

ORGANIZE

Exposing the truth about P3s



CUPE members from across the country will gather in
Montréal, Québec, February 10-13, 2009
 for the National Bargaining Women's Equality Conference.

Take advantage of the easy online registration at cupe.ca
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Deadline:
January 11, 2009



Join us in Montréal
and be part of setting the table!

CUPE / Canadian Union
 of Public Employees

Combating privatization and P3s



PSAC
 National President Paul Moist joined PSAC's cross-Canada Walk for Respect in June.

This issue of *Organize* focuses on the number one policy direction from our 2007 national convention – fighting privatization in all of its forms, wherever and whenever it arises.

Our union's history is replete with examples of successful campaigns against contracting out and privatization. The scope of what we face today – such as multi-decade P3 agreements – makes the stakes much

higher, and requires diligence, sound research and reaching out beyond our membership to inform and connect with the public and other concerned parties.

In May, CUPE pension trustees heard from Professor Éric Pineault of the Université de Québec à Montréal. He outlined the secrecy and scandal in a P3 real estate development project at the university. This fall, based upon concerns expressed by Quebec's provincial auditor, the criminal investigation arm of the Quebec Provincial Police is looking into the lack of transparency and huge cost overruns being experienced.

This is a crystal clear example of the perils associated with P3s and the threat they pose to public ownership and accountability of public services.

Elsewhere in this issue, we highlight key actions of our members. In particular, we celebrate the brave members who work at the *Journal de Québec*. Locked out for some 15 months, these 252 members, with

support from across our union and elsewhere, fought back and achieved a good agreement using techniques new to our union. I salute these members, the staff and all of you who supported them.

Finally, as we go to press, we have just finished a 37-day federal election campaign, one where Canadians elected their third straight minority government. And one in which CUPE members were instrumental in electing progressive candidates and in pushing key issues such as health care and child care.

I thank all CUPE members for your ongoing dedication to the work of our union, your activism, and what you are achieving for our union and our communities.

In solidarity,

Paul Moist

Paul Moist
 National President

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ORGANIZE

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Settlement at *Journal de Québec*



Locked out *Journal de Québec* workers and their many friends in the labour movement demonstrate their solidarity.



Lucie Levasseur, President of CUPE Quebec, speaking to supporters at a Montreal rally in May, while Lucie Butler, President of CUPE 2808 (front row, second from right) and Jocelyne Martineau, President of CUPE 1872 (beside Butler) look on.

Denis Bolduc, President of CUPE 1450 (at left), and Claude Généreux, National Secretary-Treasurer, holding up copies of the locked out workers' paper, *MédiaMatinQuébec*.



CUPE members lead the fight for pay equity – and win!

The summer of 2008 can be considered a pivotal time in the fight for pay equity in Canada, with a couple of key wins on the part of CUPE members.

In July, the 299 members of CUPE 963 won wage increases of 5 to 42 per cent thanks to a pay equity agreement reached with the New Brunswick Liquor Board. The overall settlement puts \$1.6 million more into members' pockets.

According to Diane Ouimet, CUPE Job Evaluation Officer, "significant wage inequities existed for several female dominated jobs as well as for permanent part-time workers."

"After years and years of wondering if women are paid correctly for what they do, we decided to do a job evaluation," says Past-President of the local, Brian Buckley. "The

employer was very cooperative and could see how well it worked out."

Adds CUPE 963 President Martha Thompson: "We did have pay equity before, but the job evaluation gave us a sense of what the work was worth."

Meanwhile, wages at Toronto's public libraries will go up anywhere from 15 cents to \$4.22 per hour after CUPE 416 and the Toronto Public Library signed a pay equity settlement in June. A year-long job evaluation set a floor wage that will finally lift the library's 119 lowest-paid workers (shelvers and pages) out of poverty-level wages. Members will see their wages increase about three per cent annually on average. Nine out of ten CUPE 416 members at the Toronto Public Library will receive a wage increase.

■ Pam Kapoor



Standing together for pay equity in British Columbia

Unions key in protecting workers with AIDS

Two members represented CUPE at the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in August. Gerry Lavallée, co-chair of CUPE's Pink Triangle Committee and member of CUPE 4092 in Toronto, and Roger Procyk, a Winnipeg community health care worker, President of CUPE 2348, and member of the CUPE National Aboriginal Council, met with medical professionals, community health workers and activists to discuss the challenges facing the global response to HIV/AIDS.



