

Counterpoint

OCCUPY! THE 99% SPEAKS OUT

FOCUS: A CARBON NEUTRAL
CONVENTION & MORE

ISABELLE DOYON:
at 32 she is part of the
new generation of
trade unionists

**CUPE Convention
delegates vote in new
National Secretary-
Treasurer**

Stephen Lewis:

*"I see a powerful union
with powerful activists.
Collectively you will
not be intimidated".*

 #CUPE2011

CONVENTION DELEGATES
CREATE A DIGITAL STORM!



HE SAID

“Occupy: This is a necessary and legitimate movement, an expression of anger.”

Alexandre Boulerice, NDP MP Rosemont — La -Petite-Patrie



FROM CUPE REPRESENTATIVE TO NDP STAR

Thirty-eight-year-old Alexandre Boulerice is the new NDP Member of Parliament for Rosemont–La-Petite-Patrie, a riding in the heart of Montreal. A star recruit for the NDP and one of the drivers of the “Orange Crush,” Boulerice is also a seasoned CUPE veteran. He is a past treasurer of CUPE 687 (TVA Montréal) and served as a communications representative for CUPE’s Montreal office from 2002 to 2011. Counterpoint asked him to comment on four key events that have marked his first six months as an MP.



Member of Parliament for Rosemont—La-Petite-Patrie, Alexandre Boulerice addresses the House of Commons.

Struggle of Canada Post workers

“In late June, we kept the debate going for 58 hours straight, in an attempt to block the Conservatives from passing special legislation against postal workers. The law makes no sense: the federal government forced them back to work after the Crown Corporation locked them out. In essence, that was Harper’s way of saying

‘we’re attacking workers, working conditions and workers’ rights.’”

Death of Jack Layton

“That was a huge blow, an enormous loss for the progressive movement and for all Canadians. I’ll never forget the letter Jack wrote 48 hours before his death – his political legacy, what Stephen Lewis called a “new manifesto of social-democracy.” His words are generous and beautiful—

something to always keep in mind and think back on as often as possible.”

“Occupy Montreal”

“I’ve gone to the Occupy Montreal site three times so far to show my support. This is a necessary and legitimate movement, an expression of anger that speaks to me and reflects my values and principles. It is unacceptable to live in a world with so much wealth and yet so much inequality.”

The G8 legacy fund scandal

“Basically, Tony Clement used taxpayers’ money to buy gifts for friends in his riding. He created a \$50-million slush fund. This is the biggest scandal to hit the federal political scene since the sponsorship debacle. And this is the same Tony Clement who will be slashing \$11 billion from the public service over the next three years...”

■ Sébastien Goulet

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

OCCUPY THIS!

I attended the “Occupy Vancouver” protest for a few hours on Saturday. There were people there from all walks of life, from babies-in-arms to seniors, from scruffy to trendy, from naïve to jaded.

There has been a lot of feedback about the world-wide “Occupy” protests. It doesn’t matter whether a person was speaking about multinational corporations and banks, or about universal child care and affordable tuition. It all boils down to MONEY – the having of it and the not having of it. The people we elect are supposed to have our best interests at heart, all of our best interests.

One of the speakers said: “We are not broken, the system is broken. Until we stand up, come forward, and march to change the system, it will continue to be broken.”

I hope the protests continue. I hope people are waking up to new possibilities.

*Cindy Birck
Recording Secretary
CUPE Local 403
Langley, BC*

Editor’s note: This letter was edited for length.

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Shop Steward profile

At 32, Isabelle Doyon is part of a new generation of trade unionists.

Hired by CBC/Radio-Canada in July 2006, she quickly became involved in the union. Her local, CUPE 675, represents 625 professional and office employees of the Crown corporation working in Quebec City and Moncton, 75 per cent of whom are women.

“When I first got involved in union activities, I was only a temporary employee, working in a position that could be eliminated. I guess I was a little naive,” she admits today, although she insists she has no regrets.

“They were looking for a union rep to serve on the job evaluation committee,” she explains. “It was a joint labour-management committee that looked at job evaluation requests submitted by employees. The position involves attending seven or eight meetings a year.

But to be eligible, I had to be a steward.”

That’s how Isabelle cut her union teeth. After becoming a steward in late 2006, the first thing she did was to attend a series of job evaluation workshops given by CUPE specialists. She has fond memories of the experience.

