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your bargaining resource –
publishes four times a year. Its
goal is to give CUPE Local bargaining
committees, elected officers and
servicing representatives useful infor-
mation for preparing – and negotiating –
bargaining demands. Tabletalk's
three-hole punch style makes it easy
to keep in reference binders. Feel
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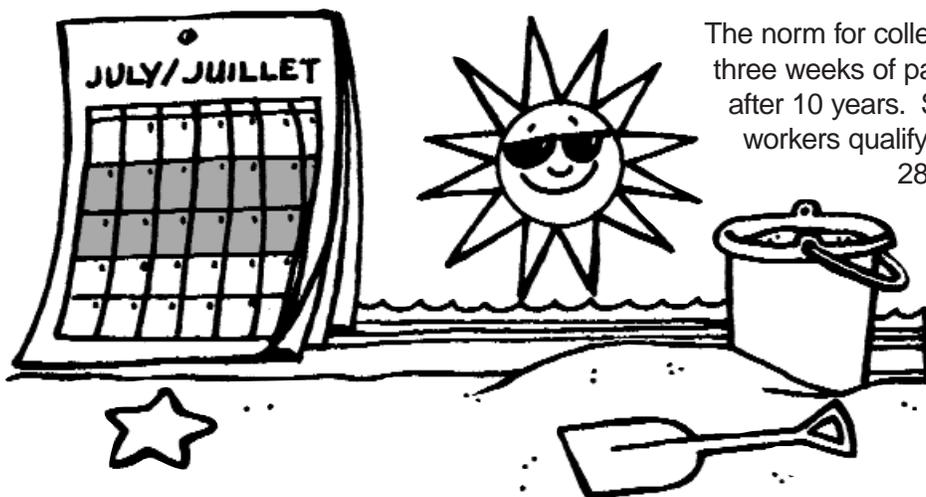
Have you had your vacation yet?

If not, you are among the many Canadian workers who don't use all their vacation. According to a recent poll by Expedia/Ipsos Reid, almost a quarter of Canadians do not take all their vacation days. A full 10 per cent say they use no vacation at all. You know who they are. There's likely one or two in your workplace who pride themselves on NOT taking vacation. Some are saving up for a big trip. Others think vacations are for sissies!

Vacations are a necessary part of working. Time off work actually makes us better workers. As human beings we need play, relaxation, a change of pace. Without it, we threaten our health, our families and our sense of well-being.

Here's how Canada's labour standards legislation shapes up:

- two weeks vacation after one year—all provinces (except Saskatchewan: 3 weeks)
- three weeks vacation—
 - after five years: B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec
 - after eight years: N.B. and N.S
 - after 15 years: Newfoundland

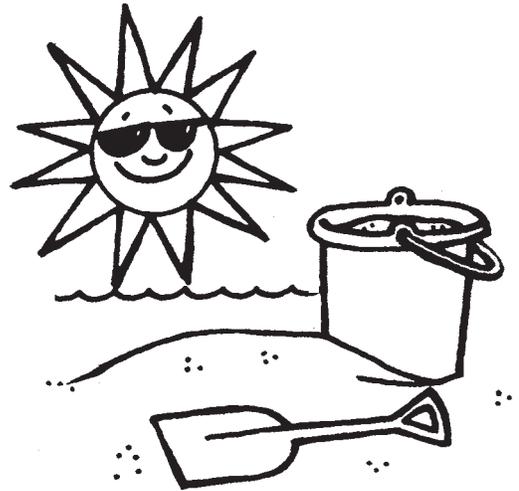


The norm for collective agreements in Canada is three weeks of paid vacation, rising to four weeks after 10 years. Seventy per cent of unionized workers qualify for four weeks after 10 years, and 28 per cent qualify after five years.
(Source: *The Unhealthy Canadian Workplace*, Andrew Jackson, CLC, November 2002.)

(Continued page 2)

CAIS, CUPE's Collective Agreement Information System, shows the pattern in agreements as:

- almost 30 per cent of coded CUPE collective agreements provide three weeks vacation after one year of service,
- 20 per cent provide three weeks after two years of service,
- close to 20 per cent provide three weeks after three years of service,
- 15 per cent report four weeks vacation after five years.



How do we compare to the rest of the world?

By contrast, the European Union has higher legislated minimums. The minimum statutory entitlement to paid vacation leave is 20 days or four weeks, and the average provided in collective agreements is 25.7 days, or more than five weeks.

How do we compare to other countries? Here's a breakdown of average number of vacation days per year:

Canada	.26 days
U.S.	.13 days
Italy	.42 days
France	.37 days
Germany	.35 days
Brazil	.34 days
United Kingdom	.28 days
Korea	.25 days
Japan	.25 days

(Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO), *InfoPlease*, August 16, 2006.)