With an estimated 58,000 people in Canada living with HIV – up from 50,000 in 2002 – Lavallée sees

a clear role for unions as a safeguard for workers with HIV. "HIV/AIDS must be a priority for trade unions because unions protect the rights of people at work against stigma, discrimination, compulsory testing and dismissal."

Lavallée sees a special role for CUPE as a leader in defending the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS here in Canada and around the world. "We can do this," says Lavallée. "We just need the will."

■ Allison Gifford

Air Canada flight attendants PUSH BACK company cuts and closures

 On July 10, Air Canada flight attendants were greeted with harsh news: over 600 flight attendants would be laid off in November. A few weeks later, the airline announced plans to close flight attendant bases in Halifax and Winnipeg.

Air Canada says the closures are justified by a “base viability study,” but has refused to make the results public. So on September 22, CUPE replied with its own study showing that there is no business case or economic justification for the closures.

The layoffs will affect 144 CUPE flight attendants in Winnipeg, 187 in Halifax and 300 in Vancouver. The move will have a devastating impact on members of the CUPE

airline division, their families and their communities.

In response, CUPE flight attendants decided to push back. The union has launched a national campaign devoted to stopping the base closures and staff cuts.

Simultaneous, cross-country rallies took place on July 28 in Halifax, Winnipeg, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. One thousand flight attendants and supporters came out, including Premier Gary Doer in Winnipeg, and MPs Alexa McDonough and Geoff Regan and Mayor Peter Kelly in Halifax.

“The numbers of people who came out, and the passion with which our political leaders spoke was fantastic, so inspiring,” says Lesley Swann, President of CUPE’s Air



Canada Component.

The union won a victory on July 25 when Federal Labour Minister Jean-Pierre Blackburn rejected Air Canada’s request to skip the consultation process required under the Canada Labour Code when laying off more than 50 employees.

This fall, CUPE took advantage of the federal election to ratchet up its campaign, gathering support from dozens of candidates, including NDP leader Jack Layton.

■ Allison Gifford & Sébastien Goulet

The Halifax community gathers in support of Air Canada workers fighting the base closures.



The silver lining: NDP gains seats in fall election

Canadians were forced into another election this fall by the Harper Conservatives, who broke their own “fairness” law that had set October 19, 2009 as the date for the next federal election. And what did we get: another Conservative minority government, a \$300 million bill for Canadian taxpayers at a time when we cannot afford it, and an all-time low in voter turnout in a federal election.

Despite the waste of money and broken promises by the Conservatives, there have been some gains. Jack Layton led one of the strongest campaigns in NDP history, resulting in an increased percentage of the popular vote and inroads in Quebec, Newfoundland, Alberta and Northern Ontario. The NDP finished with 8 new seats over all, climbing from 29 seats in 2006, to 30 at dissolution, to 37 by the end of election night.



CUPE 54 member Brandon Walker (left), CUPE 4731 member Shelina Hassanali and CUPE 3242 member Kevin Carswell congratulate Jack Layton after the televised leaders debate.

Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe played an integral role in denying Stephen Harper his coveted majority. Quebeckers and others rejected the Conservatives’ \$45 million in cuts to arts and culture, and

their harsh proposals for sentencing young offenders.

The best news to come out of this election is that Canadians do not want the Conservatives to have a free hand to govern our country. Voters have demonstrated strong support for the NDP, who are now charged with being the true opposition in the House of Commons. “We are committed to working with the NDP to ensure that issues affecting working families are addressed in this parliament,” says CUPE National President Paul Moist.

So what do the election results mean for CUPE members? Harper has said that he plans to govern as though he has a majority. This means he’ll continue to push his partisan and ideological agenda through parliament. Harper will use economic woes to justify a smaller government and reduced public services.

At over half a million members strong, we’re ready to keep up the fight, to push back against cuts to public spending and jobs.

■ Allison Gifford

Manitoba social services and child care meeting

Association for community living workers, women’s shelter workers, child care workers, child protection and child support workers came together May 23 and 24 in Manitoba for a social services and child care committee conference.

