

ORGANIZE



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Privatization





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Our work is far reaching



As you receive this issue of *Organize*, we are on the eve of our national convention—our parliament, where some 2,000 activists will gather to debate policy and set direction for our national union.

While we often get direct feedback from members, locals and staff, we don't often hear directly from our employers

about the work of our union. This happens daily at a local level, but rarely at the national level.

I received some very interesting comments during the three days that Brother Claude, a number of our key municipal activists and staff and I spent in Calgary. We were attending the annual convention of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), June 1-4. With over 1,700 Mayors and Councillors in attendance, it was a great opportunity for us to lobby the employers of our 150,000 municipal members.

The Mayor of Grand Prairie, Alberta approached me at our CUPE booth to offer his thanks for the literacy award that his city and Local 787 received from the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators. He shared with me that he had never heard of joint literacy projects until he attended FCM's convention in Edmonton in 2004, where he spoke with us at our booth and took some of our literature.

A while later, a gentleman approached me and introduced himself as a former CUPE activist from Cape Breton, N.S. who is now in his third term as a City Councillor in that community. He too wanted to offer a thank you. When I asked him why, he explained that he had learned public speaking and parliamentary procedure during his days as a union activist. His CUPE education assists him every day that he serves as a Councillor, and he has always wanted to thank CUPE.

Both stories are great tributes to the work of our union. And they are only two examples of the kind of encouraging feedback we received in Calgary. They remind me that our members' work and our union's work impacts individuals and communities in a very positive way.

In solidarity,

Paul Moist

Paul Moist
National President

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Supreme Court rules collective bargaining protected by Charter

In January 2002, the British Columbia provincial Liberals introduced Bill 29, one of the province's most controversial pieces of legislation. Bill 29, the Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act, effectively stripped health care workers of their collective bargaining rights. The legislation removed or rewrote contracting out, seniority and other provisions of health care and community social services collective agreements.

As a result of Bill 29, up to 8,000 health care workers were fired during the B.C. Liberal government's first term. This Bill also facilitated the most extensive privatization of health care services in Canada. Cleaning, dietary and other hospital support services in the province's largest population centres have been contracted out to multinational corporations that, in turn, have slashed wages by half, causing high staff turnover and undermining service quality.

From the very beginning, CUPE National, CUPE HEU and other unions took on Bill 29. At CUPE, we dedicated substantial resources to fighting it every step of the way. From March 2002 before the B.C. Supreme Court, to the B.C. Court of Appeals, and finally to the Supreme Court of Canada, CUPE opposed Bill 29.

In June of this year, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that sections of Bill 29 violate the *Canadian Charter of*

Rights and Freedoms. "The Supreme Court of Canada has determined that the right of workers to bargain collectively is so important to society as a whole that it is protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms," says CUPE National President Paul Moist.

"The verdict has been in on Bill 29 for the last five years. It's a bad law that's wrecked havoc in health care," says Judy Darcy, the Hospital Employees Union (HEU) Business Manager. "Now the highest court in the land has declared that this law violates the constitutionally protected Charter rights of our members."

In a 6-1 decision, the Court held that freedom of association as guaranteed by Section 2(d) of the Charter includes a procedural right to collective bargaining. CUPE B.C. President Barry O'Neill says: "this decision has historic implications, and for more than just the health unions. The Supreme Court decision forces the provincial government to redraft this legislation to the benefit of working British Columbians."

CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux concurs: "From now on, governments that interfere with freely negotiated collective agreements and the collective bargaining rights of employees must justify their actions against the protection provided by the Charter of Rights."

■ Catherine Louli

June 29, 2007: National Aboriginal Day of Protest



Photos 1,2 & 5 credit: Murray Mosher

Photo credit: Jean-Claude Tremblay MédiaMatinQuébec



(L-R) President of CUPE 1450 and spokesperson for the locked-out workers Denis Bolduc, CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux, CUPE National Servicing Representative Sylvain Blanchette, and Brother Généreux's Executive Assistant Michael Butler, all holding the union paper MédiaMatinQuébec.

Protesting the lock-out, July 11, 2007 in Quebec City.

At 9 a.m. on April 22, 2007, the *Journal de Québec* building was barricaded with metal barriers and thirty security guards were posted. In negotiation with its staff since December 1, Sun Media Corporation (Quebecor) declared a lock-out of its office workers, journalists and photographers. The number one daily newspaper in Quebec City, *Journal de Québec* pulls in net profits of close to \$25 million annually. At the end of 2005, when rival newspaper *Le Soleil* announced a shift to tabloid format, it seemed reasonable for Journal employees to agree to extend their collective agreement by one year to allow the company to deal with the competition. In its 40-year history, the *Journal de Québec* had never experienced any labour conflict.

Strangely, despite its economic success, the employer decided that it would not be business as usual, and prepared for an unprecedented show of force. In September 2006—far enough in advance of the lockout to bypass the anti-strike breaking provisions of the Quebec *Labour Code*—the company hired 14 additional executives. In November 2006, Quebecor executive Anne-Marie Cadieux sent an e-mail "in anticipation of difficult negotiations at the *Journal de Québec*," recruiting journalists "ready to move to Toronto for the duration of the conflict" and adding that they would be generously compensated.

An uncommon lockout at the Journal de Québec

Her e-mail was published in the Montreal newspaper *La Presse*, and she left Quebecor soon thereafter. In January 2007, a phantom pressroom was set up on the third floor of the *Toronto Sun* building.

On April 22, management made its move, trying to break the union by throwing newsroom and office staff out on the street.

The response from CUPE 872, 1450 and 2808

In a show of solidarity, printing staff refused to go to work and, that same day, voted to strike by 97%. The next day, while the media headed for the *Journal* building, union members announced that there would be no picket line. Even more ludicrous, the company had barricaded in itself as if terrorists were about to attack.

Two days after the announcement of the lockout, a major surprise: union members published the first issue of a free daily paper, *MédiaMatinQuébec*. Throughout the lockout, union members have published and distributed their daily throughout Quebec City. With a run of 40,000 copies, it has received an enthusiastic reception from the city's population.

For the locked-out employees, the publication of a free paper has been, above all, a way to publicize the conflict and their cause. This original pressure tactic has aroused much comment. Some of the

media have gone so far as to say that we are witnessing a new form of trade unionism.

The more time passes, the more support for union members grows: from CUPE in Quebec and across Canada, other Quebec Federation of Labour members and large Quebec unions.

Who knows what the future holds?

At the time of writing, barring a change of attitude in the employer, the conflict at the *Journal de Québec* seems to be far from over. No negotiations have taken place since the beginning of the lockout. Maintaining its stance of "business as usual," Quebecor is trying to purchase yet another chain of daily newspapers, *Osprey* in Ontario. Sun Media Corporation (Quebecor) has resorted to several legal appeals, among other means, to block the publication of the union's daily newspaper. In court, Quebecor tried to invoke the loyalty due from its employees, even in a lock-out!

By creating a conflict at the *Journal de Québec*, Quebecor may have helped us write a new page in the history of labour relations.

