

National President's Report

September 2006 – December 2006

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

This reporting period has seen our union engaged in some critical struggles at the bargaining table, our members active in elections in New Brunswick, municipal/school board elections in four provinces and elsewhere in by-elections.

Struggles such as CUPE Local 1232 employed at the Mount Orford Ski Resort in Quebec, representing approximately 400 members, who were locked out on November 9. The dispute was settled on November 24 with our members successfully resisting removal of their cost-of-living clause!

It has also been a period of sadness as in a 10-day period in October we lost a number of members of the CUPE family. I remember them near the end of this report.

Our members have also gathered to plan and to organize at our National Human Rights Conference at various sectoral meetings and other gatherings. We know we work best when we work together and as detailed in this report, a number of key meetings have been held in the past three months.

We face some critical struggles in various sectors of our union, including an increased threat of P3s in BC's municipal sector, and by the federal government. School Board workers in Ontario are also being attacked as the provincial government underfunds support services while denying elected school boards the right to maintain services.

As is always the case, this report captures but a glimpse of the incredible energy that our activists and staff exert day in and day out on behalf of our members, and for whom I thank each and everyone of you for your commitment to social justice.

1. Free Collective Bargaining

Every day CUPE bargaining committees engage in negotiations, and we often fight to maintain bargaining rights, including the right to strike, in order to provide effective representation to our members. Two recent examples tell an incredible story on this fundamental issue for our union.

Nova Scotia Health Care Bargaining

Our 2,300 health care workers in Nova Scotia formed a coalition with other health care unions – the CAW, the NSGEU and the Nova Scotia Nurse’s Union – to deal through negotiations with a critical pension issue.

Historically the Nova Scotia Government through the Nova Scotia Association of Hospital Associations (NSAHA) has taken the position that pensions are not bargainable. Our coalition of unions tabled pension proposals to deal with a range of issues, including the employer’s use of over \$50 million in fund surplus to make their pension contributions. In response to our proposals, the employer took us to the Labour Board and lost. The Board ruled that such matters were not prohibited from collective bargaining consideration should one, or both parties, raise them.

With CUPE in the lead, bargaining continued and our members provided a strong strike mandate and set a strike date. This resulted in a settlement which included:

- An immediate end to employer contribution holidays, as well as employer contributions to increase by 1.4% (some \$70 million over the next 10 years).
- An agreement that surplus cannot be used by the employer to make their contributions.
- A joint committee on governance change, with the goal being joint trusteeship with unions and employers having equal representation, and a mediation-arbitration process in the event of a deadlock.
- The establishment of the principle that pensions are a legal and legitimate bargaining issue from this point forward.

Through our members’ resolve, our elected leadership and staff’s hard work, we have led the way and made some incredible breakthroughs. We even secured editorial support which affirmed our bargaining rights:

“Work stoppages by employees in essential occupations are never popular and whenever such a walkout occurs, or is threatened, some people demand an end to such employees’ right to strike. The public’s frustration with public-sector strikes is understandable. But if the hospital workers did not have that right, and had not been willing to use it – what would have happened to their pension plan?”

(Halifax Daily News editorial, Oct. 31, 2006).

On behalf of our entire union, I salute our membership and staff in Nova Scotia on an incredible victory.

New Brunswick Education Workers

Earlier this year the New Brunswick Labour Board declared the vast majority of our education support workers as essential in the event of a work stoppage thereby severely limiting the effect of job action on our part in strike situation.

We contested this ruling and the New Brunswick Court of Appeal ruled recently that such limitations on our right to strike went too far and struck down the Labour Board ruling. In doing so, the court said:

“Realistically speaking, if school custodians were to strike, it is more likely than not that schools would ultimately close. Furthermore, common sense would lead one to conclude that such closures could occur without impacting the health of those directly affected: students, staff and teachers. This is the conclusion reached by the Board in [a 1981] decision. In my view, its logic is as sound today as it was over 25 years ago.... It has not escaped me that if we were to accept the Board’s premise that schools must remain open, because of the right of children to obtain an education, then the right of teachers to strike would be nullified. Yet, it is well known that teachers do not provide an essential service within the meaning of s. 43.1 of the Public Service Relations Act and, therefore; they retain the right to strike that is provided for under the Act. Recall that an essential service is defined as one that is essential in the interest of the “health, safety or security of the public”.

I congratulate our members and staff in New Brunswick for this important victory, one we hope will pave the way to resolve similar limitations on the rights of school board workers to strike, such as exists in Newfoundland & Labrador.

Everything our union does is important, but there is not much that is more important than our right as workers to engage in free collective bargaining on all issues of concern to our members with the unfettered right to strike if necessary.

2. National Human Rights Conference – November 23-26, 2006 – Vancouver

Over 450 CUPE delegates participated in CUPE’s First National Human Rights Conference held from November 23-26, in Vancouver. The conference was a tremendous success and sought to bring under one umbrella a multitude of equality and human rights issues.

