said Papoutsis.

She showed up to the pub wearing her

costume. After the wait, she felt the effects of the cold winds and rain.

"I was wearing my costume and let's just say that I wasn't wearing very much that night and I was freezing cold. I actually got sick from standing out in the rain."

Jenna Watt was also stuck waiting in line for well over an hour, and she didn't even get in to see the party.

"I did wait in line for over an hour before giving up because security said my chances of getting in were slim to none," said Watt.

When she got to the pub there were 70 to 100 people in front of her, she said.

She and her boyfriend spent over \$50 each on their costumes and didn't get to show them off.

Spirits among other people in the line were not high, Watt said.

"My boyfriend was complaining about how much of a pain the line was. Everyone was in a bad mood and it just kind of

ruined the night."

After Watt and her boyfriend gave up on pub, they took off their wet costumes and called it a night.

Watt said she would recommend some sort of shelter for people in line next time the weather is ugly.

Courtney De Pippo was another student who didn't get to see the dance floor last Thursday. But unlike Papoutsis and Watt, she didn't even bother with the line.

"I turned the corner and was like, 'Yeah, let's go back.'"

De Pippo said the weather played a big part in her decision.

"It was mostly because it was raining and I'm just like, 'I'm not standing in that line to get in.' Everyone was just standing there soaked," she said.

De Pippo doesn't go to pub often, and said she was disappointed when she found out she couldn't get in to one of the pubs she was looking forward to.

The president of Loyalist College's stu-

dent government, Chantel Johnston, said she understands students' concerns, but there isn't much that she can do about the long line.

"I feel bad truly, because I want them to come in. But when it comes down to it, this facility, just like any other facility has a fire code. You can only have so many people in here - for legal reasons, alcohol restriction reasons, for many legal purposes we cannot have over a certain amount of people in here," said Johnston.

The lineup this year was no different from previous Halloween pubs, she said.

She and her staff do all they can to make sure everything goes smoothly on a busy night, Johnston said. That includes making sure the lineup moves as quickly as possible.

"I do assure them that we are doing our jobs, we're working as fast as we can. We are ensuring that we aren't holding up the line - the only thing holding up the line is

the fact that we are at our max."

When the pub reached its cap, Johnston tried everything she could to make the best of the situation, she said.

"On Halloween I felt so bad. I came inside, I gathered as much jackets, sweaters, umbrellas as I could, and I went up and down that line. Anyone whose costumes were ruined, makeup falling down their face, or people who were freezing cold, I would give them a jacket of my own, or someone else's that I borrowed."

When it comes to the weather, Johnston said, her options are limited for creating a shelter for the long line.

"It is very costly. Especially with the winds - awnings would not have stayed out there. There is only so much we can do, especially with the fact that it's all concrete. We can't really fasten anything. There isn't a lot you can do in that spot."

Johnston said she and the student government are considering all ideas and opinions from upset students.

## Locals advocate for minimum wage raise

By Tyson Leonard

Ontario's Minimum Wage Advisory Panel was in Kingston on Wednesday to look for feedback on how to adjust the minimum wage.

The questions asked by the panel included when raises should happen, what economic indicators should raises be tied to, and who should oversee raises.

There were presentations from groups such as the Belleville Workers Help Centre, the local Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, the Peterborough United Way, and the Kingston Chamber of Commerce.

Andy Hanson of the Belleville Workers Help Centre said he presented because he wants to change the way the government oversees minimum wage.

"Minimum-wage jobs are considered the bottom of the employment ladder. They are almost always non-unionized. Workers in those jobs depend on the standards set by the government to protect them," said Hanson.

In his presentation, Hanson advocated for an immediate raise to at least \$14 an hour from the current \$10.25, followed by automatic increases tied to 10 per cent above the Low Income Cut-Off. The LICO is an income threshold generated by Statistics Canada.

"Raising the minimum wage is not simply a solution to reducing poverty - it is an economic stimulant from which we will all benefit," said Hanson.