■ Robert Bellerose

For more information on the employer, its financial situation and its labour practices, go to www.cupe.ca/media/Lockout_at_Le_journa

Labour mobility agreement could harm workers, affect safety



Stephen Shrybman (middle) joins CUPE National President Paul Moist and CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux for a presentation on TILMA at the recent Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference.

in order to protect workers, patients, consumers and, more generally, public safety. These important goals are actually put at risk by TILMA.”

Nevertheless, Minister Bernier has decided that “TILMA is a model for Canada,” and is pressing the provinces to join a race to the lowest common denominator of provincial regulation.

Warns CUPE National President Paul Moist, “TILMA provides both unprecedented grounds for asserting the interests of private service providers, and a sympathetic forum for doing so. This means that rather than spend years litigating before

domestic courts, challenges such as the one mounted by Doctor Chaoulli [to introduce private, for-profit delivery] to Quebec’s Medicare system are now likely to proceed under TILMA.”

The worse thing about TILMA is that it is not necessary. We already have virtually unrestricted interprovincial trade in Canada. We have no customs stations along provincial borders and no tariffs of any kind on interprovincial trade.

■ Catherine Louli

For more on Steven Shrybman’s opinion, go to www.cupe.ca/tilma/An_assessment_of_the

In the early days of summer, just before the House of Commons recessed, Industry Minister Maxime Bernier suggested that free labour mobility is a right of citizenship. He said this in the context of promoting the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA).

CUPE hired Steven Shrybman, law partner with the legal firm Sack Goldblatt Mitchell, to look at TILMA and write a legal opinion on the agreement. He explained that, “like other aspects of the rationale offered for TILMA, it is hard to find evidence that there are significant problems of labour mobility in Canada, or that existing efforts to address them are not working.”

For the 20 per cent of Canadian workers who must be certified or licensed to practice their trade or profession, federal-provincial bodies have been working for some time, and successfully, to facilitate greater mobility and avoid unnecessary duplication in provincial regulations.

“It is also important,” continued Shrybman, “to appreciate that the training and certification standards targeted by Minister Bernier were established to ensure the competence of individuals to carry on a particular occupation or trade

Campaign to reinvest in community social services

After almost a year in the making, the kick-off to a joint community social service agencies / labour campaign calling for Ontario government reinvestment in the sector has already begun to produce tangible results. Over 85 agencies, labour groups and 800 union and non-union workers braved unseasonably cold weather on June 5th to put on a demonstration of their work and role in building healthy communities on the front lawn of the provincial legislature.

This coalition, led by a steering group of nine agencies and four unions, came together because of a decade of underfunding and cutbacks by federal, provincial and other governments. The ability of social service agencies to serve their communities while meeting their basic costs,

including decent wages and benefits for front line workers, has been severely eroded.

“Many agencies were generally reticent to take political action against their funders and, traditionally, workers fought with employers when the source of the problem was the lack of government funding,” says CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Fred Hahn, a social service sector worker for many years. “The very fact that so many agencies came to Queen’s Park with their workers and unions was in itself a powerful and unifying event.”

More action by the coalition is in the works, targeting the upcoming provincial election and federal and municipal reinvestment in social services.

■ Valerie Dugale



PEI Silent Witness Program

Shelly was only eight when her mother, Shirley Ann Duguay, died at the hands of an estranged common-law partner. As a volunteer for the Silent Witness Program, Shelly now takes time to speak on PEI about domestic violence and abuse. Surrounded by 11 life-size silhouettes representing Island women and victims of family violence, Shelly spoke about her life experience to the delegates of the CUPE PEI Annual Convention this May in Summerside. “This courageous young woman touched the delegates,” says Donaldda MacDonald, President of CUPE PEI. CUPE contributed \$2,500 to help this crusade against domestic violence.

CUPE gets political across the country

Five provinces—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island—and municipalities in seven provinces and territories—Manitoba, Saskatchewan (urban), Yukon, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Northwest Territories and Nunavut—held elections during the past 12 months. CUPE members were particularly active in some of these elections.

CUPE—as the largest affiliate in the Quebec Federation of Labour—participated as part of the labour campaign in the March 2007 Quebec election, including endorsing the Parti Québécois. Despite their efforts, the Liberals won a minority government, and the Action Démocratique du Québec unseated the PQ as the official opposition.

Manitobans went to the polls on May 22, electing 36 NDP Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to form another NDP government. “The union focused attention on voting for a government that puts people and public services ahead of tax cuts and privatization and that’s what we achieved,” says CUPE Manitoba President Kevin Rebeck. “Now we have to work with the government to

put their policies and promises into practice, and make sure working people in Manitoba see the benefits of their election victory.”

Three CUPE women ran for office in Manitoba. Marilyn Brick (CUPE 500) was re-elected; Sharon Blady (CUPE 3909) ran in a Tory stronghold and won; and CUPE National Representative Denise Harder ran in a historically Tory constituency, coming in a very respectable second. “It’s great to see CUPE women taking the lead and running for political office. Thank you, sisters,” adds Rebeck.

A few days later, on May 28, the Prince Edward Island election brought dramatic political change, unseating the Conservatives and giving the Liberals a sweeping majority. In the lead-up to the election, more than 60 activists participated in a first ever Political Action Conference organized for CUPE members on PEI.

CUPE PEI took an active part in this campaign, surveying the three party leaders about labour issues and publishing their answers in a brochure for members. “We wanted to make sure that, during the election, our members made the connection between the lunch box and the ballot

box,” says Donaldda MacDonald, CUPE PEI President. “We put workers’ issues on the forefront. All three party leaders addressed delegates at our annual convention and answered their questions—a first for CUPE on the Island. At the end of the day, we received some commitments from the parties and we will work to make them live up to their promises.”

In Ontario, where voters will head to the polls on October 10, CUPE Ontario has a comprehensive plan to elect progressive MPPs (Members of Provincial Parliament) and get CUPE members involved. CUPE Ontario’s planning began at sector conferences in January, which featured political action seminars where delegates identified important election issues and discussed election strategy. CUPE Ontario will focus on a *Putting People First* agenda, and will put significant resources into the election.

■ Roseanne Moran

Communities mobilize against

PRIVATIZATION



Photos 1, 2 & 3: Protesting the closure of the hospital laundry in North Bay.

Photo 4: In New Brunswick, the community was out in force to stop the privatization of public skating rinks.

Photo 5: Carleen Pickard, Council of Canadians BC/Yukon Regional Organizer (left), with Pete Davidson of CUPE 2010 and Pina Belperio of the Whistler chapter of the Council of Canadians.

It's part of the recipe for success. When CUPE members take on privatization and contracting out, it's usually in coalition. As Karin Jordan reports, CUPE members know they are stronger when they work together with others to defend public services.

The winning combination

It takes a community to slay a giant. That's the lesson from Stellarton, Nova Scotia, where workers and the community recently stopped health care multinational Sodexho from getting a toehold at a Nova Scotia nursing home. Alert members of CUPE 2330, workers at the Valley View Villa, got early warning of the corporation's bid to manage the home's support services. "Once we had our members together, we knew our next step was the residents' families," says CUPE 2330 President Betty Jean Sutherland. From there, the campaign grew quickly.