The CUPE-BC and CUPE-HEU Divisions welcomed members and hosted the opening evening reception. A popular theatre was used to evoke workplace human rights issues both at the opening and closing of the conference, featuring CUPE members as actors.

The conference also introduced keynote speakers such as Musqueam Elder Larry Grant, Anita Braha a BC Human Rights lawyer, Kiké Roach a civil rights lawyer, Adirana Paz from Justicia for Migrant Workers and Sherene Razack a professor in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education. Interspersed within the conference was a wide variety of cultural singers, dancers and drummers.

A panel of CUPE members and staff also presented successful union projects – Sisters Lila Murao (HEU, Re-organizing Contracted Out Workers), Barb Moore (National Women’s Task Force), Brothers Richard Sherring (Challenging Attitudes: Disabilities and Discrimination), Gerry Lavallée (Workers Out and International AIDS Conference) and Don Moran (Aboriginal Partnership Program).

CUPE members endorsed the Vancouver Declaration which aims to strengthen diversity in the union. Among other things, the declaration calls for the creation of a human rights course, initiatives to increase diversity and ensure that all levels of the union, committees, executive and staff structures reflect the full diversity of CUPE’s membership. (A copy of the Vancouver Declaration and a progress report on Gender and Diversity Representation on CUPE National Committees and Working Groups are appended to this report.)

On behalf of our Union, my sincere thanks to the CUPE members who volunteered and gave of their time to prepare as actors, as panellists, as masters of ceremony, as facilitators, and in many other roles. As well I wish to express our appreciation to the many organizers of this successful event.

3. Strategic Meetings

The Strategic Directions policy document adopted at our 2005 National Convention included the important goal of strengthening our sectors and during this reporting period a number of key meetings have been held consistent with this membership direction.

National University Workers Meeting

About 150 CUPE university workers from across Canada gathered for their first ever three-day meeting to discuss key challenges we face in this sector. The meeting was held in Montreal from October 12th to the 14th, 2006.

In plenary sessions and workshops, delegates heard from a range of speakers – a student leader from France, Brother Bruno Julliard; representatives of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; the Canadian Federation of Students and others.

Key issues such as system funding, tuition fees and privatization, along with our recent experiences in bargaining were discussed and strategized on. One of the key points of consensus is that university workers, no matter what province they reside in, have much in common and face similar struggles and they want CUPE National to continue to improve national coordination within the sector. (Much more information is available on our website at www.cupe.ca).

Workers Compensation Tri-Union Conference

Twenty eight delegates who work for Workers' Compensation Boards across Canada gathered in Barrie, Ontario October 25 – 28. CUPE and NUPGE represent most of the compensation board workers in all provinces except Quebec.

The conference discussions covered a range of issues, including grievance trends and bargaining. Common bargaining issues are wages, benefits, restructuring, organizational change, workload and home office work. A significant technological change has emerged in BC and Ontario which involves computerized adjudication of claims decisions. The BC Board has pursued this technology more aggressively, and it has resulted in job loss.

The group affirmed their support for the Stanhope Declaration, a broad policy statement on what a comprehensive workers compensation system should be.

The group plans to meet again in June 2008 in St. John's.

Energy Workers

A special NEB Ad-Hoc Energy Committee met with representatives of CUPE energy workers in Ottawa on November 14-15, 2006.

This meeting, which included representation from our National Environment Committee, tackled a number of key energy-related resolutions which were submitted at our 2005 National Convention and which were ultimately referred to the NEB as they did not get dealt with on the floor of convention. The meeting also built upon the strategic work of our May 2005 energy workers' meeting.

The high level of debate and expertise, as well as the level of respect for differing positions on the issue of Canadian energy supply models make me very proud of our union.

The work of this gathering will assist our union's representatives who also serve on a CLC Task Force on Generation. It also assists us in dealing with climate change issues which are currently front and centre in terms of national debate.

National Women's Task Force

The NWTF met in Ottawa between December 1-4, 2006 to begin to analyze the feedback from CUPE members gained from consultations held throughout the fall.

The response from members has been very good. Over 3,000 individual members surveys, plus surveys from locals, and over 1,300 members participated in face to face meetings held throughout the country. This is a very positive response rate and I thank each and every member for participating in this phase of this key national initiative, one of the most important decisions from our last national convention. The next critical phase of the NWTF is to reflect upon members' feedback, pass along these findings to the NEB, begin to put together recommendations, a report and plan of action for 2007, leading up to the next National Convention set for Toronto in October 2007.

CUPE Saskatchewan Solidarity Conference

I was privileged to attend the 2nd CUPE Saskatchewan Solidarity Conference along with 200 delegates in Saskatoon, on October 20-21, 2006.

Sector meetings preceded the conference and delegates committed to a \$200,000 public relations campaign designed to profile our members' work throughout the province. Agreement was also reached to have each and every local in the province vote on a solidarity pact which commits members to support one another in any and all struggles we face in bargaining or from any dealings with employers.