CUPE members often carry heavy workloads due to staff cutbacks. Staff cuts mean fewer workers are expected to do the same amount of work. Employers and the public expect those who are left to pick up the extra work with no increase in hours or pay. When CUPE members are not replaced on vacation, their work piles up while they are gone. For some, it's a disincentive to take vacation.

The Expedia/Ipsos Reid poll reports that the most common reason cited for not taking vacation was "not scheduling in advance" (11 per cent). Another 9 per cent said they were "too busy at work." This has been substantiated by studies CUPE has done with our members. For example, respondents to a survey of 1,700 Ontario school board workers reported working 110,320 unpaid hours of work during the year 2000. That translates into more than 2,000 extra workers needed just to do the unpaid time these CUPE members worked!

The poll reported some interesting differences among Canadians:

- Eleven per cent of workers outside Quebec take zero vacation days compared to just four per cent of Quebecers.
- Not surprisingly, lower income workers report being more vacation deprived. Those with a household income under \$30,000 are more likely to take zero vacation days (25 per cent versus seven per cent), but they are less likely to check work messages while on vacation (eight per cent versus 20 per cent).

So what does forfeiting vacation days mean for employers? A gift! The poll estimates that workers voluntarily give up an average of two days of vacation a year which translates into 32 million untaken days and \$5.1 billion in wages!

(Source: Expedia.ca/Ipsos Reid, *Vacation Deprivation* survey, 2006.)

(Continued page 3)

The effects of taking too little vacation time show up in various forms – mental illness, physical illness, stress and burnout, reduced productivity, relationship and family problems, higher absenteeism and benefits costs, and a general sense of dissatisfaction with one's life. Unpaid hours eventually take a

toll on workers' health. Health Canada reports that workweeks of 41 hours or more are associated with increased health risks caused by smoking, alcohol consumption and weight gain.

Take your vacation — you've earned it! ■

Making the transition to retirement easier

As the working population ages, employers and unions are seeking ways to make the transition to retirement easier. Here's one example of language that provides long-term employees with extra vacation in preparation for retirement:

CUPE Local 917(01) and the University Club of Victoria, expiry: December 30, 2005.

21.02 Vacation Entitlement

(d) In addition to the above vacations, an employee who has completed at least twenty (20) years of continuous service shall be entitled to a single special vacation of twenty-two (22) consecutive working days, to be taken prior to retirement. Where eligibility for such special vacation occurs within six (6) months of normal retirement, the special vacation entitlement may be taken as pay in lieu thereof on retirement.

Innovative Language

CUPE Local 2396, and Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group, expiry: July 31, 2006.

Article 29 – Childcare Benefits

29.1 Childcare Costs

The employer shall pay 50 (fifty) percent of an employee's childcare costs for a weekly amount of hours equal to the amount of hours worked at PIRG. Childcare costs eligible for subsidy shall be no greater than the current SFU daycare rates for equivalent care.

29.2 Substitute Care

The employer shall reimburse an amount up to \$15.00 (fifteen dollars) an hour for an employee who is a parent who incurs a cost for substitute care when required to work outside of his/her regular work day as defined in Article 38 (Hours of Work).

29.3 Application for reimbursement under this section shall include the receipt for childcare or substitute care charges. ■

Language responds to the needs of CUPE Aboriginal members

Aboriginal members of CUPE want the same things non-Aboriginal members do: decent wages and working conditions, and fair treatment in the workplace.

Whether they work for Aboriginal organizations or side-by-side with CUPE members in other workplaces, Aboriginal members may also have needs

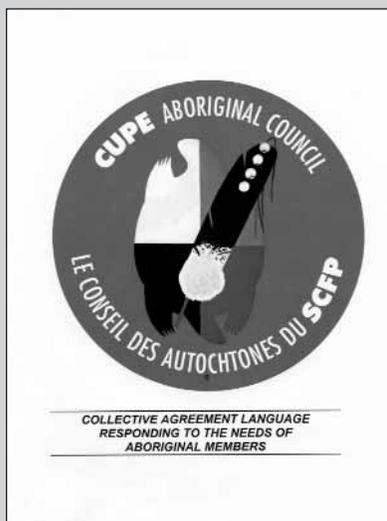
that require the negotiation of specific language. CUPE's Equality Branch has prepared a collection of both actual and recommended language clauses designed to help develop and negotiate language that promotes dignity and equality in the workplace.

Here's an example:

First Nations University of Canada and CUPE Local 1975. Expiry September 30, 2007.

"Leave for traditional Ceremonies

Upon written notice to the appropriate supervising Dean, Director or equivalent, an employee may be granted up to seven (7) working days with pay for the purpose of participating in traditional First Nations ceremonies. Such leaves shall not be unreasonably denied. The employee member shall make every effort to give the longest possible notice of such leaves."



Seeking to gain or improve the equity language in your agreement?