The pitch was simple. Valley View Villa is a home away from home for loved ones. Handing management to a French-owned multinational with a reputation for cost-cutting would lower the quality of care, hurting residents. "We were able to draw very quickly on research from CUPE National and the HEU (Hospital Employees' Union) about Sodexho's track record to make our case," says Sutherland. "Once we got rolling, those guys didn't have a hope."



CUPE members, other Valley View Villa workers and community members sported "Say No to Sodexho" buttons. CUPE's campaign got air time in the provincial legislature and at the local county council.

"We couldn't have done this without the provincial and national union support," Sutherland stresses. "It gave us the base to build our campaign quickly, which was essential to stopping the bid."

Election campaign pays off

In Sudbury, CUPE 4705 (municipal workers) took part in a community campaign to elect a new, more progressive Mayor. "We worked really hard, as a union and with community partners, to elect a labour-friendly government," says Local President Wyman MacKinnon.

This work has paved the way for a recent decision to contract in snow plowing. The local was able to show the new Mayor and Council that contracting out the work was costing \$1.25 million in standby time, plus the \$750,000 the contractors were paid to clear snow last winter. "It was immoral, almost criminal," says MacKinnon.

A committee that included snow plow operators, other local representatives and the local's National Representative reviewed the situation and prepared its own winter control plan, one that saved money while delivering reliable service from CUPE members. City Council has

adopted the plan, which will see the number of contractors cut in half for 2007-08, with a further reduction of 25 to 30 per cent the following winter.

"So much more is possible now. Before, we had a couple of labour-friendly Councillors, which was great. But having the person who sits in the big chair appreciate and understand your work is so important," says MacKinnon.

Saying no to private hospitals

In North Bay, CUPE is fighting privatization in coalition using a different kind of ballot box. Residents have signed pledge cards saying they will vote to keep hospitals 100 per cent public in the provincial election. That means no private finance, no private ownership, no privatized services and no staffing cuts. At press time, we were still waiting to hear the results from that vote.

"The Ontario Health Coalition's approach really is to mobilize on the ground in the community where the P3 hospital is located," says Michael Hurley, President of CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions. "The most successful tactic—and the one that's most painful for the

politicians—has been the referendum strategy. Going door-to-door and using the lead-up to the vote as a time to raise awareness has meant a huge expansion in our base of support at the local level."

CUPE and the health coalition are connecting the dots in North Bay, showing how the high-priced privatized hospital hurts the community. The North Bay Regional Health Centre is more than \$500 million over budget. Meanwhile, a joint hospital laundry in the community is closing, taking the service and 26 local jobs and services from the community.

"The politicians say there's no connection," says Henri Giroux, President of CUPE 146 and the CUPE District Council. "But there's no doubt that what's happened to our laundry service is the result of privatization and restructuring."

The coalition's strategy has a powerful impact. Former Ontario Health Minister Tony Clement went down to defeat in a storm of anger over a P3 hospital in his riding. While the Liberals are still pushing privately financed hospitals, they have severely narrowed the scope of privatization and guaranteed that most support services won't be contracted out. "We've forced the Liberals to back down, and now we have to keep the pressure up," says Hurley.

Keep job security and good service

In Winnipeg, it's everything except for the "pipes, pavement and police" that's up for grabs and under threat of contracting out by Winnipeg's Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC). The Commission is targeting job security provisions in the local's contract. CUPE 500 members are mobilizing to defend their collective agreement and community services.

"City officials want to get volunteers—teenagers and seniors—to do the work of committed city workers. Instead of thanking city staff for their contribution to the life of Winnipeg, this report is a slap in the face," says CUPE 500 President Garry Swanson. "They will contract out and privatize services even if it doesn't make economic or administrative sense."

Shared solutions

When the Alberta Conservative government announced plans to privately finance schools, "we used the disasters from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as our opening salvo," says CUPE Alberta Division President D'Arcy Lanovaz.

(cont. on page 9)

Are you curious about the many and diverse things CUPE members are doing in another local, another province or even in other countries? Find out what's happening by checking out these recent publications from the Communications Branch at CUPE National.

CUPE Celebrates: Year in Review 2006



Our annual report highlights important national campaigns, meetings and activities, and profiles key activities in each Division. Full of photographs and quick

facts, CUPE Celebrates offers an enjoyable survey of CUPE's efforts last year.

Early learning and child care—It's time

This updated, user-friendly publication explains the need for enlightened child care policies and a pan-Canadian early learning and child care system, and describes the varied activities of CUPE's national Child Care Working Group.



International Solidarity Report, 2006-2007

A collaboration of the Research and Communications branches at CUPE National, this report showcases the impressive array of international solidarity activities CUPE members are involved in around the world. (And a glance at the centre-spread map will give any CUPE member a reason to be proud.)

To request hard copies of any of these publications, e-mail comm@cupe.ca.

CUPE and Oxfam have teamed up to fight for strong, accessible public services in Canada and around the world.

"Linking experiences at home and abroad is critical," says Miriam Palacios, Oxfam's Public Engagement, Advocacy and Campaign Officer and a member of the CUPE National Global Justice Committee. "We have learned how women and workers are hurt by privatization in Canada, and we know it's a similar story in the South."

Oxfam Canada Campaigns Coordinator and CUPE 2722 member Bill Hynd draws clear links between public services and their impact on women and girls around the world. "If we make school free, the biggest group to benefit are girls. When there's a ready source of clean water, it frees up girls from having to walk long distances to gather water. When there's a free clinic to support pregnancy and childbirth, women live better and longer lives. Put simply, public services advance women's rights."

CUPE and Oxfam's joint work includes pressure on Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Canadian government to increase aid that focuses on strengthening human rights and ending poverty through public services, not privatization. The campaign also calls for Canada to use its clout with international agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to stop the practice of tying loans to forced privatization and cuts in social spending. This work



Young women gathering water in Cape Town, South Africa.

goes hand-in-hand with community-based campaigns in the South demanding that governments deliver vital services.

As more people—especially women—gain access to health care, education and clean water, "we are able to generate momentum and build a movement where people are able to exercise their rights, take social action and change their world," says Palacios.

■ Karin Jordan

Stay tuned to www.cupe.ca/globaljustice/CUPE_and_Oxfam as the campaign steps up in the fall. For more information about CUPE's global activities, ask us for a copy of CUPE's international solidarity report for 2006-2007.

"Speed kills," he quips, talking about the impact of having quick and ready access to information from other regions. "We're now reaching out to parent councils and the broader community. We're also engaging an economist to show the true cost of the government's plan."

Lanovaz says local victories have national significance. "When we fight P3 schools, it's not just an Alberta problem, it's a national problem. Our work fighting privatization has to take place nationally, through coordination of information and strategy, as well as regionally and locally through on-the-ground mobilization."

Small local, big victory

When municipal workers in Whistler, B.C., needed to fight the privatization of their wastewater treatment plant, they reached out right away. CUPE 2010 President Pete Davidson says that as a small local, community partners were a critical part of keeping the plant public.

Senior managers in Whistler, backed by the provincial agency Partnerships BC, had been quietly laying the groundwork to privatize the operation of a major upgrade of Whistler's sewage treatment plant. When City Council announced its P3 plans in 2005, Davidson had a single-minded response. "I refused to accept we were going to lose," he says. "So we worked with seniors, environmental groups, young people, the local writers' group. We went door-to-door and hung around the local bottle and garbage area, to make sure everyone knew what was going on. We didn't leave a single stone unturned."