Upcoming Strategic Meetings

Plans are underway for three key strategic meetings to be held in 2007. A first Social Services sector meeting will be held February 27 to March 1, a second meeting of Pension Trustees from across our union and a CUPE District Council Conference will be held in the first half of 2007.

We also plan to hold our first ever National School Board Education Workers meeting in very early 2008.

4. Global Justice – International Work

Columbia Tour

Solidarity Tour 2 to Bogota, Columbia took place from November 4-12, 2006. This tour was one of two approved for funding under the National Global Justice Fund and was coordinated by CoDevelopment Canada in BC with participation from PSAC, CUPW and ourselves. Sister Barbara Moore (Co-chair of our National Global Justice

Committee) and Sister Tracey Fall (PEI representative on the Global Justice Committee), along with Brother Dennis Lewycky (Communications Representative in the Manitoba Region) who offered staff support participated. Colombian trade unions are fighting an extremely repressive government that is aggressively restructuring the public sector through privatization.

LaborTech 2006 Conference – San Francisco

CUPE was pleased that Sister Pat Daley, a Communications Representative from the Ontario Region, was an active participant in a LaborTech 2006 Conference held by the University of San Francisco, November 17-19. The conference focused on progressive media approaches and included forms and use of new technology. Sister Daley also served as a panellist in a session on Workers Technology and Class Struggle Around the World, and in a workshop on Labour Boycotts/Solidarity Campaigns Using the Internet. She also submitted a paper entitled New Technology and a Labour Media Strategy: Some Canadian Experiences.

Public Services International – Public Services Working Group

CUPE's Managing Director of National Services, Brother Stan Marshall represented CUPE at this international meeting where delegates from public sector unions and community organizations explored trends in public services and assessed what public services and public service delivery would look like in the year 2020. The exercise was designed to open the door to longer term strategic thinking and planning for public sector unions on a global level. The forum ended with a short meeting of the Public Sector Steering Group (on which CUPE has representation) which further discussed the implications of this future looking exercise.

HIV-AIDS Program – Japan International Labour Foundation

Sister Corina Crawley, Senior Officer from our Research Branch, has been invited to participate in an HIV-AIDS Program organized by the Japan International Labour Foundation and currently taking place from November 30 to December 13. Sister Corina will form part of a small CLC delegation. More information on this initiative upon her return to Canada.

International Union Roundtable – Cornell Global Labor Institute

Sister Morna Ballantyne, Managing Director of Union Development, attended a meeting of the Cornell Global Labour Institute held October 6 in New York City. The meeting focused on the public sector as part of a larger institute investigation into privatization of public services, current trends and situations, and the need for public sector unions to work with civil society for progressive reform and expansion of the public sector.

Approximately 30 international trade unionists and academics were invited to participate. A further meeting is being planned for May 2007.

2007 Duke of Edinburgh Commonwealth Study Conference

The Commonwealth Study Conference was an initiative of the Duke of Edinburgh, commencing in 1956 and held every six years to bring together future leaders from labour, business and government from Commonwealth countries.

I was fortunate and attended the conference held in Australia in 1986 and it was an unforgettable experience. Many of you may know of the Governor General's Conferences which emerged about 20 years ago out of the Commonwealth Study Conferences.

Our union submitted two names for consideration by the conference selection committee, Regional Vice-Presidents Sister Candace Rennick (Ontario) and Brother Kevin Rebeck (Manitoba). I am pleased to announce that both have been selected to attend the 2007 conference to be held in India next March.

International Delegations

As detailed in our report "CUPE's Work on International Solidarity" presented at the June NEB meeting (available on our website cupe.ca) our union is active in various international events held around the globe.

In terms of the make-up of our delegations that are funded by CUPE National, a number of principles anchor our selection of members/staff attending such events. These include:

- National leadership (National Officers or other NEB members);
- Staff support;
- Gender Parity;
- Rank and file members (ie World Water Conference);
- Global Justice Committee members (particularly for Global Justice Fund projects);
- Sector representation (ie Health Care Workers Exchange, Energy conferences);
- Requests for specialized staff (ie training on pay equity, Africa).

Some events see us sending only one person, at other times we send larger numbers. Some delegations do not include either a National Officer or an NEB member. Most, but not all delegations include staff support. All international delegations are viewed as educational/development opportunities, as well as our building solidarity with other workers.

In terms of accountability, all international delegations are required to submit a written report to the National Executive Board, and all of these reports are shared with our Global Justice Committee. Each June, the NEB receives an annual report on the previous year's international work, which serves as an accountability reporting back document within our union.

What is clear is that the local, division and national levels of our union are very active in a range of international pursuits designed to strengthen our relations with other workers and to achieve our social justice goals.

5. Organizing

A national meeting of organizing staff was held on November 15-17, where regional organizing strategies and plans for the future were shared. The participants also reviewed emerging labour board decisions and the Federal Code and its applications. A special session on broader questions related to jurisdiction, use of media and innovative practices was held.