“Little by little, I took on other assignments, like writing articles for our newsletter and the website. They helped me get a much better handle on my work



environment and round out my knowledge of union matters.”

But what drives Isabelle Doyon? Why does she feel this need to look out for her fellow workers? “I come from a modest family,” she says. “My father works in a warehouse and my mother is a press operator. They both instilled a solid set of values in me. My father has always volunteered for things. He helped out with community Christmas baskets, for example, and I always went with him. And my mother taught me the importance of hard work when I was a teen. I guess it all comes from there.”

For CUPE 675, the French saying “To noble souls, worth is not measured in years” is apt. In May 2011, Isabelle Doyon was elected president of CUPE 675 by acclamation.

■ Robert Bellerose

Darcy to run in B.C. provincial election

Judy Darcy will be carrying the banner for the NDP in New Westminster in the May 2013, B.C. provincial election.



Darcy served as CUPE national president for 12 years. Since 2005, she’s been the secretary-business manager of the Hospital Employees’ Union where she led settlement negotiations for health care workers after an historic Supreme Court decision found that Bill 29 violated their Charter-protected rights to collective bargaining.

Darcy has also been active in the NDP for more than 27 years – knocking on doors in countless campaigns, running as a federal candidate, serving on a constituency executive, the Federal Executive, and Election Planning Committee, and acting as a national TV commentator for the NDP.

As a trade union leader, she co-founded Water Watch and led successful campaigns for public health care, public education, and public power. She has been a leader in working to end discrimination and inequality for women, new Canadians, and people of colour; and in winning a landmark court case to end bias against same-sex couples. “I have spent my entire life fighting for working people and standing up for public services and against inequality in our society,” says Darcy.

“I am so honoured to have the opportunity to carry that work forward in the political arena on behalf of the NDP in New Westminster, a very special community that I am proud to call home.”

■ Mike Old

NATIONAL PRESIDENT PAUL MOIST

New Year message from Paul Moist

In many respects 2011 was a difficult year for CUPE. The election of a majority Conservative government set an adversarial tone for CUPE and the entire labour movement.

In short order, our brothers and sisters in CUPW and CAW were set upon by the anti-unionism rife among Harper Conservatives. Then CUPE became the target, when the rights of our flight attendants at Air Canada were trampled.

Thinly veiled private members bills attacking unions, stalling urgently needed reforms to our public pensions, the foisting of an ‘austerity’ agenda on Canadian workers while trumpeting more corporate tax cuts: 2011 had no shortage of challenges for CUPE.

As we head into the New Year, the challenges are by no means abating.

Many of our CUPE brothers and sisters are – or soon will be – undertaking some difficult bargaining. These difficulties are being fueled by the ideological agenda of Harper Conservatives and their like-minded allies in some provincial and municipal governments.

CUPE members across the country – from the largest cities to the smallest villages and towns – are being told at bargaining tables they have to be the ones to shoulder the burdens with wage freezes, cuts to benefits, and the dismantling of their pensions.

This, in the simplest and clearest terms, is unacceptable. Our members provide the quality public services all Canadians depend on, and they will not be the ones

to take responsibility for an economic crisis they didn’t create.

When facing these challenges it is important to remember we are strongest when we work together. Across bargaining committees, locals, regions and the entire union, our solidarity is our greatest asset.

One of the ways we can use our solidarity in practical terms is by sharing information. This year we will be holding a national bargaining conference where this sharing can be fostered. At each of the 2012 division conventions, I will be hosting a breakfast where we can come together and discuss the economic issues facing our members.

Meetings and gatherings like these are an opportunity to exchange ideas, gain insight and strategize on how best to push back against the austerity agenda and defend our members and the public services they provide.

This New Year will no doubt hold many new challenges for CUPE. From what we saw at our national convention, we are ready to work together - with each other, our brothers and sisters in other unions, our allies, and our party - to make sure 2012 is a great year for the 615,000 members of Canada’s largest union.

PAUL MOIST ONLINE twitter.com/CUPENatPres



 Follow Paul Moist on Twitter

FOCUS:

CONVENTION ISSUE



MAKING SOCIAL CHANGE HAPPEN – CUPE 2011 CONVENTION AWARD WINNERS

Social change does not happen without dedicated leaders who fight for what they believe in. These champions of positive change challenge and push for changes in the way we live, the way we work and the way we view others and ourselves.

