

Tabletalk –  
*your bargaining resource* –  
publishes four times a year. Its  
goal is to give CUPE Local bargaining  
committees, elected officers and  
servicing representatives useful infor-  
mation for preparing – and negotiating –  
bargaining demands. Tabletalk's  
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**Women in CUPE**  
Strengthening our union

## National Women's Task Force Tackles Bargaining

Women make up approximately 66 per cent of CUPE members, yet they are under-represented in many areas of CUPE. In response to a 2005 National Convention resolution, CUPE established the National Women's Task Force to investigate and make recommendations about how CUPE can make our union stronger by increasing women's participation and representation in the union. The Task Force spent the last year listening to CUPE members and staff, and prepared an interim report that includes recommendations related to collective bargaining in the Union.

The Task Force Report says:

As the 2005 Strategic Directions document stated, "We need to initiate a more effective union-wide strategy to put working women's issues back on the bargaining agenda in a concerted and coordinated way."

Too many women members are concentrated in low paying jobs, or are struggling to make ends meet on two or three part-time jobs. Pay equity is still not achieved in many provinces and sectors. Many women lack collective agreement language that provides them with family illness leave, the ability to balance work and family, maternity benefits top up, paid leave for union work or benefits for part-time workers.

CUPE has developed important bargaining resources to advance women's equality needs and equity issues. The Up with Women's Wages documents and "Bargaining Equality" binder are valuable tools. We need to regularly update them and continue to use them in all of our work.

The Task Force recommends that CUPE build on this work and organize a National Women's Bargaining Conference in 2008. The conference would provide an opportunity for members to build

(continued on page 2)

strategies and set clear achievable goals on bargaining the issues that are important to women. It would also be an opportunity to put the “Bargaining Equality” binder into action and develop accountability measures for bargaining equality issues.

(Source: *National Women’s Task Force Spring Report*, CUPE, 2007)

To read the full *Spring Report* or for more information on the work of the National Women’s Task Force, go to [www.cupe.ca/nwtf](http://www.cupe.ca/nwtf). You will also find the

44 recommendations of the Task Force in the “Multi-year Action Plan for Women” on our website. You may want to test your knowledge with the short “Women in CUPE” quiz!

The National Women’s Task Force presented its report to provincial Division conventions this spring and will be reviewing all feedback to its report, at the end of May. The final recommendations of the Task Force will be presented to the National Executive Board in June and to the National Convention in October. ■

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# TRENDS IN BARGAINING

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CUPE members across the country have seen employers demand concessions in our benefit plans. The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) is no exception.

Employer proposals include demands for concessions on callout, sick leave, and benefits. Employers are seeking cuts to health benefits for families such as a complete restructuring of the sick leave plan, substantial reductions in benefits valued at close to \$2 million annually, and additional and increased premium costs to members. Families would face increases of 10 per cent in their Medical Services Plan (MSP) and dental premiums and 30 per cent in extended health premiums.

These concessions are on the table despite the fact that local economies are flourishing! Lower Mainland municipalities are prosperous and expanding, but the cost of living is making it difficult for workers to afford housing where they work. Since December 2006, most Lower Mainland civic workers have been working without a contract. Across the region, talks have stalled as GVRD bargainers refuse to make meaningful progress. CUPE civic workers feel they are being pushed into job action to get a fair contract.

Consequently, civic workers represented by CUPE have launched a campaign ([fairnessforcivicworkers.ca](http://fairnessforcivicworkers.ca)) to help them secure fair contracts and are calling on the public to help prevent a disruption in civic services. They are asking the public to put pressure on their civic politicians to get serious about bargaining, take concessions off the table, and show respect for the work and services they provide across the region.