Check this out! Copies are available online at cupe.ca and from the Equality Branch. It is a work in progress and Equality welcomes any other examples so they can continue to expand this resource. If you have equity language, send it along to the Equality Branch. ■



HIV/AIDS is a union issue

Our sisters and brothers in sub-Saharan Africa are being devastated by HIV/AIDS, with the Caribbean coming a close second. In some countries, more than 25 per cent of the population is infected or affected by the disease. Entire economies are in ruin and public health systems are totally overwhelmed.

The problem is not limited to other countries. Canada's incidence rate is rising, particularly among Aboriginal communities and women of colour. Women bear the brunt of this disease, caring for the sick and dying, caring for surviving family members, and suffering among the highest rates of infection.

We can lend our organizing and lobbying skills to the continuing fight against this disease worldwide. Developing country unions need our support, and

not just financially. (Check online at cupe.ca for coverage of the XVI International Aids Conference, other information about HIV/AIDS work in the union, and *Labour Fights Aids* published by the CLC.)

CUPE members work on the front line and also need the union's support. CUPE's policy, passed in 1995 states, "In occupations where exposure to blood and bodily fluids is likely to occur, employers should institute infection control programs, providing the necessary clothing and devices to prevent exposure."

Union members have a role in helping to eliminate the stigma and discrimination of people living with AIDS. We can negotiate provisions that prevent discrimination, ensure needed drug and health coverage, allow time off and accommodation to care for oneself or family members living with HIV/AIDS, and prevention education. Here are a couple of examples of language negotiated by CUPE locals:

CUPE Local 388 and the United Way of Greater Victoria, expiry: December 31, 2005.

4.03 Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

No employee testing HIV positive shall be discriminated against or harassed in any manner. No employee who has a family member testing HIV positive or who has in any way been exposed to the HIV virus shall be discriminated against or harassed in any manner.

CUPE Local 3908 Unit 1 and Trent University, expiry: August 31, 2007.

Appendix F: Policy on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

...There will be no mandatory testing or screening of students, faculty, or staff for HIV infection (including AIDS)... Trent University will not tolerate discrimination against any visitor, student, faculty or staff member who has AIDS or who tests positively for the HIV antibody. ...Infected students are encouraged to continue their studies as long as they are physically and mentally able to do so. In a similar fashion, infected faculty or staff members are encouraged to perform their regular duties as long as their health permits. All cases related to the AIDS virus on campus will be handled in a confidential manner, with strict "need-to-know" restrictions for access to the information. ■

Ontario hospital workers settlement



OCHU, CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, has negotiated a tentative three-year collective agreement with The Ontario Hospital Association (OHA). Covering 18,000 hospital employees at 56 hospitals, the settlement helps ensure significant labour stability for the next few years during an anticipated period of change in Ontario's health care system.

This is the third successive, freely-negotiated agreement between CUPE and OHA – a first – in a sector where negotiations are routinely resolved through arbitration. The tentative settlement features contract improvements and a wage increase in each of the three years of the contract which runs from September 29, 2006 to September 28, 2009.

The tentative settlement covers trades, maintenance, dietary assistants, custodial, materials management, paramedical and clerical staff, and 3,600 nurses.

Highlights of the three-year agreement include:

- **Wage increases:**
 - September 29/06 – 2.75 per cent
 - September 29/07 – 3 per cent
 - September 29/08 – 2.6 per cent
- **Seven weeks vacation entitlement after 28 years – a first.**
- **Evening and weekend shift premiums increase to \$1 per hour.**
- **Job security:**
 - An increase in the ceiling on the employer's early retirement packages (within the classification) prior to issuing notices of layoff. These packages are increased to two weeks pay per year of service to a maximum of 52 weeks, up from 26 weeks in the expiring collective agreement.

- A new provision requires employers to offer voluntary exit packages in addition to early retirement packages, where the number of employees accepting early retirement is insufficient to prevent layoffs. The voluntary exit package is within the department, and is also two weeks pay per year of service to a maximum of 52 weeks.
- **Bumping rights:** Where an employee is unable to bump to an identical or lower-paying classification, the employee can now bump upwards, with no restrictions as previously existed. Workers on layoff will be on a recall list for 48 months, an improvement over the previous provision of 24 months.
- **Bereavement Leave:** A new threshold of 4 working days off with pay in conjunction with the death of a spouse, in addition to the existing entitlement for other family members.
- **Benefits:** New language provides for chiropractic and physiotherapy services up to a maximum of \$300 per year. Workers on layoff are entitled to employer paid benefits for 3 months up from 1 month in the last agreement. ■

Current and Upcoming 'Key' Negotiations – July 28, 2006 covering 500 or more employees