In short order, a Whistler Water Watch coalition that included CUPE 2010 and the local Council of Canadians chapter was up and running. "The overwhelming response—from more than 20 per cent of Whistler residents—trumped Whistler's P3 plans," CUPE National Representative Meena Cheema.



Photo credit: Nic Hume

Kim Manton, Victoria Water Watch Coalition campaign coordinator & CUPE member, offering "clean, green and affordable" cookies to Graham Bewley, a Wastewater Operator and member of CUPE 1978.

are backing us. And that gets them engaged," she says.

Ensuring that the coalition includes environmental groups has built a united front that short-circuits opposition attempts to pit labour against the environment. "Our campaign is about stewardship—of the environment, of public funds and the public interest. So our slogan is 'public sewage treatment: clean, green, affordable.' It connects all the issues and shows that protecting the environment involves staying public," says CUPE 374 President and Island Water Watch Co-chair Justin Schmid.

"Once local politicians saw the numbers, they did a 180 degree turn away from a full referendum on the P3, and voted to design and build a public wastewater treatment plant," adds Davidson. "We could never have done that alone."

Stewardship: Clean, green, affordable and public

Community connections are equally important in a fight to stop privatized sewage treatment in Victoria. Here, the push started when the government mandated the region to start treating its sewage. Then, B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell singled out the Capital Region District's sewage treatment by announcing that all infrastructure projects worth more than \$20 million would go to the province's P3 agency for likely privatization.

The government's aggressive campaign is being countered by a broad coalition that counts CUPE as a main player. The Greater Victoria Water Watch Coalition has Kim Manton, a CUPE 1978 member, as its full-time campaign coordinator, thanks to support from her local and CUPE National.

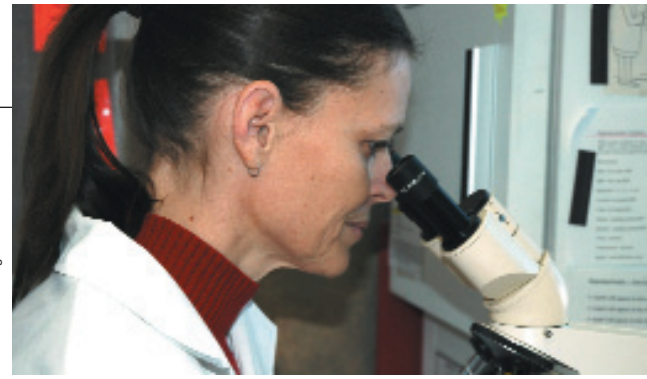
The campaign is building capacity in her local. "It's showing members that their national union and the local community

The wide range of voices around the table inspires Peter Justo, a Council of Canadians member involved in the coalition. "From many different perspectives we have been able to reach a consensus and work towards the same end. Working together is essential, because on our own we are spread too thin," says Justo.

For Schmid, new pressure from the federal government makes coalition work even more critical. The last federal budget introduced new measures linking infrastructure cash to privatization. "We're finding ourselves squeezed on two sides, so we need to strengthen the understanding of P3s as privatization, and push back even harder," he says.

Whether it's nursing homes, snow clearing services, hospitals or municipal water services, public services are under attack. CUPE members have had great success fighting privatization by working together with other community people and organizations that see how these initiatives damage our communities. As Kim Manton says, "it's given us incredible energy and reach." ■

For the latest campaign information, go to www.cupe.ca/campaigns



Members of CUPE2191 sent a message to Toronto-area MPPs in February: Have a heart for developmental services.

Coordinated bargaining: Solidarity brings strength

A national strategic initiative of CUPE, coordinated bargaining means that locals in a sector develop a common front and stand together in solidarity during negotiations. The amount of coordinated bargaining in different sectors has greatly increased, especially in B.C. One of the hardest sectors to achieve this approach is the municipal services sector. Yet CUPE members are making gains there and elsewhere.

British Columbia municipalities

When British Columbia's 20 Lower Mainland CUPE municipal locals began regular meetings in a flexible coordinated bargaining structure in the Fall of 2005, they had no idea how much these meetings would pay off. After all, this was the "Olympic round of bargaining." It was supposed to be a breeze. CUPE locals weren't asking for anything outrageous—unlike B.C.'s provincial politicians, who gave themselves a 29 percent wage increase—just fair contracts throughout the region.

"We were aghast at the concessions demanded," says CUPE B.C. Assistant Regional Director Anne Coupland, who at the time was coordinating meetings, proposal exchanges and idea-sharing among locals. "Everywhere, there were demands to cut sick pay, vacation and other benefits. At some tables there were even demands to cut wages."

In response to the employers' outrageous demands—including 39-month contracts that would expire weeks after the Olympics ended, when the event's bills would start to pour in—the 12,000 regional civic workers launched a campaign called "Fairness for Civic Workers."

The campaign included region-wide radio ads, print ads and an action website at www.fairnessforcivicworkers.ca to build public support and pressure politicians. To show the employer that CUPE locals were united, CUPE 389 (North Vancouver) President Cindy McQueen made sure locals were scheduled to appear at each other's respective bargaining tables, wearing each other's civic flag. The head of the employers' labour relations firm, in a local paper, said he "has not experienced coordinated bargaining to this degree in more than two decades."

The coordinated bargaining strategy has, to a large extent, been very effective in British Columbia's Lower Mainland—contracts have been settled everywhere except in Vancouver. There, an intractable mayor, Sam Sullivan, has kept 9,000 of the region's 12,000 civic workers on the picket line. But CUPE municipal locals in the Lower Mainland have shown that in coordinated bargaining, more than ever, solidarity will prevail.

Ontario ACL

CUPE locals in Ontario's associations for community living (ACL) sector have created one of the great success stories in coordinated bargaining.

It's been years in the making. The powerful combination of effective collective bargaining and political lobbying resulted, earlier this year, in a significant infusion of new funding into a sector that has been historically underfunded.

Seven years ago, community-based ACLs decided to study the problems they'd been having with staff recruitment and retention—problems that have only worsened in the ensuing years. Employers commissioned KPMG to compare ACL wage rates with those of workers doing similar jobs in other sectors like education and health care. KPMG documented a shocking wage gap of almost 25%, information that CUPE locals have used at the bargaining table and with politicians ever since.

CUPE's ACL bargaining committee came up with a plan in 2004 that started it on the road to success. A key feature of the coordinated proposals tabled by all locals was a demand that the employer sign a letter agreeing to two initiatives: engage in a discussion about central bargaining, and engage in a joint lobby campaign with their staff.

CUPE locals began to see wage increases double despite employers' pleas of poverty, by pressuring the province to increase funding to the sector in 2005.

In the fall of 2006, activity escalated through a "We Count Too!" campaign. Workers, employers, the individuals they support and their families sent thousands of postcards and e-mails to the provincial cabinet, and held forums and Valentine's Day have-a-heart media events. CUPE locals met with their MPPs, often accompanied by employers and family representatives.

At the same time, CUPE had moved coordination beyond our own locals, developing a relationship with the Ontario Public Employees Union (OPSEU), which represents a significant number of other workers in the sector. Together, in 2007, the two unions had about 80 bargaining units at the table—a fact that was not lost on the provincial Finance Minister and Minister of Community and Social Services. With a provincial election on the horizon, they wanted to avert widespread job action in the sector.