Of course, the long-term solution to reducing the costs of benefit plans is a national Pharmacare program. Since drug costs are the main drivers of expanding costs, removing them from private plans would control costs and would improve access to prescription drugs for Canadians. CUPE is an active member of the Canadian Health Coalition that is campaigning for a national Pharmacare program, which would contain the costs of pharmaceuticals, improve prescribing, and provide accountability. Expect Pharmacare to be an issue in the next federal election. ■

### With apologies...

Incorrect information appeared in the last issue on page 3. The correct information is as follows:

#### **B.C. School Boards (K-12)**

- Additional trades adjustment of .1% of payroll per year (\$828,000/year, calculated as .1% of payroll = roughly 30 cents per hour/year).
- A further .1% of payroll (30 cents) in '07, '08 and '09 for trades who are able to mentor apprentices (N.B.: all trades people are eligible).
- Overall, increases for trades are approximately 17.3% over four years.

# Demonstrate your Solidarity!

Workers around the world face difficult struggles every day. Here at CUPE, we face many of the same struggles, such as employers who try to intimidate and threaten workers' rights to fair and free collective bargaining. By working together we can articulate our challenges and build effective strategies to defend workers' rights, human rights, and the quality of life in our communities around the globe.

That's why CUPE supports global justice work. Did you know that there is a way to support this work directly?

Many CUPE locals demonstrate solidarity with international workers' struggles by negotiating a contribution to CUPE's Global Justice Fund. The Fund is one way CUPE members can strengthen the global movement to fight privatization and free trade.

For only a penny an hour per member – about \$21 a year – locals can support CUPE's Global Justice Fund, which promotes projects to meet and learn from workers involved in anti-privatization struggles in countries such as Chile, England,

## GLOBAL justice MONDIALE

Haiti, Cuba, Nicaragua, Mexico, and South Africa. For more information visit [cupe.ca/globaljusticefund](http://cupe.ca/globaljusticefund).

The following is an example of negotiated language.

### **CUPE Local 1876 and Northside Community Guest Home, Sydney, Nova Scotia, expiry March 31, 2009**

*26:09 Good of The Union*

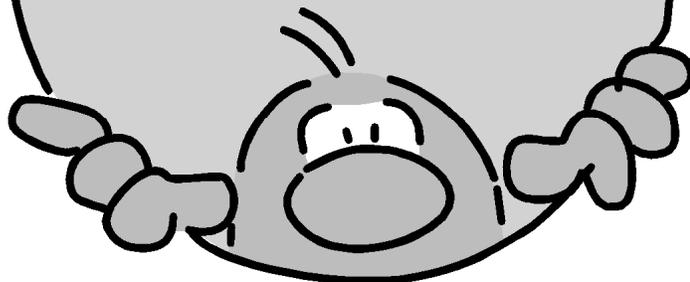
*The employer shall deduct on a weekly basis \$0.01 per hour from the wages of all members of the bargaining unit and prior to the 15th of the month following, remit that amount to Union Aid [Global Justice], CUPE's International Solidarity Fund. The employer shall include with the remittance, the number of employees for whom contributions have been made. Prior to the 15th day of February each year the employer shall forward to the Fund a list of the contributions made by each employee . . . [T]he program of deductions set forth above may be discontinued by any employee in the bargaining unit after the receipt by the employer and the union of that employee's written statement of desire to discontinue participation. The employer agrees to remit such amount on a monthly basis to Union Aid [Global Justice], CUPE's International Solidarity Fund, 21 Florence Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0W6.*

### **FACTOID**

**Percentage change in Canadian greenhouse gas emissions by 2005, as promised in the Liberal Party's 1993 Red Book: -20**

**Percentage change in Canadian greenhouse gas emissions between 1993 and 2005: +20**

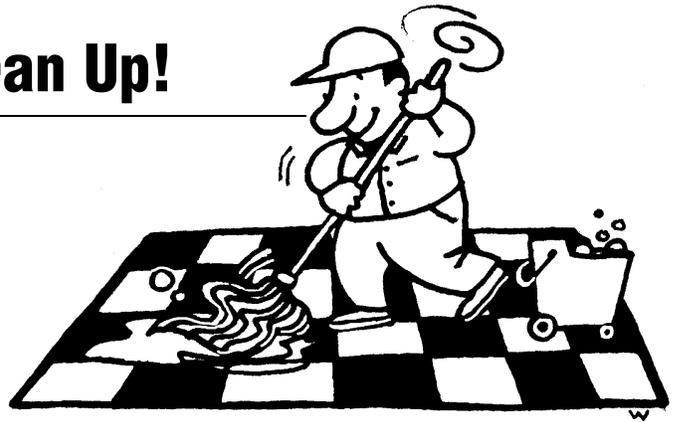
(Source: Centre for Research on Work and Society, York University, Toronto, Ontario, 2006)