In the **Atlantic Region**, our newly-merged childcare local is developing a mapping strategy for bargaining. CUPE has won the votes in three of the four centres where cards were signed. The region also met with the Ministers of Natural Resources and Public Service Commission to discuss the issue of denying these workers access to a union. The harmony House for Girls has voluntarily recognized these 10 workers and we shall begin bargaining for a first collective agreement. Representation votes throughout the Newfoundland health care sector has become a reality and we are working hard to maintain our membership.

The **Maritimes Region** will be focussing on three jurisdictions- long-term, home support and municipalities, and has reactivated its nursing home sector organizing campaign. The Hardman Group, Saint John was certified on October 11th, and hearings were held on our certification application for the Central Carleton Nursing Home Inc. in Hartland, N.B. CUPE PEI has struck an organizing committee that meets regularly and is developing the planning of targets and organizing campaigns.

The organizing campaign in the health care sector in **Quebec** (following the adoption of a bill ordering accreditation mergers) has concluded and closed with a resounding victory in the Beauce. While initially, our projections were that we would be losing thousands of workers in the health care sector, we have in fact ended the series of representation votes with a net gain of some 600 members. On-going organizing priorities for Quebec consist of the education, post-secondary, Hydro Electric, municipal, social affairs and Crown agencies.

During the last quarter, we have engaged member-organizers in **Ontario** to assist with leafleting, meetings and as scrutineers as well as other organizing activities. CUPE has successfully certified 11 new groups and won a representation vote in Rainy River. We welcome to CUPE 770 new members at Kids and Company (childcare), Belvedere

(LTC), Ottawa Foyer Partage, Montfort Hospital (clericals), London District Catholic School Board (ESL), St. Thomas & Elgin County Housing, Salvation Army Peel Family Shelter and Links2Care as well as welcome the former CAW paramedics in Rainy River.

CUPE set up an information booth at the Children's Fest 2006 in Windsor, an event attended by thousands of families and their children thanks to the assistance of Locals 3677 and 543 which allowed CUPE organizers to talk about our Child Care Organizing Campaign. We also hosted a dinner in recognition of Child Care Workers' and Early Childhood Educators' Appreciation Day. As well, a full-time member-organizer and president of CUPE Local 2204 commenced her assignment of mapping potential centres in the Ottawa area.

A number of other active campaigns and priorities for the **Ontario Region** include universities, libraries, long-term care, community and home care agencies.

The **Manitoba Region** through its Strategic Organizing session has determined that their focus in 2007 will be in the school board and social services sectors. Labour Board hearings on behalf of Local 4792 Behavioural Health Foundation have taken place and we have been certified for 40 new members. Manitoba is also anticipating and planning for possible representation votes in early 2007.

A number of legal decisions will determine the priorities in organizing for the **Saskatchewan Region**. One is the application for all employee units in the education sector. In the event that CUPE is successful this will result in continuing efforts to organize in the remaining three divisions, as well as stepping up their lobbying campaign for provincial bargaining in the sector.

The **Alberta Region** has successfully concluded three organizing projects, adding members to existing CUPE locals in the region. Their organizing focus is in the education and long-term sector, and well as having significant energies dedicated to fighting back raids. Approximately 20 member-organizers were trained in 2006.

The **B.C. Region** has completed extensive mapping exercises for Aboriginal agencies as well as childcare. Both of these initiatives, as well as recreation workers, transit, universities and creating wall-to-wall union coverage in existing locals, will be the region's focus. Successful certification votes for the Penticton Library and the Terrace Library were held in November and resulted in additional members. A number of on-going organizing projects are underway.

For the period of September 1st to November 30th, 2006, organizing efforts yielded a total of 601 new members, within 11 certifications. The January 1st to November 30th efforts recorded 2,669 new members and a total of 58 certifications.

6. Privatization – P3s

On October 4, 2006, the National Post ran an editorial in its business section bemoaning the lack of progress on privatization of Canadian water systems. The piece contained the usual rhetoric and went on to mention CUPE:

”...there remains enormous resistance to public-private-partnerships, let alone outright privatization. This is largely due to a campaign of lies ran by the Canadian Union of Public Employees....one of CUPE’s frequent claims is that British water privatization has been a disaster.”

Not surprisingly the Post did not print our counter op ed piece. But I must confess to taking some pride that our union was depicted as the primary force against P3s in Canada today. And yes, I agree totally, UK water privatization has been a disaster for everyone with the exception of the multinationals.

“P3 naysayers, most prominently the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE and the leftist NGOs such as the Ontario Health Coalition, have been a mine of misinformation about P3s. One of their principal techniques has been to portray the P3 experience in Britain – where these innovations have been much more enthusiastically promoted – as poor or mixed.

This assessment came under a harsh spotlight at this week’s annual Toronto meeting of the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships. There, experts not only explained the success of British P3s, they directly confronted the kinds of misrepresentations peddled by CUPE and co.”