For once, the provincial budget released last March had happy news—\$200 million over four years in new operating funds for development services. Almost half was targeted specifically at improving wages in the sector. At the same time, major gains have been made on coordinated language on health and safety, violence in the workplace, job security and pensions. Still, central bargaining remains the real, long-term goal for the ACL bargaining committee. Bringing all the employers and the unions to a central table will be the only way to resolve permanently the disparities in the sector, and ensure that employers pass fair levels of the new funding onto the workers.

Ultimately, perpetuating underfunding and low wages will harm persons with a developmental disability the most. High staff turnover means they lose the comfort and ability to progress that having consistent and qualified support workers ensures. That's the message CUPE ACL workers in Ontario will continue to deliver as they fight to make gains at the table.

New Brunswick Hospital Workers

New Brunswick Hospital workers understand very well the power of coordinated bargaining. For years now, they have been negotiating provincially under the umbrella of the New Brunswick Council of Hospital Unions—CUPE 1252.

"In CUPE 1252, the local handles the grievance procedure, and the Council decides which grievance goes to arbitration and pays for the cost. Instead of having similar grievances going to arbitration, we usually pick the best case scenario," explains Robert Lafleur, President of the Council. "CUPE 1252 is also the bargaining agent for the hospital workers. When we negotiate, we don't do it on behalf of one hospital or a few hundred members, we do it for the province and more than 6,500 members."

"This has given us more clout and has allowed us to improve our wages, pension and benefits substantially. There is no doubt that we wouldn't be where we are today if we didn't negotiate as one," concludes Lafleur.

Standing together, with a common front, has been a great advantage for all CUPE members involved in coordinated bargaining.

■ Diane Kalen in British Columbia, Pat Daley in Ontario and Danielle Savoie in New Brunswick

First National District Council meeting



At the meeting, delegates shared ideas on how to strengthen District Councils and increase the participation of member-locals.

The simple fact that thirty-two representatives of CUPE District Councils from across Canada met in Toronto for a full weekend of discussions was, in itself, an amazing feat. That it was the first national meeting of District Council representatives in 44 years of CUPE's existence made the event even more significant.

Between April 27 and May 1, delegates from the four provinces where District Councils exist—British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia—made real an idea that was borne at the 2001 national convention.

"While some progress had been made in terms of funding District Council projects since the 2001 convention," says National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux, "there was a real need to bring about a meeting of the minds to establish how support for District Councils could be enhanced."

The delegates worked hard throughout the weekend, examining the role of

District Councils in CUPE, and exploring ways to increase interest and affiliation. Ontario's vastly divergent communities illustrate the challenges and creative potential when bringing members in different sectors together over issues. "In our community, CUPE locals work together on Communities Day, and we hold an annual social attached to our educational forum. Now we are fighting together to stop contracting out of hospital laundry services. Even though our numbers are small, we



The British Columbia delegation.

try to find creative ways to bring people together," says Henri Giroux of the North Bay CUPE Council.

Delegates also studied barriers faced by activists and brainstormed about the kinds of tools that CUPE could provide to help overcome some of those barriers. "Many travel up to three or four hours just to get to a Kootenay District Council (KDC) Meeting," says Gerry Schmon. The KDC President identified one of the many obstacles faced by District Councils outside the main centres in B.C. and Ontario.

For Lisette Muise, President of the Cape Breton Island District Council, the only one in Nova Scotia, "the opportunity to see just how other groups are overcoming some of the same obstacles, was a gift."

Outcomes from the meeting included:

- An NEB-supported resolution to increase project funding to District Councils to \$5,000 per project. Some of the funds can be used to book activists off for political mobilizing and election work.
- A listserv that will allow District Council activists to communicate regularly.
- A tool kit in the works, with information on how to access funding programs, CUPE policies, a calendar of events, and sample promotional literature, media releases and other materials to help District Councils encourage affiliation among members within the district covered by the Council.

■ Pam Beattie and Louise Leclair

CUPE co-sponsors national child care conference



CUPE national Child Care Working Group member Randi Gurholt-Seary (CUPE 15 B.C.) chats at the CUPE booth with Australian guest June McLoughlin.

Co-sponsoring the annual Canadian Child Care Federation conference this year proved to be a fruitful endeavour for our union. More than 600 child care workers, administrators, advocates and researchers from across the country came to Halifax for the June event. Members of CUPE's national Child Care Working Group joined a delegation of child care workers from Nova Scotia, as well as CUPE members from other provinces.

over 130 children aged three to twelve in the city of Vancouver. She has worked in the field for 25 years, 20 with her current employer. "Being at this conference gave me and other CUPE activists an opportunity to put a face to CUPE for non-unionized workers. We were also able to influence the discussions in the various workshops, to really give a labour perspective which would have otherwise been missing," says Gurholt-Seary. "Because I

There was steady traffic at the CUPE booth in the busy conference trade show. Materials available to delegates included an updated version of CUPE's child care booklet, information on research and political action, and organizing materials from Nova Scotia, Ontario and British Columbia.

Randi Gurholt-Seary is a B.C. member of the Child Care Working Group and a Supervisor in a pre-school and out-of-school care program for

am an ECE [early childhood educator], the participants talked with more comfort to me about their interest in CUPE," she adds.

Conference sessions tackled workforce issues and highlighted the ingredients of high-quality learning and care. Political action was also a hot topic. The Code Blue for Child Care campaign held an advocacy session during the conference that was filled to overflowing.

Stacy Delaney has worked as an Educational Assistant at Elm Street Elementary School in Summerside, PEI for 15 years. She says, "The highlight of the conference for me was the touring of the CUPE centres. In September, Summerside will be getting its very first Montessori program. Getting a tour of a similar program by CUPE ECEs was just what I needed to see."

CUPE currently has strong organizing campaigns underway with early learning and child care workers in British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia.

■ Karin Jordan and John McCracken

For more information on the Code Blue for Childcare campaign, go to www.buildchildcare.ca



First collective agreement for T'it'q'et daycare

Lillooet, B.C.: An aboriginal gathering was held on June 4 to celebrate the signing of a first collective agreement between the T'it'q'et Council and CUPE Local 173.

According to Roberto Limongelli, National Representative, the six workers at the First Nation daycare and preschool "not only have a collective agreement but also a solid relationship with Chief and Council, and that speaks volumes."

For more information on the new local, go to www.cupe.ca/aboriginal/Titqet

National Women's Task Force: Groundswell builds for change



NWTF members (front row, L-R) Donna Jackson, Rachel Besharah, Joanne Webb, Yolanda McLean, and (back row, L-R) Heather Vidito and Anne McGrath.

It's undeniably the widest outreach to members in CUPE's 44-year history. In its short 18-month life, the National Women's Task Force (NWTF) has listened to thousands of women and men across our union on how to improve women's representation and participation in CUPE.

The result: a groundswell of support for change that will benefit all union members.

Shelina Hassanalí (NWTF-Aberta) says she met with some women members who knew nothing about CUPE outside of their workplace and servicing representative. "They were touched to see that National was reaching out to them, asking them what their struggles were."