At the CUPE 2011 National Convention in Vancouver, delegates honoured four CUPE champions who worked tirelessly to make positive changes that help our members in their workplaces and in the community. The four national award winners are:

Terry Bennett, a proud



Literacy award winner Terry Bennett.

and active member of CUPE 569 in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador is the winner of this year's National Literacy award. Brother Terry helped develop his workplace literacy program, successfully completed his General Educational Development (GED) and ran for municipal elections in St. John's in 2009.

Lynn Chassé, dedicated



Grace Hartman award winner Lynn Chassé.

her Grace Hartman Award "to the memory of all loved ones lost due to violence." Chassé, whose mother was murdered by an ex-boyfriend in 2000, is the driving force behind the annual Shoe Memorial, held since 2008 in Kamloops, BC.

Gary Orsten, a health and safety activist in Alberta for over 37 years is the winner of the National Health and Safety Award.



Health and Safety award winner Gary Orsten.

Gary helped improve Alberta's health and safety code and helped establish the Alberta Municipal Safety Association.

Richard Sherring, received the National Disability Rights Activism Award posthumously. Richard was an active member of CUPE 998 in Manitoba who worked to improve disability rights awareness and promote other social



Mr. and Mrs. Sherring accept the Disability Rights Activism award on behalf of their deceased son Richard Sherring.

justice causes through award-winning videos and innovative tools. Sadly, Richard passed away earlier this year and in a touching, emotional ceremony, his parents, Cheryl and Bob Sherring, accepted the award on his behalf.

■ James Chai

COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS WINNERS

Union solidarity depends on good communication. CUPE's local communicators put in long volunteer hours to make sure our members are informed. This year we honoured our communicators on the convention floor with 15 Communications Awards. For a complete list of winners, go to CUPE.CA/COMM-AWARDS.

■ Wes Payne

THE NEW SOCIAL ACTIVISM: CUPE MEMBERS FIGHTING SMARTER

Smartphones, laptops and iPads could be seen everywhere at this year's National Convention as delegates shared information, comments and images that traveled across the country and around the world!

The week of convention was the highest-traffic week ever in the history of cupe.ca and hundreds of people used the Social Media Guide. Thousands of photos from Convention were shared on Facebook and the #CUPE2011 hashtag was used to make more than 3,500 tweets.

Dozens of people from Burma posted Facebook comments and shared our photos of Burmese activists Aie Son and Aung Naing Soe who were guest speakers at the Global Justice Forum.

CUPE members took action through social media to send messages of solidarity in support of Occupy Vancouver and striking CUPE members at the University of Sherbrooke.



By investing approximately \$63,000 – CUPE supported Carbon Zero’s Social Housing Retrofit Project.

BURMESE PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS WIN HEARTS, EXPAND NETWORK



Burmese activists Aie Son and Aung Naing salute CUPE delegates.

Burmese pro-democracy activists Aung Naing Soe and Aie Son made a big impression during their guest appearance at national convention.

Delegates learned how the two young, ethnic Burmese exiles have made a difference with their activism, despite the fact that an “Arab Spring” or “Occupy”- style movement seem next to impossible in Burma (also known as Myanmar), now approaching its fiftieth anniversary under military dictatorship.

Aung Naing, 32, is general secretary of the

Nationalities Youth Forum, a multi-ethnic youth umbrella organization representing 13 groups and 11 ethnicities in Burma. Aie Son, 31, is chairperson and deputy director of programs for the Mon Youth Progressive Organization. Both based in Thailand, their organizations provide human rights, media, and other forms of training for border-area ethnic peoples inside Burma.

At the Global Justice Forum, Aie Son’s account of media censorship in Burma provided a sobering contrast to activist resources

in North America.

“If you don’t have Internet access, then you don’t have Facebook and Twitter,” she said. “So your support is important.”

Aung Naing spoke at the Youth Forum and encouraged delegates to fill out postcards calling on the Burmese government to release the country’s 2,000 political prisoners.

To sign the postcard, visit:

CUPE.CA/ACTION/RELEASE-POLITICAL-PRISONERS-IN-BURMA.