“It was an incredible two days,” says Sheree Capar, CUPE National representative assigned to the conference. “Coordinated bargaining was a hot topic. We see it as a strategy to shore up support for bargaining while meeting the different needs of the sub-sectors.” The other hot

topic was developing an action plan to help raise the profile of social services in the community and with members.

For domestic violence month, CUPE Manitoba will sponsor an Irish exhibit of posters on domestic violence from around the world. “Our members at women’s shelters have wanted to bring this exhibit to Manitoba for some time now. The exhibit is planned for November and we hope to have it at the provincial legislature,” says Capar.

■ Catherine Louli

CUPE well represented at premiers' meeting



Labour leaders gather to develop strategic positions on federal issues during the July premiers' meeting.

CUPE enjoyed a prominent profile when the Council of the Federation, made up of Canada's premiers and territorial leaders, met in Quebec City in July.

Prior to the meeting, National President Paul Moist wrote a letter to the leaders outlining the main priorities CUPE believes the premiers should take into consideration: strengthen our economy, improve income security, rebuild our public infrastructure, reject so-called public private partnerships (P3s), and say no to interprovincial trade agreements that could undermine the democratic powers of governments and other public organizations.

When the premiers' assembly took place, the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions and the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec chaired a think-tank addressing important issues for health care professionals. Moist declared CUPE's full support for the nurses' mandate, which included a national pharmacare program, greater transparency in expenditure of public funds, and the rejection of P3s.

As well, Moist and Federation of Labour presidents met to share ideas on a constructive role for labour in the development of federal policies that affect workers in Canada.

While the labour conferences were productive, the outcome of the actual premiers' meeting was disappointing. The leaders determined to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), an interprovincial agreement on trade and labour mobility, to include a tribunal mechanism to resolve internal trade disputes, coupled with up to \$5 million in penalties for governments that fail to comply with the agreement. CUPE is concerned that the new dispute mechanism might be opened up for corporate abuse rather than only being accessible to provincial and territorial governments.

From now until January 2009, when the amendment takes effect, Canada's largest union is calling on its 570,000 members to put pressure on governments to fight any amendment to the AIT that compromises democracy in favour of private investment.

■ Allison Gifford

Taking advantage of attention on the premiers' meeting to raise public awareness about the impacts of privatization.

Union leaders build solidarity in Colombia



National President Paul Moist and other Canadian labour representatives meet with Colombia labour leaders and their families as part of the solidarity exchange.

Four of Canada's public sector union leaders took part in a high profile tour in Colombia July 18 to 25 to examine human and labour rights in view of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. CUPE National President Paul Moist joined leaders from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the National Union of Public and General Employees.

The leaders strengthened solidarity ties with Colombian unions and discussed ways to defend public services against privatization and globalization. They also shared concerns about free trade and its negative effects on workers.

"Free trade will hurt, not help Colombian workers," says a news release that the leaders issued jointly in Bogota and Ottawa.

The Canadian labour leaders also met with the Colombian Minister of the Interior and the Canadian Ambassador, and witnessed the Permanent People's Tribunal delivering its final judgement on Colombia's human and labour rights record. What they heard from the Tribunal confirmed everything that they had learned during their week-long tour.

"This is a country where 95 per cent of workers do not have an enforceable collective agreement," Moist told Colombia's Minister of the Interior. "We can't accept a free trade agreement until these basic labour rights and human rights are in place."

■ Allison Gifford



Mexico City sanitation workers attach "water is life" headbands to their hats.

CUPE warns Mexico of NAFTA energy trap

Trade and energy meetings held in Mexico City this summer helped in building solidarity among unions in Canada, Mexico and the United States, as the three countries ready themselves for the next round of Security and Prosperity Partnership discussions.

"Canada is the only nation in the world that is committed to serving U.S. energy needs in priority to its own," lawyer Steven Shrybman, attending on CUPE's behalf, told the Mexico meetings. "This is because under NAFTA, U.S. consumers are now entitled to at least 60 per cent of Canadian natural gas, and approximately 65 per cent of its oil and gas. Moreover, even if supply shortages arise, Canada is precluded from meeting its own needs before those of the U.S."