"The spring round of division conventions has resulted in overwhelming support for the organizational change recommendations of the Task Force," says Helen Kennedy (NWTF-Ontario). "We may not all agree on the structural recommendations, but we all agree that the status quo is not acceptable."

The NWTF presentation received several standing ovations and the new "women strengthen our union" tee-shirts sold out. Seeing a "sea of purple" from the podium during her presentation at Ontario's division convention was an outstanding moment for National Executive Board member Candace Rennick (NWTF-Ontario). "It was really motivating to see so many sisters and brothers united behind the report, wearing their tee-shirts."

Of the experience, Donisa Bernardo (NWTF-HEU) comments, "Although we all came from very diverse backgrounds and, at times, expressed very different views, I was amazed how those were expressed respectfully at every meeting."



(L-R) NWTF staff coordinator Cheryl Stadnichuk, CUPE Quebec Equality Representative Annick Desjardins, and NWTF member and SCLP Executive member Lucie Levasseur.

And Lucie Levasseur (NWTF-Quebec) observes that bringing together women from different environments, realities and origins "led to a far better understanding of the different problems experienced by women across the country and made it possible to transmit information on a larger scale."

Based on its member outreach, the Task Force put together a comprehensive set of nearly four dozen recommendations, which were discussed at conventions and conferences across the provinces. The structural recommendations would create two new national officer and four more regional vice-president positions to achieve immediately a minimum representation of women in CUPE's highest leadership structures.

The non-structural recommendations are far-reaching, bringing down internal union barriers and affecting everything—from union culture to developing a code of conduct to better union leave and

bargaining to address women's economic insecurity.

- One well-received recommendation calls for a women's bargaining conference to strategize on how to make gains for women in bargaining and strengthen their bargaining power.
- Some proposed changes would institute new union policies to recognize dependent care needs for members caring for children and elders.
- Others create funding for scholarships and mentoring to help women members access union education and training.

Sheryl Burns (NWTF-British Columbia) says NWTF activities inspired women to become active. "There's a commitment to hold women's caucuses at conventions and conferences and to create women's committees at the local level," she said, adding that many CUPE brothers have become allies in ensuring increased female representation.

Six provincial divisions held women's caucuses for the first time. In Nova Scotia, 47 women attended one such caucus, many speaking at a microphone for the first time. The division unanimously approved resolutions supporting the work of the NWTF and calling for the creation of an equality staff position.

Co-chair Barb Moore (NWTF-Nova Scotia) believes that one of the strongest roles the NWTF has played is in bringing women together. "Knowing that many feel the same concerns gives us the strength and power to break the barriers before us," she says. "United, we can tackle the most difficult problems, like globalization and climate change. We can win social justice for ourselves and the future."

■ Doreen Meyer

Expanding CUPE's networks



Jack Layton, speaking to delegates at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference.

CUPE has been building coalitions "outside the box" through its participation at two conferences in May: with the Canadian Library Association (CLA) in St. John's, and with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in Calgary. And conferences like CUPE's 11th Annual Western Canadian Municipal Workers' Conference (WMWC) also reflect a cross-pollination of ideas—this time between 130 municipal workers from an entire region.

At both the 2007 FCM and the WMWC, issues of privatization and contracting-out of municipal services were very much on CUPE's agenda. So too was the Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) and its projected impact on municipal services.

CUPE's focus at CLA was not on privatization, yet the freely distributed leaflet spoke clearly of the importance of keeping libraries public. A short time later, when the fight to keep the last library bindery was being waged, CUPE's motivation was better understood by many public library supporters.

Delivering public services—and fighting to protect them—is the front line work of CUPE members. By connecting with our sisters and brothers at the WMWC and with employers and the broader community at conferences like the CLA and FCM, we're building coalitions to extend our reach even further.

■ Louise Leclair, with files from Dennis Lewycky

Commonwealth Study Conference 2007

Overwhelming. Eye-opening. Educational. Awesome.

Those are just a few of the adjectives used by Kevin Rebeck, CUPE Manitoba President, and Candace Rennick, Regional Vice-President from CUPE Ontario, when they talk about their participation in the Tenth Duke of Edinburgh Commonwealth Study Conference.

"At first, when I found out I was going to be participating with business people, government people, bank managers, I was sceptical," says Rennick about the conference founded by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1956. "Then I realized it was absolutely important for us to be there, to put forward our point of view about strong communities and strong public services."

Rebeck agrees. The two were among 22 Canadians who travelled throughout India last March with other young leaders from unions, government, the private sector and NGOs. "CUPE's participation brings a labour perspective and balance for folks who don't even think about labour," says Rebeck. "It broadens our perspective, too. Even if we don't agree, it makes us step back and get perspective on our own and others' views."

Both are now involved as Commonwealth Conference alumni in helping to plan the 2008 Governor General's tour of Canada, keeping labour and public services high on the agenda.

■ Pat Daley

Claude Castonguay:

The Father of Quebec Medicare?



Appointing a like-minded individual to head a committee of enquiry is a surefire way to be reassured of the outcome. And with a track record for knowing the challenges, even better. Such was clearly the thinking of the Charest government in appointing Claude Castonguay to lead a working group examining financing Quebec's health care system.

At first glance, the choice of Castonguay seems quite reasonable. Described as the so-called "father of medical insurance" in Quebec, the former Minister of Health claims the title of founder of the province's universal, public health care system. One might think that Castonguay would be the right choice to keep the system universal, all the while making recommendations for its modernization. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth.

As Minister of Health in the early 1970s, Castonguay was already a supporter of a two-tiered health care system. However, neither the general public nor a vital union movement in Quebec agreed, and the Liberal government of the day was



forced to choose publicly delivered universal health care.

Castonguay's post-legislative career is revealing. He was a member of the Quebec government's advisory committee on privatization in 1986. After 17 years working in banking and insurance, he became a shareholder and Director for pharmaceutical companies like Andromet and Procrea BioSciences. Castonguay also authored several articles in *La Presse* promoting the benefits of a privatized health care system. Does such a profile reflect a neutral third party?

It isn't hard to understand why many think that Castonguay's report, anticipated for September, will reflect his particular interest in the role of privatization in Quebec's health care system. In another report released in May, authored by

Castonguay under the auspices of CIRANO, an inter-university research centre focusing on organizational analysis, he recommended a number of significant amendments to Quebec Medicare, including the privatization of some services, instituting a user pay system, and encouraging a larger role for private insurance.

It is unlikely that Castonguay's September report will hold many surprises. And it will, no doubt, form the basis of Quebec Health Minister Phillippe Couillard's new action plan. Let's hope that public resistance to the privatization of Quebec's universal public health care system is ready for mobilization. We know that CUPE members will be on the front lines in that fight.