I share this with you to underscore the importance of our ongoing P3 fightback campaigns. Notwithstanding some of our successes, there are dangerous initiatives underway in many parts of Canada.

In BC, the Campbell government has decided that all municipal capital works projects exceeding \$20 million must be run through a P3 consideration process. The Charest government in Quebec has signed a deal with the federal government for a private P3 toll highway around Montreal.

The McGuinty government in Ontario continues to pursue P3 Hospital schemes calling them Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP), after campaigning against such initiatives by the former Conservative government.

In the municipal sector many arena/pool recreation projects are going the P3 route.

Most recently, the Harper government’s fiscal update announced plans for federal infrastructure projects to be put through a similar P3 screen, as that proposed by the BC government.

Our anti-privatization work has been a hallmark of CUPE since our formation 43 years ago. We must be vigilant on all fronts. At the bargaining table. During election campaigns. In other specific campaigns. The future of public services in communities throughout Canada are on the line, and we have an ongoing responsibility to lead the fight to protect services wherever the privatization threat crops up.

7. Federal Scene

Spending Cuts / Debt Reduction

On September 25, 2006 the Conservative government applied \$13 billion in accumulated surplus against the federal debt, at the same time they announced just over \$2 billion in spending cuts. Some of the most notable social program cuts are:

- Cuts to programs like the Court Challenges Program, which CUPE used to launch our successful case for same sex benefits in the 1990's.
- Some \$17 million in cuts to federal literacy funding, which has caused the closure and scaling back of dozens of literacy programs across Canada.
- Cuts in funding to grants to the Status of Women's group, and a provision that this group must not partake in advocacy on behalf of women's issues.

A host of other cuts were made – this at a time of huge federal surplus and federal program spending, as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product is stuck at early 1990's levels.

Two days after these decisions were announced I was appearing before the House of Commons Finance Committee and I characterized them as a triumph of ideology over common sense.

Minority parliaments have traditionally strengthened the hands of opposition parties, but the Harper government has enjoyed almost majority-like power in the face of the Liberals being mired in an almost yearlong leadership campaign.

As this report goes to print, the federal Liberals have on December 2, elected Stephen Dion as their new leader. It will be important that we strengthen our lobby work with the Liberals (among others) on anti-scab legislation, childcare, Medicare and environmental issues.

We will also continue to work closely with our trade union allies and groups such as the CCPA in order to fight these cuts and to advocate for a 2007 federal budget that places the needs of people first.

Bill C-257 – Anti-Scab Victory

On October 25, 2006 Parliament passed the above federal anti-scab bill at second reading by a vote of 167 – 101.

This is an historic moment. We have never gotten this far in terms of the Parliament of Canada banning the use of scabs during strikes or lockouts in workplaces regulated by the Federal Labour Code.

CUPE activists and staff were very involved in the CLC led parliamentary lobby. It was both refreshing and empowering to see the halls of parliament full of workers, meeting face to face with MPs. There is much work to do on this file, but we have established that a majority of MPs support the principles of anti-scab legislation which is a huge accomplishment for our movement.

Bill C-303 – The Early Learning and Child Care Act

On November 22, the House of Commons voted 144 to 116 for Bill C-303, a New Democrat-sponsored private member's bill. The legislation would aim at creating national standards for childcare, much like the Canada Health Act.

The Code Blue Campaign activists organized a very successful public and political campaign to generate support for the childcare legislation. The campaign will also continue lobbying as the bill now moves to a review committee before being brought back to the House of Commons for a third vote and focus their efforts leading into the next federal election to ensure that childcare remains a priority election campaign issue.

Airline Division – 1/40 Campaign Victory

Our Airline Division has succeeded in securing a statement from the Federal Transport Minister, Lawrence Cannon that the Harper government will not increase the flight attendant ratio per passenger from the current 1/40 to 1/50.

I was pleased to be part of two meetings with the Minister and our Airline leadership and staff, who did an incredible job in outlining the health and safety consequences of such a move.

Our sisters and brothers in the Airline industry face many challenges in a very unsettled industry. With the support of all of us they will be better able to meet these challenges.

Federal Election Preparation – The Next 20 Group

Our union remains very active, working with other unions, the CLC and the federal NDP to identify the likely areas of growth for the NDP for the next election, which could occur at any time.

Our efforts are focused throughout the country, with the exception of Quebec where our members work in concert with the QFL on all political action initiatives.

Climate Change

The Harper government abandonment of Canada's commitment to Kyoto remains a blight for our country on the international stage. Their recently-tabled Clean Air Act confirms their refusal to adopt Kyoto principles.

We are working closely with opposition parties and the NDP on what is arguably one of the most important public policy files of our generation.

Health Care – Medicare Works Campaign

CUPE is a major supporter of the Canada Health Coalition's national campaign to put Medicare back on the front burner in terms of public policy debate.