# School Board Workers Clean Up!

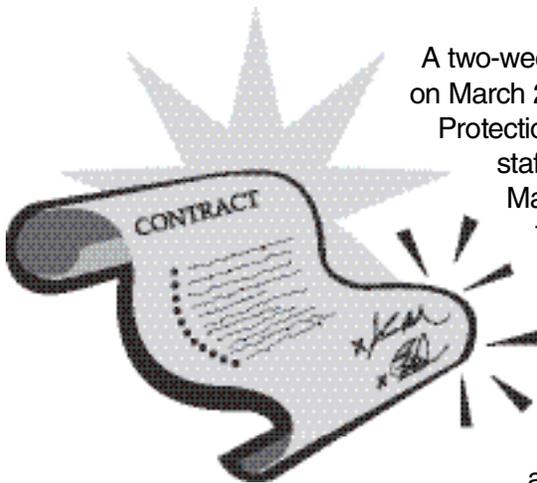
CUPE Local 1483 members – custodians and trades workers with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board in Ontario – have a new contract that includes an innovative custodial staffing ratio based on the square footage of the facility.

Since the Ontario government introduced a “funding formula” for school boards in 1997, facility maintenance budgets have been neglected. Budgets were constantly underfunded because benchmarks were set too low. The result? Staff cuts, dirty schools, and more contracting out efforts by employers. The new ratio formula is designed to resolve both increasing custodial workload and inadequate staffing levels.



Linking custodial staffing to facility size ensures there will be more custodians in schools and cleaner, healthier environments for students and staff. For more information, contact Local President Larry Stevenson at (416) 433-4322. ■

# Solid Homework and Member Courage Get Results



A two-week strike ended on March 28 for Child Protection and Support staff (Local 2483) in Manitoba, with a 15 per cent wage increase over four years.

Negotiations began with the employer arguing they

couldn't afford wage increases to

bring greater equality with workers doing similar work. For almost a year, the employer was unwilling to consider funding a decent pension plan.

However, solid research conducted into both wages and pension options showed that there were significant differences between the work of Child Protection and Support staff and other workers doing similar work. An actuary was hired to compare the members' existing pension plan and the Manitoba government's Superannuation Pension Plan. This

detailed information painted an alarming picture of how inadequate wages and the pension plan were.

Conciliation was brought in after nine months of negotiations with the employer, but little was achieved. Ultimately, the employer's position forced the workers to take strike action, a first by Child Protection Workers in Manitoba.

The analysis done by the union was important in attracting media attention and public support. They were able to see clearly the position of the union and why the members took strike action, according to Lee McLeod, Local President. “The unanimous commitment of the union membership, strong public support, and the support of CUPE staff proved formidable for the employer,” he said.

The strike ended with members getting a decent wage increase, guarantees for improving pension benefits, improvements to severance provisions, and the withdrawal of concessions wanted by the employer. ■

(With thanks to Dennis Lewycky, Research/ Communications Officer, Manitoba.)

# Workload Breakthrough for Communications Workers in Quebec!

In Quebec, the communications industry is organized differently than in other provinces. Because of its largely francophone market, communications production is a growing industry and a highly organized sector in the province. CUPE Quebec represents almost 7,000 communications workers.



Media giant Quebecor (Sun Media Corporation) owns newspapers, cable, TV, and websites in Quebec. The huge corporation wants to be able to use our members' work in any of its formats. This raises two issues: First, having the same story appear in various media means that the same perspective appears wherever the public looks for their news and limits public access to different points of view; and, second, our members' work can be used indiscriminately in any format the employer chooses.