■ Dan Gawthrop

A CARBON NEUTRAL CUPE CONVENTION

The 25th national convention in Vancouver was the first-ever carbon neutral CUPE convention.

CUPE offset the carbon emissions related to convention with investments that will support retrofits in social housing.

Holding a large event - like a national convention in a country the size of Canada - unavoidably has an impact on our planet and generates significant greenhouse gas emissions.

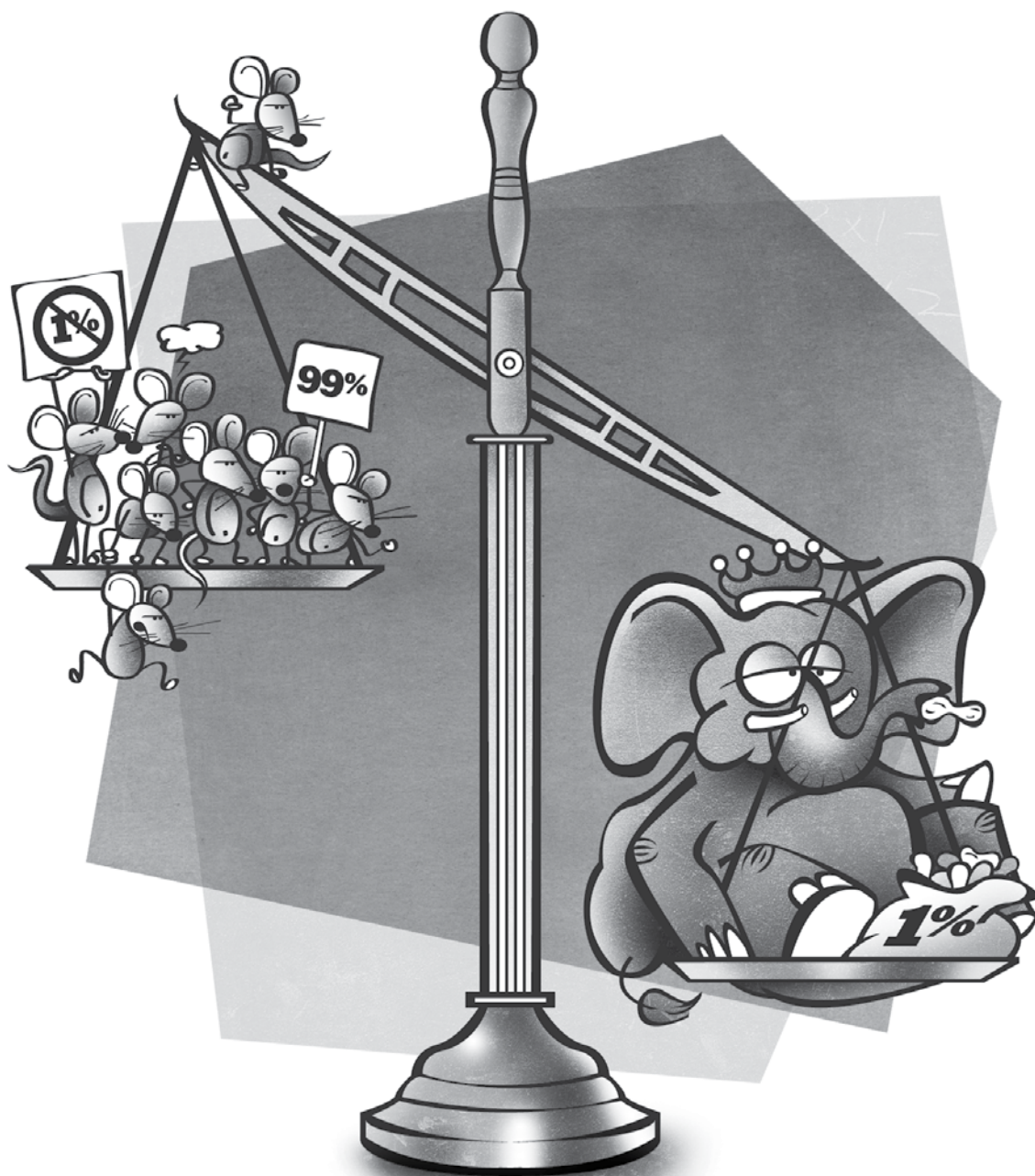
Taking into account travel, energy use and printing, our national convention generated 3,061 tons of carbon emissions.