■ **Alexandre Boulерice**

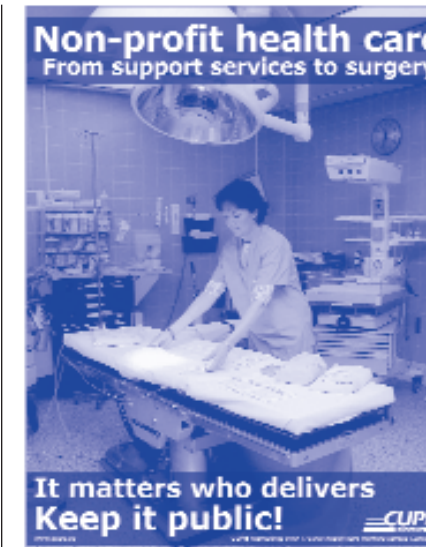
Conference builds on

Tommy's vision

More than 600 leading health care thinkers, union activists and academics gathered in Regina in May to build on "Tommy's vision for health care," and send a strong message to Canadian governments.

"We want public policy makers to know that Medicare is not for sale," said Bruce Campbell of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) in his opening remarks. "Protect it, expand it, renew it ... but don't neglect or dismantle it."

Organized by the CCPA and the Canadian Health Coalition, the *S.O.S. Medicare 2: Looking Forward* conference heard from an impressive array of speakers including actor Shirley Douglas, former Minister of Health and Welfare in the Trudeau government Monique Begin, researchers Armine Yalnizyan and Marcy Cohen, medical doctors Michael Rachlis and Joel Lexchin, and former Saskatchewan premiers Roy Romanow and Alan Blakeney.



Together, the more than 40 speakers identified "the next steps" to advance Tommy's vision and expand public health care in Canada. Some highlights:

- Colleen Flood, a law professor at the University of Toronto, told conference participants that upcoming court battles concerning Medicare in both

Ontario and Alberta must be fought on best evidence. "If we only fight on values and beliefs, we will lose," she said, citing the recent Supreme Court decision on Chaoulli that opened the door to private for-profit health care.

- "The time for a national prescription drug program has arrived," said Blakeney, stating research shows that huge cost savings could be achieved by a national plan.

Greg Marchildon of the University of Regina Graduate School of Public Policy noted there has always been "a vocal and powerful minority" working to undermine Medicare. But, he said, the fact we have the only public health care system in North America shows that when ordinary people work together, they are capable of achieving extraordinary things.

■ **Beth Smillie**

For more information about what happened at the conference, or to view a video of the proceedings, go to www.healthcoalition.ca/SOS2.html



Relay for Life

Véronique Fortin, a Clerk-Typist in the Finance and Administration Department of CUPE National, has been a cancer research advocate for the past four years. In response to a challenge from CUPE Local 523 in B.C., she recruited a team of seven other women—three-quarters of whom are CUPE employees—to participate in this year's Relay For Life. CUPE National sponsored the team and, in only 4 months, they were able to raise \$3,700 for the Canadian Cancer Society. Congratulations to you all!

Hot times in British Columbia

Major strides have been made in coordinating efforts in civic bargaining, both in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island. The “Fairness for Civic Workers” campaign (see page 10) received a big morale boost when several B.C. communities were threatened by

floods. A CUPE “Flood Watch” campaign revealed the crucial role that CUPE members play in relief efforts in their communities.

In Harrison Hot Springs, members of CUPE 458 (municipal workers) thanked the public for its support fol-

lowing a successful campaign for respect that saw the local resolve dozens of grievances and fight off 37 concessions—no small feat for an 11-member local.

In the K-12 sector, CUPE locals engaged their communities and school boards in the battle to keep schools open and services available to students throughout the spring. Adequate funding for schools will continue to be an issue in the coming year.

CUPE 873 continued its “Critical Condition” province-wide campaign—highlighting the need for improved funding and staff in B.C.’s ambulance service—while community social service workers were encouraged by a positive Labour Board decision in May that made it more difficult to dismantle and de-unionize the sector.

■ Daniel Gawthrop



Book saviours

CUPE 391 members Glen Creamer, Aliza Nevarie, Peter DeGroot, President Alex Youngberg and Ed Dickson staffed CUPE B.C.’s Strong Communities booth at the Vancouver Public Library’s Central Branch on May 23. VPL workers used the booth to raise awareness about the importance of the bindery, and encourage library patrons to sign a petition to save it.

For more information, go to <http://www.CUPE.ca/libraries/vplbindery>



Ontario: Walking a tightrope of bargaining and lobbying

Across Ontario, a pitched battle is being fought by CUPE to pressure the McGuinty Liberals into correcting the flawed public education funding formula implemented during the Harris/Eves regimes and continued by the Liberals. CUPE is pursuing a dual-track approach: lobbying the government, and ensuring that we use collective bargaining as a tool in the campaign.

Although negotiations with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) were long and hard,

CUPE 1483 President Larry Stevenson described the new contract as a “break-through settlement that enhances existing workplace rights and increases protections for custodians and trades staff.”

Unfortunately, workers at the Thames Valley District School Board and Durham District School Board were forced to strike. And, at press time, another part of the DPCDSB has had to ask for conciliation in its fight for contract improvements.

CUPE Local 3251 members also waged a successful strike against the

municipalities of Cornwall, Finch and Alexandria and the counties of Dundas, Glengarry and Stormont, achieving bargaining goals and fighting off concessions.

As in the municipal sector, coordinated bargaining has taken centre stage with the Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee. Locals with end dates in 2006 and 2007 who are still in bargaining are being asked to commit to coordinated bargaining, no concessions, progress on job security and wages, increased coordination on the

(cont. on page 19)

New Brunswick Paramedics Union



After months of negotiation, the New Brunswick government and Medavie Blue Cross signed a 10-year contract for the delivery of ambulance services in the province, merging 54 ambulance services under one provincial group. “We have been negotiating with the government for the past year to make sure [paramedics’] seniority will be recognized,” says CUPE N.B. President Daniel Légère.

“Even though a private company will manage the ambulance service, every paramedic in New Brunswick will be public service employee and, as such, a CUPE member,” explains Légère. “We are very pleased to welcome the para-

medics. CUPE already represents the public sector paramedics and some private sector companies. With the new ambulance service, the paramedics working for non-profit organizations or for communities will become CUPE members and enjoy better wages and benefits such as a pension plan.”

In order to facilitate the transfer of the paramedics, CUPE has already established a new local, CUPE 4848. The new local elected its interim executive this spring and will receive its first members this fall. When the transfer process is completed, there will be close to 900 members in the local.

■ Danielle Savoie



Photo credit: Murray Mosher

CUPE National President joins members of CUPE 3261, striking Uof T Press workers, on the picket line.

term of the collective agreement, and ongoing communication and support among coordinated locals. Locals with later contract end dates are coordinating their bargaining even more.

With a provincial election on October 10, all sectors are working tirelessly to ensure progressive candidates get elected. CUPE will continue to put pressure on the McGuinty Liberals for dragging their heels on the education funding formula, lifting the freeze on tuition fees, implementing LHINs, entering into P3 agreements and breaking a long list of promises.

■ Wendy Forbes

Battling a strike ban in Nova Scotia



CUPE has joined with six other unions—NSFL, NSNU, NSGEU, CAW, SEIU and IUOE—to wage a campaign in response to the Conservative provincial government’s plan to prevent some 32,000 hospital workers from ever going on strike.

There have only been three hospital strikes in Nova Scotia in the last 25 years. “The system in Nova Scotia has worked well for decades. Why fix something that is not broken?” asks CUPE N.S. President Danny Cavanagh. “Premier Rodney MacDonald has decided to take away

rights of health care workers rather than deal with the real problems in the system.”