■ Catherine Louli

More on NAFTA and the energy trap: www.cupe.ca



Public private pressure: How CUPE members are fighting back

Canadian media and politics have been abuzz with talk of public private partnerships, or “P3s”. Allison Gifford demystifies the debate and focuses on some key anti-privatization campaigns of CUPE members.



P3s exist when a public institution agrees to pay a private company to fund, build and operate (and sometimes own) a facility or service that would normally belong in the public domain. Although proponents say P3s are a kinder, friendlier alternative to selling off public services, they're wrong – P3s are privatization, pure and simple.

The federal government is trying to convince Canadians that P3s are a good idea. The Harper Conservatives even created the Building Canada Fund, with \$1.25 billion earmarked to build infrastructure by subsidizing P3 projects. Some provincial governments,



Decoding P3 lingo in Nova Scotia

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In need of massive infrastructure improvements, and with mounting pressure from the provincial and federal government to go the P3 route, it's easy to see Nova Scotia as Canada's newest battleground against privatization.

The Nova Scotia government hired Partnerships BC – a company founded by B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell to promote public private partnerships – to evaluate P3 opportunities in the province. In July, Partnerships BC delivered a report recommending 10 possible P3 projects.

CUPE Nova Scotia President Danny Cavanagh has serious concerns about the impartiality of Partnerships BC. “It's just a smoke-screen for the government to promote P3s,” says Cavanagh. “We need to make sure people understand that. Partnerships BC is now in the process of developing business scenarios for each project. We assume they will all be P3s.”

And Partnerships BC's “help” has been costly. The price for each project assessment? Two-hundred thousand dollars.

CUPE's Union Education Department facilitated *Understanding Public-Private Partnerships*, a one-day workshop to help Nova Scotia members separate the facts from the spin. They learned what P3s are, the problems with them, how corporations benefit from them, and what union members can do about them.

For John Evans, a CUPE staff member in the Sydney office, the training was invaluable. “This workshop explained P3s in a way that was easy to understand. Now, members know the truth about P3s, beyond what's presented in the media.”

“The educational component helped us gain more activists to help mobilize other activists,” adds Cavanagh. “We're up against a lot of privatization. We need all the help we can get.”



Travelling ad raises public awareness about privatization.

like Gordon Campbell's B.C. Liberals, have hopped on the bandwagon. Private companies, and consultants like Corpus Sanchez and Ernst & Young Orenda, are also singing the praises of P3s.

But in communities across Canada, people are realizing that P3s simply don't work. Citizens are becoming frustrated as their once-public services are being replaced by cheaper, inferior quality providers. And taxpayers are having a tough time footing the bill for P3s, which, when all is said and done, can cost up to twice as much as public infrastructure projects.

It is possible to defeat P3s, but it takes organizing and campaigning. CUPE members have been working tirelessly across the country to raise public awareness, build coalitions, take political action and educate communities about the dangers of P3s.



Victoria's water watchers unite

When the Sierra Legal Defence Fund (now Ecojustice) published its 2004 report card for municipal sewage treatment in Canadian cities, Victoria, B.C. got the dunce cap. The city was "suspended" for being "the only city in Canada that still discharges all of its sewage raw and has not taken steps to improve." It is estimated that the city won't be fully treating sewage until 2017.

Victoria's Capital Regional District (CRD) is under pressure to consider a P3 water treatment system. Premier Gordon Campbell said the province would kick in one-third of the costs for sewage treatment in Victoria, but only if his pro-P3 organization, Partnerships BC, gets to decide whether the project becomes a P3.

In spring 2007, the CRD hired consultants Ernst & Young Orenda to prepare a financial analysis of Victoria's sewage treatment project. Given the consulting company's track record of pushing P3s, they'll likely suggest private sector involvement.

CUPE BC is fighting back with the Water Watch campaign, which seeks to raise awareness about the risks of privatizing water and sewer systems. CUPE members and staff have worked diligently to liaise with local media and use strategic paid advertising, such as Victoria's double-decker buses.



Double-decker buses in Victoria take the campaign to the streets.

CUPE is also active with the Greater Victoria Water Watch Coalition – a team of local environmental groups, community organizations, student groups, church groups, politicians and members of the agricultural community. "The coalition has been really key in all of this," says Kim Manton, a campaign coordinator with CUPE 1978.