CUPE members of Local 687 who work for TVA, a private TV station owned by Quebecor, focused on protecting their work in their most recent round of negotiations. To protect their work, the workers were able to negotiate an agreement that ensures a "minimum workload level." The agreement ensures a minimum of 1,200 hours of production work (excluding news) per year. The new collective agreement maintains control of CUPE work at TVA, regardless of where or when the work is broadcast. This represents a major gain in the industry. The new three-year collective agreement was ratified by 93.5 per cent of the members of Local 687.

"This guaranteed minimum level of production is based on past years' experience. In fact, it ensures work not only for regular employees, but also for temporary employees who have been with us for a long time. It is a great victory, which protects our members' jobs," said Local President Jean Chabot.

Quebecor is also the employer that locked out 260 CUPE members at the Journal de Québec. Employer tactics included hiring fourteen managers, and surreptitiously attempting to hire francophone reporters to work out of a Toronto office. When the locked out workers published their own newspaper, *MédiaMatin*, to apply pressure to the employer to return to the bargaining table, the Quebec Superior Court dismissed the employers' effort to stop the production. The lockout continues. For more information, see [cupe.ca](http://cupe.ca). ■



# Innovative Language

Do you wear uniforms at work? Do you know where they were made? Some employers purchase uniforms from the lowest bidder, and that means they may be produced by sweatshop labour. Some CUPE locals have negotiated a “No Sweat” policy with employers to encourage them to use

suppliers that protect the jobs of unionized workers and discourage manufacturers from shifting work to low paid, non-union workers, too often children. For more information on sweatshops go to [cupe.ca](http://cupe.ca) and [clc-ctc.ca](http://clc-ctc.ca). ■

## Workplace Procurement Policy “Union-made and No Sweat” Model Bargaining Language

*All uniforms and apparel issued or required by the Employer shall be union-made and bear a recognized union label. In the event the uniforms and apparel cannot be manufactured by unionized workers, the uniforms and apparel purchased by the Employer shall be manufactured by companies that can provide assurances that their products are manufactured under decent conditions (as defined under point 5), not in sweatshops.*

- 1. All uniforms, apparel and textile goods that are laundered by a contractor for the Employer shall be laundered in unionized facilities.*
- 2. The Employer shall require all prospective suppliers or launderers of uniforms, apparel and textile goods to provide the name and address of each facility to be used in the production or laundering of the apparel and certify that each facility is under contract with a legitimate union. In the event where the uniforms, apparel and textile goods cannot be laundered by unionized workers, the Employer shall provide the names and addresses of companies that can provide assurances that the products are laundered under decent conditions, not in sweatshops.*
- 3. The Employer agrees to provide the union with full disclosure on all information regarding its suppliers, including the names and addresses of the suppliers where the products will be manufactured and/or laundered.*
- 4. The Employer agrees that the “No Sweat” Policy will be based on internationally recognized standards. The Employer also agrees that an effective bulk procurement and laundry policy will include the following provisions:*
  - No forced labour*
  - No child labour*
  - No discrimination*
  - The right to organize and bargain collectively*
  - No abusive treatment of workers*
  - Wages that meet basic needs of workers and their families*
  - No forced pregnancy tests*
  - Public disclosure of factory locations*
  - Respect of basic Health & Safety regulations*

*(Source: <http://sweatshop.clc-ctc.ca/en/collective.html>)*





## Consumer Price Index by Province, April 2006 to April 2007

Newfoundland and Labrador	1.4
Prince Edward Island	1.4
Nova Scotia	1.4
New Brunswick	1.1
Quebec	1.4
Ontario	1.8
Manitoba	2.2
Saskatchewan	2.4
Alberta	5.5
British Columbia	1.9

(Source: Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, Thursday, May 17, 2007)

Energy costs are the main source of the fluctuation in inflation figures over the last year. Retail gas prices have swung up and down by at least 20 per cent in most regions and by more than 30 per cent in some cities across Canada. Pump prices have reflected increases of up to 50 per cent in crude oil prices caused by instability in the Middle East, supply problems, and speculation.

