

# Ontario municipalities crack down on off-campus parties

## London student seeking legal counsel after being tasered by police

MARGARET SHERIDAN

*Interrobang*

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*The Cord Weekly*

WATERLOO and LONDON (CUP)—Police in two Ontario municipalities are cracking down on off-campus partying by implementing stronger patrols and hefty fines.

Emily Marcoccia, a spokesperson for Ontario's Fanshawe College in London, said that several parties on one street amalgamated on the evening of 9 September.

"People gravitated towards one or two major addresses, and there was some type of, what the police called, 'aggressive behaviour' by the students," Marcoccia said.

A group of students allegedly threw beer bottles at the police officers arriving on the scene and taunted them with shouts of "pig."

After trying to break up the party without any success, London police called in backup. According to authorities, an estimated 30 officers were called to clear students from the area.

By 1:30am, four people had been placed under arrest and two criminal charges had been laid, along with a handful of non-criminal charges including breach of peace. One Fanshawe student had even been neutralized with a stun gun.

At Wilfrid Laurier University, 100km away in Waterloo, police are taking a more preemptive strategy, cracking down on house parties and handing out fines to prevent a similar incident from taking place. According to Bryan Larkin, executive officer of the Waterloo Regional Police, the force is trying extra hard this semester to "send a powerful message that there's a certain level of [behavioural] expectation."

"Often, traditional methods of giving a warning ... have not necessarily been successful. So really, it becomes a balance of education, community awareness, and enforcement," Larkin said.

His explanations were echoed by Mary George, acting manager of By-law Enforcement for the City of Waterloo.

"Things have been done in the past, but this time the police have just had extra staff [employeeed], and we're sticking with the strict enforcements. No warnings—that's the difference."

But students in both municipalities are feeling that the new enforcement

tactics are too heavy-handed. Ashley Clerici, a third-year student at WLU, has already accumulated \$600 in fines as a result of revamped noise by-laws.

"I almost think we were taken advantage of," Clerici said, estimating the heavy fines accumulated on her street are in excess of \$3000.

Dave Kutner, a fifth-year applied economics student, is in the same boat. With "a really small party" going on in his backyard, Kutner was given a fine with "no explanation whatsoever."

Kutner also said that officers denied him an explanation of how to avoid being fined in the future.

"That was our biggest complaint," Kutner said.

**"Things have been done in the past, but this time the police have just had extra staff [employeeed], and we're sticking with the strict enforcements. No warnings—that's the difference."**

MARY GEORGE

WATERLOO ACTING MANAGER OF  
BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT

In London, students who weren't even part of the problem parties found themselves under the thumb of the law.

First-year landscape design student Chris Guerin, who was charged with breach of peace, resisting arrest, and was shocked with a stun gun, says police handled the situation badly.

"I had some people up from home, and we were in my house drinking, and we saw some twenty-odd cop cars roll up," Guerin explained. "And of course, there had to be a reason for it, so we decided to go take a walk down the street."

According to Guerin, he was the given contradictory instructions from two different officers. One told him to continue walking, while another told him to stop and wait.

Then, according to Guerin, the first officer started yelling and approached him about not having listened to the previous instruction.

"I put my hands up in the air, and then four cops put me to the ground,

and they started to kick and punch me in the back. My head hit the ground, and that's when that occurred," Guerin said, pointing to a bruise above his left eye.

"I pulled my hands from behind my back to put on my face, as a barrier between the ground and my head, and that's when they tasered me."

Guerin is now retaining legal counsel and intends to fight the charges. He later hopes to file a civil suit against the London Police Service.

"I understand that they have to take action, but the way they took action was not the best," Guerin explained. "I was on the sidewalk, didn't have a beer, wasn't totally intoxicated, [and] I wasn't at the party. You can't just go and take it out on anybody; for them to paint us all with the same brush because some people on Fleming [street] were throwing beer bottles at them is not right at all."

Waterloo City councillor Ian McLean, who oversees the ward in which the University is located, said that it was "a classic example of about 2 per cent of students giving a bad impression for everyone else."

However, he doesn't believe the enforcement is "totally unreasonable."

"If you adhere to the by-laws then you don't get ticketed, right?" McLean said.

With student frustration reaching high levels, WLU Dean of Students David McMurray has already made plans to meet with Waterloo manager of Community Relations Kaye Crawford to discuss a possible student-supported by-law awareness group.

This "structured program," Murray explained, would get students involved in helping out their fellow peers, rather than relying on the more intimidating regional police door-to-door program.

McMurray said he's interested, first of all, simply to get "all the parties together" to follow a model that was successfully implemented at the University of Western Ontario in 2000.

Meanwhile, George is guaranteeing "strict enforcement all year round," and Larkin is assuring students that the force intends to "set the tone" in September and October.

"We want [students] to have fun and enjoy the university life ... but we have citizens who are saying that there needs to be a line drawn in the sand here," Larkin said.

# No tuition for BC adult education classes

EMILY HARRISON

*The Navigator*

NANAIMO (CUP)—The provincial government of British Columbia's has announced that tuition fees will be eliminated for all Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes.

These classes provide primary- and high-school-level courses to adults who hope to complete or upgrade their education. Currently, more than 70 per cent of ABE students live below the poverty line.

According to Malaspina College Students' Union organizer Patrick Barbosa, the 7 September announcement was largely in response to a massive lobbying effort from the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) this spring

and this fall.

In April, members of the CFS met with 61 members of the BC legislature, securing majority support for the initiative. Then, throughout the week of 10 September, petition postcards from thousands of students also piled into the legislature.

"This was no natural evolution of the Liberals' policy," Barbosa said. "Students made it impossible for the government to not hear their call."

"Minister of Advanced Education Murray Coell has made the right decision," said Shamus Reid, BC Chairperson of the CFS. "ABE students, a majority of whom live below the poverty line, will no longer be expected to pay upwards of \$500 for each high school course."

Barbosa, who was once an ABE student himself, said that this change will open doors to adults who want to improve their earning potential and sense of fulfillment.

"Prior to completing my high-school-level education, I had low self-esteem," Barbosa said. "After finishing my ABE in a college setting, I realized I had potential."

If it wasn't for his ABE education, Barbosa figures he would still be working at a gas station. He has now moved on to university and is working at a job that he enjoys, while earning an income that also supports his family.

"Because of the hard work of students across this province, the [government] realized that their decisions were bad for BC," Barbosa said.

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