

September 14, 2007

Quiet no more: Victoria library workers take message to public

VICTORIA—The message on the picket sign says it all: “Shhh...We’ve been quiet too long. Pay Equity Now!”

That was a familiar refrain on picket signs throughout Greater Victoria on Thursday, as CUPE 410 members hit the sidewalks in their second job action since serving strike notice last week.

The job action was held outside all GVPL branches from 2 pm to 5 pm. Themed “Education and the Public Library”, it was aimed at coinciding with the time students arrive after school to use library services for homework and research. The timing paid off, as CUPE 410 members used the opportunity to discuss their issues with an increasingly supportive public.

Susan Lambert, a teacher-librarian and first vice-president of the BC Teachers’ Federation, appeared at the Central library branch to bring solidarity greetings from the BCTF.

“Our libraries provide vital services for the education system,” she said. “Students rely on them, teachers rely on them, and I can’t believe that in this day and age pay equity is still an issue. It’s unbelievable that CUPE 410 members have been waiting more than ten years for this.”

Lambert said that the BCTF is solidly behind the striking workers and that, as a teacher librarian herself, she could vouch for the importance of library services, which she described as “far-reaching and vital.”

CUPE 410 president Ed Seedhouse, commenting on the day’s activities, said that members are solidly behind the local in trying to achieve a fair contract and are ready for full-on strike action. The public’s support has made a big difference, he added.

“Public support was overwhelming at every picket line today. We had people honking and telling us to keep up the fight, that they understand our issues and are fully behind us.”