To compensate for our environmental footprint, CUPE collaborated with CarbonZero, a leader in the design and implementation of carbon reduction strategies and solutions. “By investing approximately \$63,000, CUPE supported Carbon Zero’s Social Housing Retrofit Project, which will implement energy-efficient upgrades such as better insulation, windows and heating systems to social housing in Montreal,” explained newly elected Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury.

This project is implemented by the Office municipal d’habitation de Montréal (OMHM); OMHM workers are members of CUPE 429 (Le Syndicat des fonctionnaires municipaux de Montréal - SFMM).

■ Pierre Ducasse

Têtes-à-têtes!



“I’ve never flinched at the centrality of the labour movement in the NDP. Expand that role don’t be self-conscious about it.”

— Stephen Lewis

CUPE “A HOTBED OF SOCIAL ACTIVISM” – STEPHEN LEWIS

One of the greatest orators ever to come out of English Canada, Stephen Lewis had delegates on their feet with a rallying cry against what he called “criminal passivity” around the world.

Most known for his work with the United Nations in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa, Lewis described as “magnificent” the \$250,000 in support which CUPE and its locals and members have contributed

to his Stephen Lewis Foundation

WWW.STEPHENLEWISFOUNDATION.ORG/

Speaking about the Harper government’s current attack on free collective bargaining, Lewis asked, “Can you imagine anything more obscene than the indefensible attack on unions and working people at the hands of the current government, and all of it at the expense of working people.”

He accused Stephen

Harper of “being determined to change the landscape and values of Canadian society to the point where it will be unrecognizable.”

Speaking to the question of labour’s role in the NDP, Lewis was clear. “I’ve never flinched at the centrality of the labour movement in the NDP. Expand that role, don’t be self-conscious about it,” he urged.

Offering a bouquet to the work of the Global Justice Committee on women’s issues, Lewis suggested, “There is no more important struggle on the planet than the struggle for gender equality.

“CUPE reaches out to the rest of the world like no other union I have ever seen, from the Arab Spring to the fight for the right to clean water around the world.”

■ John McCracken



Stephen Lewis address CUPE delegates.

Convention Delegates Strengthen Strategic Directions 2011-2013:

A Blueprint for the Future

Delegates in Vancouver adopted CUPE’s Strategic Directions 2011-13, A Blueprint for the Future, after shaping the plan through debate, suggestions, and input from the plenary floor. Read it here: CUPE.CA/STRATEGICDIRECTIONS2011-13.

The plan addresses the assault on the public sector and the working class. It speaks to the impact of the world economic downturn and global financial crisis on our members’ lives. Members strengthened the strategic directions blueprint by emphasizing the links between our struggles and what’s happening in Wisconsin, in the global Occupy movement and the turmoil in Europe. Delegates pointed out that: “The capitalist system is showing serious signs of failure and now more than ever, is not meeting the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the 99 per cent.” A class analysis will be built into our education work. It will include race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and an Aboriginal perspective.

The Strategic Directions plan speaks to reaching

CUPE members, calling on the union to invest in databases, social media strategies, education tools, solidarity building and other union building activities. A bargaining conference focusing on wages, benefits, pensions, health and safety, job security, and in particular, on strategies to meet the needs of women workers, is planned for the fall of 2012 or early 2013.

“The capitalist system is showing serious signs of failure and now more than ever, is not meeting the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the 99 per cent.”

Members strengthened strategies to increase union density, strengthen our steward base, and increase our organizing capacity. CUPE will provide assistance to locals and members to facilitate coalition building and community outreach. The union will highlight the good works of CUPE members and locals and how these good works make our communities better places to live.

■ Robert Lamoureux

CUPE 2011 CONVENTION DELEGATES RALLY TO SUPPORT “OCCUPY”

In the midst of a busy and productive convention, more than 1,000 delegates took time to attend a noon-time rally in support of the worldwide “Occupy” movement.

Featuring speeches from CUPE members and leaders, the rally also heard from representatives of Occupy Vancouver, who thanked CUPE delegates for their support of the movement.

CUPE National President Paul Moist called on CUPE delegates and members to support the Occupy movement in their

own communities across the country. “I’m so impressed by the courage and passion of the people in this movement,” said Moist. “Their dedication to a fairer, more equitable society is very much in line with the values of CUPE members and of CUPE as an organization.”