Three dozen public meetings are being held this fall right across Canada. I have been pleased to speak at three of these meetings in Calgary, Kitchener and Scarborough. As well, CUPE took the lead on October 20th to celebrate the 102nd birthday of Tommy Douglas, the father of Medicare. Events were held right across Canada, including on Signal Hill in St. John's where two birthday cakes were available – one was universal and no fees were charged, the other had a user fee attached. You can guess which one the public opted for!

Brother Claude Généreux attended a similar event in Charlottetown, PEI, while I was fortunate to be in Regina where CUPE activists held a rally to commemorate the event.

Poll after poll continue to detail the fact that health care remains the number one policy issue for Canadians. Our union must remain on the front lines of this debate, to both defend, build upon and improve Medicare for all citizens.

8. United Way

In mid-September I was privileged to receive on behalf of CUPE the United Way's "Million Plus" award, which recognized that our members in campaigns across Canada in 2005 donated in excess of \$1 Million to the United Way.

This is an astounding figure and a testimony to the commitment of our members towards the building of strong communities right across Canada.

Our National Office campaign luncheon had an interesting guest speaker just a few weeks ago. Linda Osmond is an Advocacy/Outreach Worker with Ottawa's Catholic Family Services, a United Way funded agency and a worksite represented by CUPE Local 2898. Sister Osmond is President of Local 2898, and our national office staff were privileged to meet her and have a chance to talk about the important work she does in the Ottawa community.

I urge all locals to get involved in their local United Way campaigns.

9. Regional Reports

Airline Division

The Airline Division continues to push the federal government for positive changes to protect the health and safety of both flight attendants and their passengers.

Our Component is the last union at Air Canada to go to arbitration, which is the process mandated by the bankruptcy proceedings in 2004.

CanJet bargaining for a first collective agreement continues. The company laid off almost all of their flight attendants earlier this year, but have since seen a recovery in their business. We are now back up to sixty members, which is half of the original bargaining unit.

HEU

At their October convention, HEU delegates elected a new Financial Secretary, Sister Donisa Bernardo and bid a fond farewell to Sister Mary LaPlante who retired after 22 years of service. Brother Fred Muzin was re-elected as President, along with a dynamic Provincial Executive.

They also mandated a number of structural changes which provide for more sectoral bargaining and an increase in the involvement of rank and file members on committees.

The Campbell government has embarked on a \$10 million "Conversation on Health". However, they do not want to hear from health care workers and intend to segregate them from public forums. HEU has joined other health care unions to denounce this move to silence our voices.

Newfoundland & Labrador

NDP leader Lorraine Michael was elected in the recent by-election held in Signal-Hill Quidi Vidi. The seat had been previously held by NDP leader Jack Harris who had chosen to retire from provincial politics.

Brother Wayne Lucas, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Division was clearly elated with the win characterizing it as the beginning of a new era.

In the health sector we will be faced with representation votes with competing unions as a result of restructuring.

The Eastern and Western Health Districts (employer groups) of the province are proceeding to the Labour Board requesting that representation votes take place. There is concern that these votes will prompt a similar request from the two other Health Districts. The Newfoundland and Labrador Division and locals affected, along with the assistance of CUPE communications are developing a multi-faceted action campaign to ensure that we are viewed and voted as the union of choice.

Nova Scotia

Having commented on Acute Care bargaining earlier in my report in particular to the historic victory surrounding the issue of pension, it is equally important to mention that major improvements were also secured in the area of wages, classification adjustments, benefits for retirees, shift and weekend premiums but to name a few. The membership responded to the memorandum of agreement by voting 93% in favour.

CUPE Nova Scotia along with three other public sector unions have launched a major province-wide campaign to stop workplace violence. The coalition has been working long and hard to pull this campaign together. The goal is to get the government to introduce regulations on workplace violence that have been in draft format for 11 years. For more information visit their website at www.stopworkplaceviolence.ca.

Members of Local 2330 (Highland Community Residential Services) recently ratified their Agreement. The negotiations were hampered by the employer's refusal to deal with the issue of working hours for no pay (night staff). While the local was able to make headway on their issue, it is recognized that we now have to focus our action at the provincial level.

Prince Edward Island

Bargaining is currently underway for the newly created provincial paramedics Local 3324, which resulted from a recent representation vote. The local recently held its first annual meeting electing a full slate of officers with solid representation from the former private sector services and our CUPE Ambulance Services.

With provincial elections around the corner, CUPE PEI will be hosting a Political Action Conference at which delegates will be setting out their priorities. It is anticipated that an aggressive action plan will be adopted to ensure that labour's issues are at the forefront of the election campaign.

New Brunswick

The Nursing Home Pension Plan is struggling with an under-funded liability on the solvency valuation. The parties were before the Labour Employment Board and are now awaiting a decision. In the meantime discussions are still ongoing to try and find a mutually agreed settlement on the issue.