He also suggested the student minimum wage, and the farm workers minimum wage be amalgamated into one basic minimum wage.

"It's a level playing field. That's what the minimum wage was intended for," said Hanson.

Most of the other groups also advocated for the minimum wage to be raised to \$14 an hour. But they differed on what economic indicators to tie future raises to, and whether the first raise should be immediate or incremental.



Photo by Tyson Leonard

Andy Hanson of the Workers Help Centre in Belleville presents his case to have Ontario's minimum wage increased to \$14 an hour to the Minimum Wage Advisory Panel.

Only the Kingston Chamber of Commerce pushed for a smaller raise, of 25 cents an hour every two years. The chamber cited concerns over whether businesses would be forced to cut employees to accommodate for the rise in labour costs.

In listening to the presentations, panel members questioned what they called anecdotal evidence, and provided facts from their own findings.

"You get a variety of viewpoints, and that's very good from our point of view

because we want to hear all the experience, and opinions, and effects that people have experienced with respect to minimum wage," said Anil Verma, chief of the Minimum Wage Advisory Panel. Verma is a professor at the University of Toronto.

Other groups represented on the panel were university students, business groups, and non-profit organizations.

The panel has one more stop on its consultation tour through Ontario. The last scheduled consultation takes place in

Ottawa Thursday (Nov. 7).

The advisory panel will then bring its recommendations to the Ontario Ministry of Labour. Verma said he expects the panel to have delivered its report by the end of the year.

"This is advice given to government, so the government is free to take it or modify it as they wish," he said.

Anyone wanting to voice an opinion to the panel can submit a presentation through the Ministry of Labour website. The deadline to submit is Nov. 7.

## Transit stays on the road

By Matthew Blair

Belleville city council has officially ratified the new transit agreement.

Council met last night to vote on the deal, which was approved by members of Unifor local last Thursday.

The new deal runs until March 31st 2016, and will see union members get benefits at the same level as other city employees.

"Neither party wanted to disrupt transit services," said Belleville director of human resources John Martin.

"Both sides worked through a tense bargaining process to reach an agreement that was acceptable on both sides. It's a good deal. (The) union got some things they were looking for and the city got some things they were looking for. In the end we were able to resolve the difference without any kind of labor disruption which is good for everyone."

Right now transit workers' wages are \$23.33 an hour. They will see a pay increase of 2.5 per cent on April 1, 2 per cent on April 2, 2014, and 2 per cent on April 1, 2015. This means they will now make \$23.92, then \$24.40 and finally \$24.89 at the end of the deal.

The city eliminated a shift premium for Sunday work, and clarified contract language to better control overtime and shift allocations.

Last night Belleville Mayor Neil Ellis said he's happy with the new agreement.

"Today's settlement I think shows that we've got a great transit system and we will be moving ahead with an interruption. Many people rely on our transit system, not only for work (but) for school."

Councilor Jack Miller said he believes it was a good deal.

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## Police officer pleads guilty to three charges in court this week

By Jack Carver

After four emotional days of testimony, the Central Hastings OPP officer accused of assaulting a woman has pleaded guilty to three charges.

The man pleaded guilty Wednesday af-

ternoon to one count of assault, one count of mischief and one count of willful damage. He is still facing a charge of aggravated assault, to which he has pleaded not guilty.

The court will reconvene on Dec. 12 to determine the sentence on the counts to which he pleaded guilty and deal with the

aggravated-assault charge.

Justice Richard Byers said that he "wonders if this man's anger issues will spill onto his work in uniform or another relationship."

Byers expressed his worry that the officer might be a problem in the future if

he does not seek help.

"Is he someone I need to be worried about in another relationship? He has a little girl that he will have forever and he has to take care of," said Byers. "Will he pay child support? I will be interested to hear about that."

The judge then thanked the lawyers for their clean examinations of witnesses and spoke to the jury briefly behind closed doors.

The victim's family were holding back tears as they left the Quinte courthouse; the accused man's were patting each other's backs and smiling on their departure.