Moist said that government and big corporations—the so-called “one per cent”—ignore or dismiss the Occupy movement at their peril.

CUPE General Vice-President Barry O’Neill unveiled CUPE BC’s new community events

trailer, which was built entirely with Canadian or North American materials and components. He said that a renewed focus on local economies could help reduce the gap between rich and poor.

“The courage shown by our sisters and brothers in the Occupy movement is inspiring and we must do

everything we can to support them,” said O’Neill. “But we must also ensure the momentum sparked by this movement isn’t lost. We have to translate the ideas and passion into concrete action and CUPE will stand with activists and advocates to create the kind of society we all want for our children and their children.”

At the conclusion of the rally, more than 500 delegates spontaneously marched to the Occupy Vancouver site at the Vancouver Art Gallery to extend their support in person.

View the video at CUPE.CA/CUPE/OCCUPY-VANCOUVER.

■ Clay Suddaby



CUPE delegates march to Occupy Vancouver.

“Now even business-friendly organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the Conference Board have raised concern about increasing inequality, saying it’s hampering economic growth.”

THE 99% VS. THE 1%.

Retailers focus on luxury and discount brands as the middle class disappears

Everybody agrees inequality is terrible, but nobody in power seems to be doing anything to reduce it. Instead, we have more bailouts for banks while countries slash public services and salaries.

That’s why people are taking to the streets and occupying public spaces from Athens to Anchorage and Singapore to São Paulo – over 2,000 communities around the world including dozens in Canada.

It’s not just the growing chasm between the richest 1% and the 99%. Progress reducing the wage gap for women, Aboriginal people, recent immigrants, racialized communities and the disabled is stalling. And the economic crisis is

disproportionately hurting the most vulnerable: the unemployment rate for recent immigrants is almost two and half times that of Canadian-born.

While they used to claim that a “rising tide would lift all boats” and the benefits of the wealthy would trickle down, now even business-friendly organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the Conference Board have raised concern about increasing inequality, saying it’s hampering economic growth.

While Conservatives attack public services and public sector and union wages as being unfair and unsustainable, the opposite is true. Labour unions and the expansion of public services have been the

strongest forces for increasing equality in all society.

The value of public services works out to over \$17,000 annually for every Canadian and it’s remarkably similar for all different income groups. Cuts to public services particularly hurt lower income families who are more dependent on them for their well-being.

Since greater equality is better for our society and our economy, why are our governments continuing to provide tax cuts and loopholes for corporations and the rich while reducing public services and undermining workers’ wages?

The answer is as much political as it is economic.

■ **Toby Sanger**



ELECTED

Charles Fleury, CUPE’s new National Secretary-Treasurer

On Nov. 2, at the CUPE national convention, Charles Fleury was elected National Secretary-Treasurer on the third ballot. He succeeded Claude Généreux, who over the past 10 years spearheaded the spectacular turnaround of CUPE’s finances. “Claude left CUPE’s finances in such good shape with no surprises, I am committed to follow the same route,” the newly elected official declared.

Charles is a resident of Terrebonne, a community northeast of Montreal. He is an employee of Hydro-Québec, a member of CUPE 1500 and a long-time labour activist. His involvement with CUPE dates back to 1982. Before being elected to his current role, he served on CUPE’s National Executive Board as Regional Vice-President, a position he held since 2003.

“In Canada, we sometimes talk about the two solitudes between French and English speaking Canadians,” Charles said. “The only two solitudes I can see today is the one between 99 (ninety-nine) per cent of the population that needs more and the 1 (one) per cent that wants to take the little bit we have away.”

A few short hours after his election victory, Charles told us in an interview that he was worried about the political future of the country. “Every year, the gap between the rich and the poor widens. If we don’t take control of matters today,” he warned, “we stand the risk of getting into some serious trouble in 10 years. Considering the Conservative government’s attacks against workers and their right to strike and the race to the bottom, the challenges in the next two years will be sizeable ones. We need to start putting the financial and human resources in place to implement our strategic plans.”

The new secretary-treasurer also noted that in today’s workplaces “workforce renewal is an important issue.” CUPE will have to adapt to accommodate the needs of our youth. The needs of those entering the workforce now aren’t the same as they were 25 years ago. “We have to reach out to them, get to know them,” and revisit the way we do things “to win over the younger generation.” In this regard, he mentioned the importance of negotiating work/life balance options and investing in social media.