The newly elected liberal government in dire contrast to the previous government has initiated requests for meetings between government ministers and CUPE. In a recent meeting involving the Premier, the NB Division President and Regional Director, the Premier stated that the intention of his government was to have open communications with labour with the promise of regular meetings. Needless to say the Division will actively participate in these meetings.

If the provincial Liberals hold true to their election commitment we may be one step closer to having appropriate changes to give casual employees status under the Public Service Labour Relations Act. Preliminary discussion on the matter have been held with further talks to be held in the early part of the New Year.

CUPE members in the Superannuation Pension Plan along with those of three other public sector unions have been actively working together to incorporate a trust agreement. Extensive lobbying has commenced which includes a meeting with the government and official opposition.

Quebec

Most recently I had the privilege of attending the Local 1500 and Local 2000 (Quebec Hydro) membership conventions at which they celebrated their respective locals' 40th anniversaries.

These locals both have rich and dynamic histories which are marked by an ever-present high level of membership activism within the energy sector, not only at a provincial and national level but on the international stage as well.

It is anticipated that our 260 members of Local 1450 working at the Journal de Québec will be in for a difficult round of negotiations with their employer. With negotiations yet to commence the employer recently hired 15 new managers. This may well be a prelude to a lockout and as such, our local is proactively preparing its strategies to counter their employer's anticipated position.

The month-long lockout of Local 1232 members that had threatened the Quebec resort's ski season has been resolved. The Mount Orford ski resort and Local 1232 reached an agreement following intervention by the province. Overshadowing the negotiations was the provincial government's move to privatize the facilities under Bill 23.

With cries that the security is jeopardized at the Port of Montreal, FTQ president and CUPE representatives used a press conference to denounce the grave security breaches that are caused by the decision of the Montreal Port Authority to no longer systematically check empty containers. Prior to the decision by the Port Authority one of the duties of the dockworkers, members of CUPE Local 375, was to inspect empty containers. Now they have to take the word of the carrier which of course is contrary to basic rules of security. The FTQ believes the Port Authority's decision jeopardizes not only the security of the port facilities and the workers but also the security of the population of Montreal.

Ontario

Ontario school boards are in a dire financial situation due to severe underfunding. School boards will be faced with massive program and staff cuts to meet required balanced budget legislation in the 2007-2008 school year.

Through the efforts of CUPE Ontario's Education Coordinating Committee, the leadership of CUPE's school board sector approved an aggressive short and long term plan which will see mounting pressure on the government to fix the education funding formula which is structurally flawed in that it promote a continuous cycle of cuts.

Coordinated bargaining continues to be a focus for our locals working for ACLs (Association for Community Living). At a recent leadership meeting a campaign action plan for 2007 was finalized. The action plan covers a communication strategy, campaign commitment agreements and solidarity motions, and is now being presented to ACL local memberships for endorsement. Forty-five CUPE bargaining units will be coordinating their bargaining efforts with thirty-five OPSEU bargaining units in 2007 with comprehensive coordinated bargaining proposals.

With municipal election kits in hand, CUPE leaders, members and staff quickly set out to work with other labour activists in Ontario to support and elect labour friendly candidates in the recently held municipal elections.

The long hours and hard work of these activists have paid off. Six CUPE members were elected to municipal council. Twenty of the thirty-seven mayoral candidates and one hundred and thirty-four of the two hundred and seventy-nine other Councillor/Reeve/Alderman candidates endorsed by labour in Ontario were also elected.

Bill 140 – the new Long-Term Care Act – will now replace the Nursing Home Act, the Charitable Institutions Act and the Homes for the Aged and Rest Home Act.

As we represent CUPE members covered by the three previous acts, the Ontario Division is in the process of reviewing the legislation to ensure that rights are not deleted and with a focus on ensuring that issues such as minimum staffing standards are adequately addressed.

Local 4600 Carleton University was able to reach renewed collective agreements for both bargaining units that saw improved wages and the retention of tuition indexation language. Negotiations had to go to the brink of a strike as the employer was not willing to continue with the tuition indexation language.

Manitoba

Political activism was born during the Turtle River School Division strike last year. This fall, when the municipal elections rolled around, every seat in the school division was contested by a supporter of the strikers! And, three of the five were elected! Congratulations and thanks to all who made this possible.

CUPE Manitoba took the opportunity to provide input into the provincial government's pre-budget consultations. Brother Rebeck advised the government that there is no need for tax breaks. It is time to concentrate on improving public services and infrastructure, childcare, education, pensions and maintaining a strong public health care and water systems.

The Manitoba Federation of Labour Convention honoured two CUPE activists as both are retiring. Sister Lorraine Sigurdson (Education Representative) received the 2006 Judy Cook Woman of Achievement Award in recognition of her contributions to the women of Manitoba. Brother Eugene Kostyra (former Regional Director) was presented with the MFL President's Award of Merit for his long years of service to the province's working people. Congratulations and best wishes to both!