The CRD's report to B.C. Environment Minister Barry Penner outlining the city's plans to treat sewage has been delayed until December 2009. "This decision gives us a lot more space to strategize and figure out where we want to go," says Manton. "Sewage treatment isn't a glamorous issue, so it's hard to get people engaged. It's also the lingo – most people don't know what P3s are, so now we can spend another year educating members."

With municipal elections in November, and a provincial election slated for May 2009, the delay will also allow the campaign to make water treatment a prominent issue in the coming elections.

More on CUPE BC's Water Watch: <http://www.cupe.bc.ca/452>

More on Greater Victoria Water Watch Coalition: http://www.greatervictoriawaterwatchcoalition.ca/cgi-bin/show_home.cgi



CUPE BC leaders Barry O'Neill, Cindy McQueen and Carolae Donoghue, CUPE 900 President Gayle Nelson, CUPE 900 Past-President Mel Hale, and other local CUPE members get a tour of the innovative, publicly-owned Kamloops Centre for Water Quality.



Political action in Saint John

The City of Saint John, New Brunswick, lays claim to one of Canada's oldest sewage systems. For the past 140 years, sewage and water treatment has remained in public hands. But now the drinking water system is in need of an upgrade – to the tune of \$200 million.

Faced with high costs and mounting pressure from private companies, the federal government, and the provincial media, City Council has been forced to weigh its options. The Harper Conservative's Building Canada Fund requires that P3 financing be considered for infrastructure projects requiring more than \$50 million in federal cash.

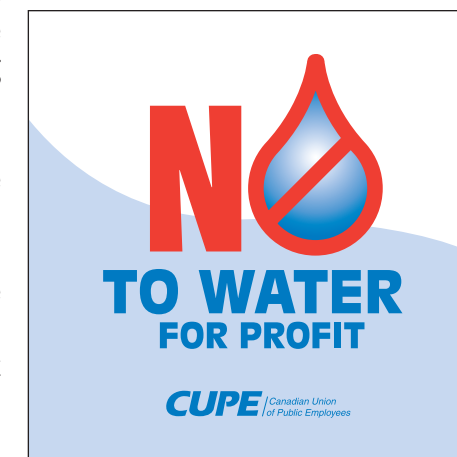
And the Tories have a worthy sidekick in the provincial media. The Irving Group, controlled by the K.C. Irving family, dominates 90 per cent

of English-language newspaper circulation in New Brunswick. "The Irving newspaper never misses a beat," says Danielle Savoie, a CUPE communications representative for the Maritimes region. "It always goes after the Council, and it wants everything privatized."

To ensure the balance of power on City Council was pro-public, CUPE became politically active during the municipal elections last May. "No to Water for Profit" signs dotted city lawns alongside candidates' signs, and CUPE 18 led a public candidate forum on the issue.

"The water issue wasn't even on the radar when these elections were called. We brought it to the forefront and made it a political issue. We asked each candidate exactly where they stood on P3s," says Mike Montgomery, President of CUPE 18. The forum was a success: the majority of the newly elected Council members, including Mayor

cont. p.12





CUPE shines at library conference

CUPE and its library members made a significant contribution to the 63rd annual meeting of the Canadian Library Association, held in Vancouver this past spring. From May 21 to May 24, a host of authors, editors, library workers, administrators, students and volunteers attended the meeting, which provided an excellent opportunity for networking, discussion and training.

For its fourth year of participation in the event, CUPE was a Platinum Sponsor, the highest category of support, which included sponsorship of the keynote address by Rowland Lorimer, author, respected professor and major advocate of public libraries.

The much-visited CUPE booth allowed our members to introduce themselves and share their experiences, including their 2007 battles against privatization in British Columbia.

■ Sébastien Goulet

A video on library work, displayed at the booth, is now available: <http://cupe.ca/libraries>

Ivan Court, oppose P3s. Montgomery says, “the people spoke when they voted. They realize that water is a public right and should never be for profit.”

Simultaneously, CUPE spearheaded a strong lobbying campaign, linking with the Council of Canadians to launch a citizen’s coalition of water stewards. CUPE also sponsored Maude Barlow’s tour for her book, *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*. CUPE members sent P3 fact sheets to every household in Saint John with an invitation to Barlow’s presentation. More than 300 people attended.