Electricity price increases are projected across Canada. B.C. Hydro recently announced that rates would rise by 11 per cent to fund repairs and upgrades of their facilities.

While gas prices have fluctuated, the main factor consistently pushing up the inflation rate is house price increases. Mortgage interest cost increases, which Statistics Canada calculates using mortgage rates and housing costs, are up 5.1 per cent since January 2006. Higher insurance premiums (up 7.7 per cent) have also contributed to increases in homeowner costs.

House prices are expected to increase by an average of 6 to 7 per cent this year, following average increases of 11 per cent last year, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Canadian Real Estate Association. Alberta is expected to lead the way again, with price increases averaging over 15 per cent, while price increases in Central and Eastern Canada are expected to average under 5 per cent.

Economic forecasters expect the slower growth in housing prices and lower average energy prices to lead to lower inflation this year. The full-year impact of the cut in the GST will also keep a lid on the annual inflation rate. On average, major forecasters expect Canada's national consumer price inflation to increase by 1.6 per cent this year, but there is a wide range in expectations from 0.9 per cent to 2.1 per cent.

Inflation is expected to be lower in Central Canada, but may increase by 2.6 per cent or more in Alberta. The national rate will depend on the direction of energy prices, while provincial rates could be most influenced by housing prices again this year. ■

(Source: CUPE's *Economic Climate*, March 2007)

# Current and Upcoming Key Negotiations – May 15, 2007 (covering 500 or more employees)

## Federal Jurisdiction

### Public Sector

Employer	Union	# of Employees	Status	Expiry Month
Government of Canada	Various unions	110,380	arbitration/conciliation/bargaining/ tentative agreement	Mar 06-Jun 07
Via Rail Canada	CAW-CANADA	3,260	conciliation	Dec 06
Government of Nunavut	PSAC	2,100	bargaining	Sep 06
National Research Council Canada	Various unions	1,800	bargaining	Dec 04–Mar 07

### Private Sector

Canadian Pacific Railway	Teamsters	6,700	conciliation/bargaining	Dec 06
British Columbia Maritime Employers Association	ILWU CANADA	3,700	bargaining	Mar 07
Canadian National Railway	UTU	3,000	arbitration	Dec 06

## Provincial and Territorial Jurisdictions

### Public Sector

Employer	Union	# of Employees	Status	Expiry Month
Provincial Health Authorities of Alberta	Nurses	23,000	bargaining	Mar 07
City of Montréal	Various unions	17,800	bargaining	Dec 06
Société de transport de Montréal	CUPE/CSN	6,250	bargaining	Jan 07
Capital District Health Authority	NSGEU	5,500	bargaining	Oct 06
City of Vancouver	CUPE	5,270	bargaining	Dec 06
Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations	Nurses	4,000	bargaining	Oct 06
Saskatchewan Telecommunications	CEP	3,460	bargaining	Mar 07
City of Toronto	IAFF	2,950	bargaining	Dec 06
Government of Yukon	PSAC	2,800	tentative agreement	Dec 06
Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations	HSAS	2,700	bargaining	Mar 07
Government of Prince Edward Island	PEIUPSE	2,440	bargaining	Mar 07
Government of Prince Edward Island	Teachers	1,480	tentative agreement	Jun 07
SaskPower	IBEW	1,340	bargaining	Dec 06
Health Authorities of Prince Edward Island	IUOE	640	conciliation	Mar 06

### Upcoming 'Key' Negotiations

Employer	Union	# of Employees	Expiry Month
Government of New Brunswick	CUPE	6,290	Jun 07
Government of Nova Scotia	NSGEU	5,800	Mar 07
City of Québec	Various unions	4,020	Dec 06
Capital District Health Authority	NSGEU	2,400	Oct 06

(Source: *Labour Policy and Workplace Information*, HRSDC, May 15, 2007)