■ **Robert Bellerose**

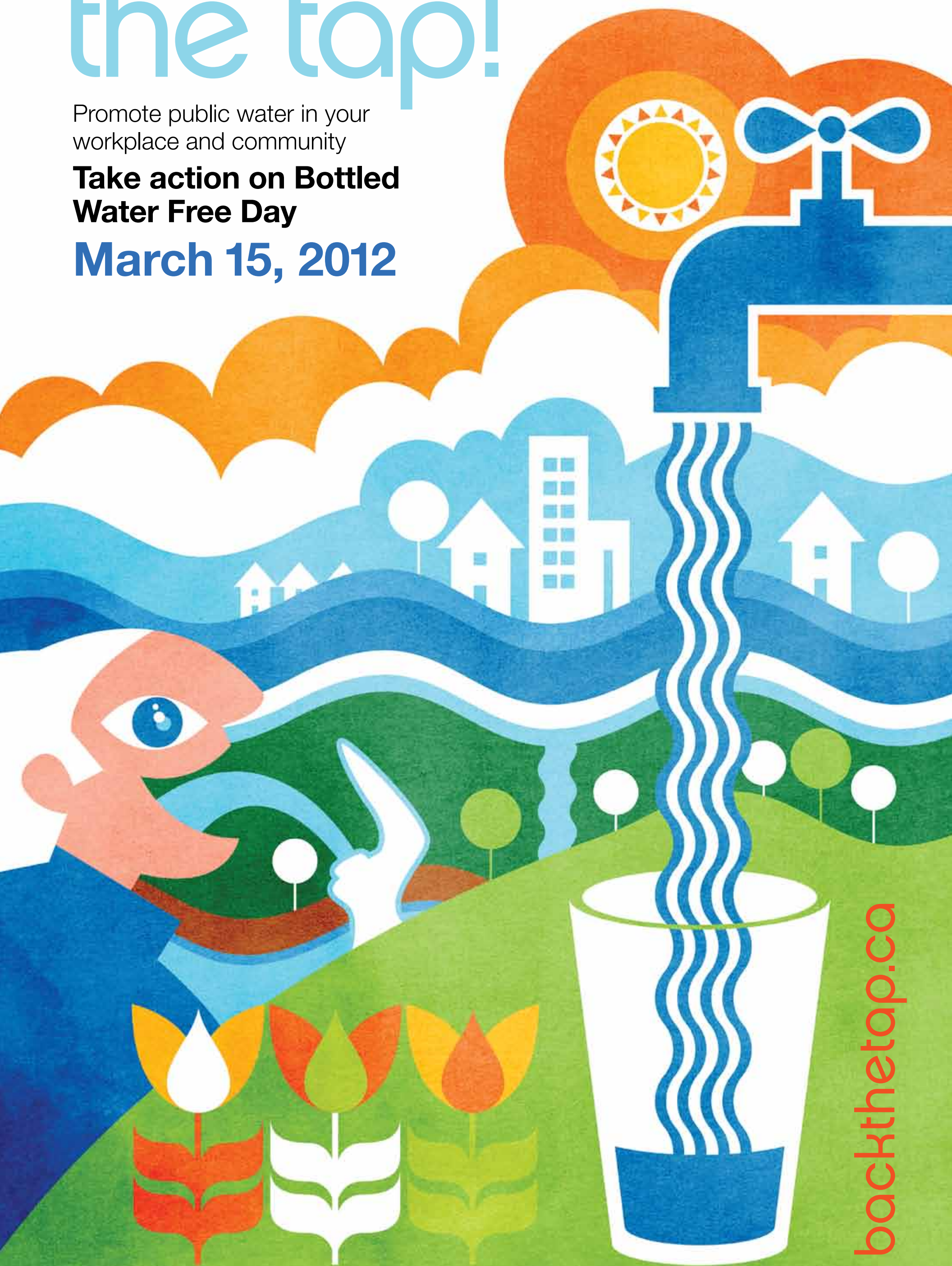


Back the tap!

Promote public water in your
workplace and community

**Take action on Bottled
Water Free Day**

March 15, 2012



backthetap.ca