This fall, City management will need to make some decisions about how it’s going to improve the drinking water system. In the meantime, CUPE’s campaign continues, gearing up to host an Anti-Privatization Summit in the port city in mid-October.

More on CUPE New Brunswick Anti-Privatization Summit: <http://nb.cupe.ca/>



Port Moody dumps private contractor

Ten years ago, Port Moody’s City Council decided to contract out municipal garbage collection to International Paper Industries (IPI) – without any public consultation. It wasn’t long before irritated residents started to report missed pickups, spilled garbage, broken bins, neglected recycling and speeding garbage trucks. At its worst, the Council office was fielding 40 complaints per day. Two city officials were fired, and the Mayor who contracted out the garbage did not run for Council again.

This past June, 10 years after the IPI contract was inked, Port Moody City Council voted to kick IPI to the curb and contract-in solid waste and recycling services. Maria Wahl, President of CUPE 825, says her local

never stopped fighting to bring the service back in-house. “We’ve been vigilant for 10 years, so this is a very sweet victory for us.”

In 2008, Council approached CUPE to form a joint committee to bring the contract back in-house. The coalition conducted a phone survey to canvass public opinion about the City’s garbage services. Port Moody residents spoke out overwhelmingly against the private company, with up to 80 per cent of residents reporting at least one missed garbage pickup. Based on the survey results, City Council voted to bring the service home by a 6-1 vote.

Wahl says the secret to the coalition’s success was to remain attentive and community-minded. “We stayed on that service constantly, and reported and logged every single complaint and safety offence,” says Wahl. At the same time, both CUPE 825 and City Council put the community first. “You have to bring the residents in,” says Wahl. “We didn’t just make it about CUPE. The real victory is for the citizens of Port Moody because they had endured such terrible service. Now they’re getting the quality they deserve.”

Maria Wahl (left) and Brigitte Pronovost of CUPE 825 with one of the recently contracted-in garbage trucks.





PEI unions fight for public manors

CUPE PEI is no stranger to the fight against P3s. In 1999, Islanders halted plans for what would have been Canada's first P3 hospital. Earlier this year, the union found itself mobilizing once more. The province is in serious need of new long-term care homes for seniors (called "manors" in PEI). The provincial government allocated \$4 million to build new manors. Liberal Premier Robert Ghiz said the government will "explore all options" for building new long-term care facilities – including P3s.

CUPE members wasted no time kicking off "Keep our Manors Public," a coalition campaign with health unions including the National Union of Public and General Employees, the PEI Union of Public Sector Employees and the International Union of Operating Engineers. The coalition will move into high gear this

fall, increasing pressure on Ghiz. CUPE PEI expects a final decision on P3s when the province tables its capital budget this fall.

The province hired pro-P3 consultants Corpus Sanchez to review the state of the province's manors. Knowing the company's track record, the coalition refused to participate in the consulting process unless the province committed not to privatize. "We know who Corpus Sanchez are," says CUPE representative Bill McKinnon. "The whole process is just window-dressing for an agenda already put in place by the federal government." While CUPE still awaits the Corpus Sanchez report, McKinnon is confident that they will recommend going the P3 route.

In the meantime, CUPE has remained tightly focused on building public awareness. The campaign's strategy is twofold: first, lead a softer campaign until the government weighs in on P3s this fall, and second, if the



CUPE Regional Vice-President and President of CUPE PEI Millo Murray (left) and CUPE National representative Bill McKinnon (centre), with Conservative Opposition Leader Olive Crane, at a press conference launching the campaign to keep long-term care homes public on PEI.

government doesn't move away from P3s, hit them heavy with radio, TV and newspaper ads. "We don't want to poke the bear in the early stages," says McKinnon. "We want people to see who we are, what we do, that we're professionals. We also want to raise awareness in PEI about the dangers of P3s."

For CUPE PEI, the outlook is promising. While the Building Canada Fund is leaning on the government to at least explore private sector involvement, the Premier has carefully avoided endorsing P3s. "I'm very optimistic they're not going to go P3 in PEI," says Wanda Livingston, President of CUPE 1051 and Hospital Council President. "Still, I was reading about P3s in B.C., and they said maintenance was the first to go. It's scary when you hear things like that. So we're doing all we can, and we'll keep fighting right until the end."