Federal Jurisdiction

Public Sector

Employer	Union	# of Employees	Status	Expiry Month
Government of Canada	various unions	17,900	conciliation/bargaining/ tentative agreement	May 02-Sep 05
Canada Post	CPAA	6,630	arbitration	Dec 05
Atomic Energy of Canada (Ont and Que.)	various unions	1,030	bargaining	Mar 06-Jun 06

Private Sector

Air Canada and Jazz (wage reopeners)	various unions	26,670	bargaining/conciliation/ arbitration	Jun-Jul 06
TELUS Corp. (que.)	CUPE	1,140	tentative agreement	Dec 05

Provincial and Territorial Jurisdictions

Public Sector

Employer	Union	# of Employees	Status	Expiry Month
Ontario Hospital Association	ONA	45,000	bargaining	Mar 06
British Columbia Public School Employers Associations	Teachers	42,000	tentative agreement	Jun 06
Ontario Hospital Association	SEIU	15,000	bargaining	Oct 06
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador	Nurses/Teachers	13,000	bargaining/conciliation	Aug 04-Jun 05
Government of New Brunswick	NBPEA/CUPE	12,700	Tentative agreement/ bargaining/conciliation	Dec 03-Feb 06
Government of Manitoba	MGGEU	12,100	arbitration	Mar 06
Government of Ontario	Police	7,680	bargaining	Dec 05
Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations	CUPE/CAW-CANADA	5,800	conciliation/bargaining	Mar 06
City of Edmonton	various unions	5,600	bargaining	Dec 05
Manitoba Hydro	various unions	4,060	bargaining/ tentative agreement	Mar 06-May 06
Government of Quebec	Ambulance Technicians	3,300	tentative agreement	Jun 02-Jun 05
Health Authorities of Manitoba	MAHCP	3,300	bargaining	Mar 06
Health Authorities of Prince Edward Island	various unions	2,340	bargaining	Mar 06
University of Montréal	CUPE	2,000	bargaining	Nov 05

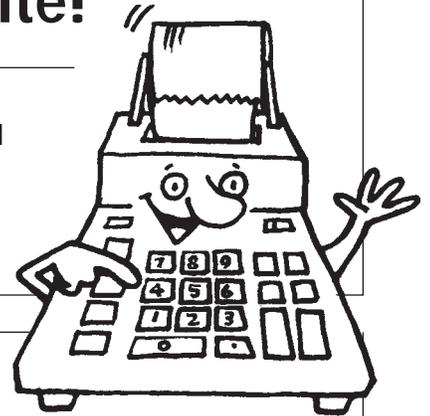
Upcoming 'Key' Negotiations

Employer	Union	# of Employees	Status	Expiry Month
Government of Saskatchewan	SGGEU	10,000		Sep 06
Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations	Nurses	4,000		Oct 06

Source: © Workplace Information Directorate, HRSDC—Labour Program, July 28, 2006

New! Calculate CPI on CUPE's website!

A new bargaining tool is now operational on CUPE's website. Now you can calculate CPI increases on wages! Plug in your city and your wage rate and calculate what your wage should be to keep up with inflation in your area. Go to <http://cupe.ca/cpicalculator.php> and check it out! ■



Consumer Price Index by province, June 2005 to June 2006

Newfoundland and Labrador	2.6
Prince Edward Island	3.1
Nova Scotia	3.1
New Brunswick	2.9
Quebec	2.1
Ontario	2.4
Manitoba	2.4
Saskatchewan	2.6
Alberta	3.7
British Columbia	2.2

Source: Statistics Canada, The Daily, Friday, July 21, 2006

In June 2006, Canadians paid 2.5 per cent more for the goods and services in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket than they did a year earlier, but the change slowed from the month before. As expected, gasoline and natural gas prices were the main contributors to the slow-down of the change in the CPI. The 12-month increase in gasoline prices slowed from 18.6 per cent in May to 15.4 per cent in June, as natural gas prices went from 15.6 per cent in May to 6.5 per cent in June.

If we exclude energy prices, the 12-month change in the CPI dropped from 1.8 per cent in May to 1.5 per cent in June.

Electricity prices climbed 6.2 per cent between June 2005 and June 2006. Rising prices over the past few months in Ontario and Quebec continued to influence the 12-month trend in electricity prices.

Impact of decline in GST - The federal Harper government's planned reduction in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was reduced in July from seven to six per cent. Experts predict the impact on CPI rates will be in the neighbourhood of a .6 per cent reduction (less than one per cent). Why? This estimate is based on the assumption that consumers will pay one per cent less at the cash register, and for the most part, prices of goods will be reduced to reflect the reduction. But, some products included in the CPI "basket of goods," such as many foods sold in supermarkets, are exempt from GST so the resulting decrease will necessarily be less than one per cent.

(For more analysis of CPI rates check out CUPE's *The Economic Climate* published quarterly, at cupe.ca online.) ■