Saskatchewan

Work continues to flow from the Second Annual Solidarity Conference, which I mentioned earlier in this report. CUPE Saskatchewan is coordinating locals who want to share strategies and resources.

CUPE Saskatchewan and its Health Care Council teamed up on Communities Day to recognize the contributions of our Locals. Nine awards were given in categories of Food Excellence (for serving hot, nutritious meals prepared on site); Supporting the Local Community (for buying local products); and the People's Choice Award (for the dietary staff who have gone above and beyond).

The Division Executive added time to their regular agenda to participate in a workshop on lobbying government. We are working hard to continue to establish strong supportive ties to the NDP, as it will be critical for the welfare of our members to win the next provincial election.

Alberta

The results of a recent CUPE survey of 600 long-term care members was released in October. As predicted, it paints a bleak picture of seniors' care. Staff shortages, under-funding and lack of appropriate facilities all contribute to the neglect of seniors.

Seniors care is one of the issues being put to the Provincial Tory leadership hopefuls. Premier Klein's replacement will be chosen in late November. Hopefully, the next Premier will understand the importance of investing in infrastructure and maintenance of Alberta communities, rather than rewarding corporate interests.

Our locals continue to make gains at the bargaining table, and are not interested in settlements which don't meet their needs. Local 1169 at the Calgary Public Library is the latest local to insist on a wage increase that reflects the high cost of living and a booming economy.

A well attended provincial Health and Safety Conference developed strategies to address a number of occupational health and safety concerns, with a focus on young workers.

British Columbia

Most of BC's municipal locals are in the midst of bargaining. While many of their employers want to reach agreements that will extend past the Olympics, our bargaining teams only settle on terms and conditions which meet the needs of our members.

CUPE BC was a major player once again at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Conference. We presented research on a recent Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement signed by BC and Alberta.

Water continues to be a priority issue, particularly on Vancouver Island. CUPE's Island Water Watch campaign team joined 450 participants at a high energy Our Water Our Future Conference. The local and international perspectives on community control of water will no doubt be even more important, given the recent flooding on the west coast.

10. Personal

As mentioned at the outset of this report, we had a very sad 10-day period in mid-October where a number of losses occurred in the CUPE family.

Sister Bev Smale, a National Rep in the Ottawa Area Office passed away at the young age of 47. Sister Bev was a health care activist prior to coming on staff. In addition to her funeral service held in Mitchell, Ontario, a memorial service was held in Ottawa which allowed many CUPE members who worked with Sister Bev to attend.

Quebec Regional Director, Sister Lucie Richard succumbed to cancer. Sister Lucie worked for CUPE for over 20 years and was appointed as the first female Regional Director in Quebec this past January. Her passing has hit our staff and members within the region very hard and I offer sincere condolences on behalf of our entire union.

Two of our staff and one retiree lost their mothers in the same period in October. I offer sincere condolences to Brothers Clive Derham, retired, MB Region; Wayne Malone, BC Region and François Bellemare, Quebec Region.

Tragically, we lost some members during this same period. Sister Amanda Anderson, a 17 year old member of CUPE Local 1978, a lifeguard, passed away after a motor vehicle accident.

Brother Alain Simard, a member of CUPE Local 957 (Quebec Hydro workers) succumbed to workplace injuries sustained while he was servicing a turbine. A contract worker also died in the same workplace accident.

Brother Mike Bonvie, a member from Local 281 in Westville Nova Scotia was also killed on the job when a trench he was working in collapsed. It was Brother Mike's 4th day on the job.

Our work day in and day out, while important, takes on far less significance when we are faced with such losses. I offer each of the above families sincere condolences on behalf of our entire National Union.

I also take the opportunity to wish the following CUPE staff all the best as they embark upon well-earned retirements:

- Brother Govind Sundram, BC Regional Office (September 1, 2006)
- Sister Barbara Wakeford, Windsor Area Office (September 1, 2006)
- Brother Paul Jordison, Peel Area Office (January 1, 2007)
- Sister Patricia Stephenson, National Office (January 1, 2007)
- Brother Brian Sheehan, Peel Area Office (February 1, 2007)
- Sister Hazel Whippler, Saskatchewan Regional Office (March 1, 2007)
- Brother John Kirk, Kelowna Area Office (May 1, 2007)
- Sister Carole Cameron, BC Regional Office (May 1, 2007)
- Sister Chantale Tremblay, Quebec Regional Office (July 1, 2007)

To each of the above staff, and their families, thank you for your many years of dedicated service to CUPE members. I wish you each, long, healthy and happy retirements.

In closing I want to take a moment to wish each and everyone of you a peaceful holiday season, one in which I hope you have the opportunity to share time with your family and loved ones.

As mentioned at the outset of this report, it captures but a glimpse of the wide range of activities our union is involved in on a daily basis. To our activists and staff, thank you for your hard work and dedication, you are making a difference for both our members and our communities.

In solidarity,

PAUL MOIST
National President

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