Cavanagh draws attention to serious recruitment and retention problems for health care workers: “Nova Scotians face unacceptable wait times and have difficulty accessing services such as surgeries, mental health care and adequate nursing home care.”

■ John McCracken



CUPE Saskatchewan has embarked on a cost-shared campaign to promote the work of its 26,000 members in communities across the province. The second phase of “Welcome to CUPE Country,” including new billboards and TV ads, is being launched as we go to press.

**Au travail
et sous surveillance**

By Linda Craig
SCFP Québec
Available in French for \$25
from CUPE Quebec (514-384-9681)



Our workplace is becoming modernized. Employers now have access to surveillance tools that are sophisticated, affordable and sometimes formidable. In this context, workers are asking: can my boss read my e-mail, install cameras, listen to my phone conversations, follow me with a GPS, spy on me when I am on leave, search through my drawers, or require me to give a blood or urine sample?

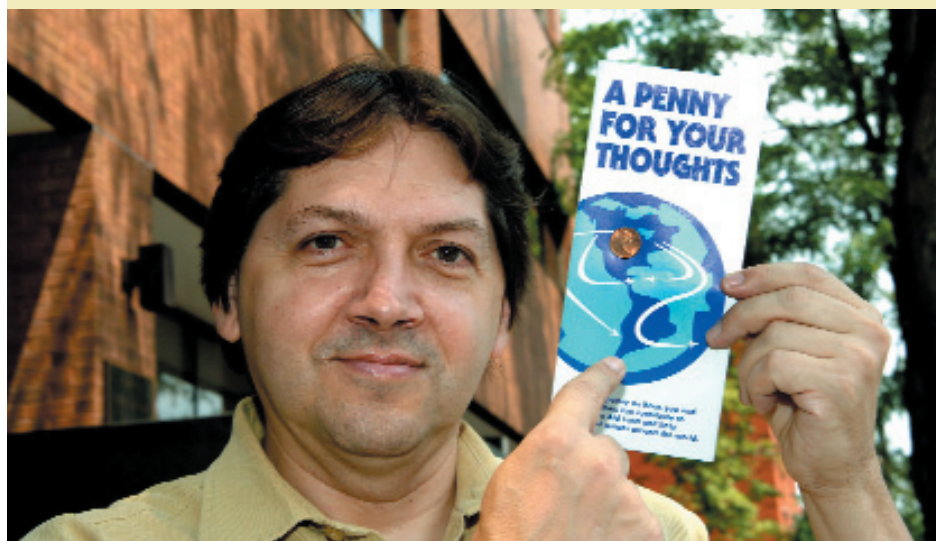
CUPE is keeping an eye on this subject. Linda Craig, a CUPE Quebec Researcher, has thought long and hard about these questions. The result is a book, *Au travail et sous surveillance (At Work and Under Surveillance)*, that sheds light on the principles guiding various courts on matters of surveillance and control in the workplace.

We learn, notably, that it is recognized that workers are entitled to respect for their private life even while at work under the authority of an employer. Employers must have clear policies and solid grounds to observe employees. Employees who believe that their private life is not being respected can seek redress with the various courts, which are increasingly called upon to decide on this thorny question.

■ Lisa Djvahirdjian

To read an interview with Linda Craig about employer surveillance in the 21st century, go to www.cupe.ca/humanrights/workplacespying

“A Penny for Your Thoughts”



CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux holding a copy of CUPE's first international solidarity publication.

Instead of a penny for my thoughts, I'd like to ask you to think about spending a penny. I am going to use the privilege of my column space in this issue of *Organize* to seek your support for CUPE's Global Justice Fund. I believe it is that important.

We all know that solidarity is not the same as charity. International solidarity is motivated by the knowledge that workers everywhere deserve decent jobs, fair wages and respect in the workplace. We also know that our interests are best served and our power greatest when we work together. That includes making connections around the globe—the same corporations that want to privatize our communities are at work on all continents.

CUPE established the Global Justice Fund in 1993 so that we could expand our international solidarity work with additional funds. Many of you will remember that we used to call the fund “Union Aid.” Regardless of its name, the fund is an opportunity for all CUPE members to participate directly in our international solidarity work. This year, our Global Justice Fund has supported developing an independent media in Guatemala, organizing women workers in Bolivia and fighting privatization in Columbia. We

have joined with our sister union in South Africa to study the impacts of privatization on gender. And we have supported worker education in Cuba.

But we desperately need your support. This past year only nine CUPE locals across the country contributed to our Global Justice Fund. More contributions would expand our reach and strengthen our movement. Some locals have negotiated a small contribution from each members pay, which is deducted at source. Just a penny from your hourly wage makes a huge difference. You can find out more at www.cupe.ca/globaljusticefund.

I know we all care passionately about working together with our brothers and sisters around the world. I know we all think about it. Put a penny with your thoughts by contributing to the Global Justice Fund. We will all benefit.

In solidarity,

Claude Généreux
National Secretary-Treasurer

Day of Mourning

*There we were, immigrant children, 16 years old
Guatemalans and Jamaicans
Working construction, demolishing houses
With no helmets and no steel toe boots
Not even face masks to protect us from the asbestos
Come to think of it, the boss didn't even tell us we'd be
working with asbestos
The boss told us that the cops would come to arrest us
If we told the guy from the labour council
That we were under-age ...
Thank God that this summer job was just a page
In the book of my working life because now that I've aged
I realize that I could've lost my life so many ways
We knocked down a 20 foot antenna with our bare hands
in those days
Rusty nails pierced my skin and I was electrocuted
in those days
In those days I wasn't unionized and knew nothing
of the Workers Compensation Act
I chose pay over my health and safety
Even though we did our best to work safely
One day, my sledgehammer dislodged a brick
That fell right by my friend's head, from the ceiling
Thankfully he didn't get hit but we were still reeling
In anger, this crooked boss was placing our teenage lives
in danger
His actions would've turned us into one of the 20 million
Canadian workers injured on the job since 1984
Surviving that job made me more thankful to be alive*

*Now that my unionized employment has finally arrived
I revive memories long forgotten
Falling asleep at the wheel driving home after working
a 20-hour shift
I sift through these recollections realizing I how blessed I am
With the job I now have,
Because I now have:
A collective agreement that protects me
A shop steward that represents me
A health and safety committee that serves me*



*But even then, sometimes this isn't sufficient
Antonio Almeida died working for the Toronto
Transit Commission
April 23rd, 2007; may his soul rest in peace
May the souls of our CUPE brothers and sisters
who died on the job
Rest in peace
May their deaths remind employers of the disease
That is profit before people, profit before health & safety is evil
Too many people the world over have died
Because a greedy corporation refused to let its workers organize
Wouldn't even respect workers' rights
To safe work places and respect on the job
I thank God that I survived my young working days
With just a tetanus shot and anger on my face
Because I will never place money over my health and safety
And I will be sure to pray for all workers to be able to earn
their income safely.*

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Luis Eduardo Mejicano—a.k.a. “Spin”—is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Toronto District Council. He performed this poem on April 28, 2007 at the National District Council meeting, accompanied by drummer and CUPE 3903 member, Ruben Esguerra.





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