More on PEI manors: www.keepourmanorspublic.ca

In every province, CUPE teams are developing plans to fight public private partnerships and other forms of privatization as part of a national strategic campaign.

More on the national campaign: <http://cupe.ca/privatization>

Workshop: Understanding Public-Private Partnerships

CUPE's Union Education Department offers an engaging one-day workshop, *Understanding Public-Private Partnerships*, to help members learn more about what P3s are, why they're being introduced, why they don't work, and what members can do to combat them. The workshop begins with small group discussions about P3s, followed by video presentations by P3 health care and trade experts. By the end of the workshop, members are able to review specific P3 case studies and analyze the impact of each project.

To find out about an upcoming P3 workshop near you, contact your regional education rep: <http://cupe.ca/www/educreps>



Learning about tools to tackle P3s at a Union Development workshop in Sydney, N.S.



Setting it straight

Ever feel like you're missing the real story while browsing the offerings of mainstream media? StraightGoods.ca might give you the fresh perspective you crave. Founded in 1999 by publisher Ish Theilheimer, Straight Goods is an independent journalism site that provides progressive context on national and international news.

"We're a private company founded by about 30 colleagues and friends who wanted to make a difference. We're supported by readers – we have about 36,000 at present – and sponsors, including approximately 15 unions and labour federations," explains Theilheimer.

The site decodes spin on everything from politics and labour to health care and consumer information. Straight Goods also features some of Canada's best progressive journalists, including Linda McQuaig, Mel Watkins, Naomi Klein, Gwynne Dyer and Charles Gordon.

Allison Gifford

Check out www.straightgoods.ca and www.publicvalues.ca



Toby Sanger

The P3 con game

The cardsharks and hucksters may have moved on, but another con game is still in town.

Public private partnerships (P3s) are being heavily promoted by the federal Conservative government and by a number of provincial and local governments across Canada.

In the past, P3s were used by politicians to hide debt. Even though private financing ultimately cost the public more, it allowed governments to keep development and operating costs off their books. But public auditors got wise to this dodge and forced governments to account for long-term P3 payments.

Now P3 promoters will admit the deals cost more, but use other accounting gimmicks to justify P3s. British Columbia's P3 agency uses private sector "discount rates" to make P3s seem much less costly than they are. For example, a discount rate of 10 per cent means that a cost of \$57.31 listed on the books today will actually cost

\$1,000 when the public pays the bill in 30 years. Other promoters claim that P3s allow governments to transfer massive amounts of "risk" to the private sector. Not only is value of the "risk transfer" highly exaggerated, it rarely pans out. Residents of Hamilton found this out when the corporation running their water system had a major sewage spill, and the public was forced to pay the cleanup costs. Canada has a growing list of P3s that have resulted in costly public bail-outs and environmental clean-ups.

Unfortunately, it's very difficult to uncover financial details about P3s before – and unless – they fail. CUPE, the Ontario Health Coalition and other unions waged a four-year court battle to gain access to information about the Brampton P3 hospital that eventually revealed that the hospital cost at least \$300 million more as a P3.

Regardless of the accounting tricks used, they add up to billions of dollars siphoned from the public purse into private profits, leaving less money for public services. P3s make no economic sense. It's time governments at all levels dealt themselves out of this losing game.

■ Toby Sanger



Mary Catherine McCarthy

Coordinating the CUPE anti-privatization campaign

Making links across the country that strengthen the on-the-ground fight to stop privatization and promote public services: that's the challenge for coordinating this national strategic initiative, adopted at the 2007 CUPE convention.

CUPE provincial divisions are rising to the occasion; backed by CUPE National funds, they are working on special campaigns that take on privatization. At the national level, CUPE is working in coalitions to advance public alternatives to the Harper government's agenda

of privatizing and commercializing water, community infrastructure, health care, child care, education and other public services. And CUPE National's women's bargaining and health and safety conferences will have a focus on privatization, connecting the dots between diverse issues and our members.

From mobilization workshops and rock concerts to solidarity conferences, community town hall meetings and anti-P3 summits, CUPE is organizing to fight back.

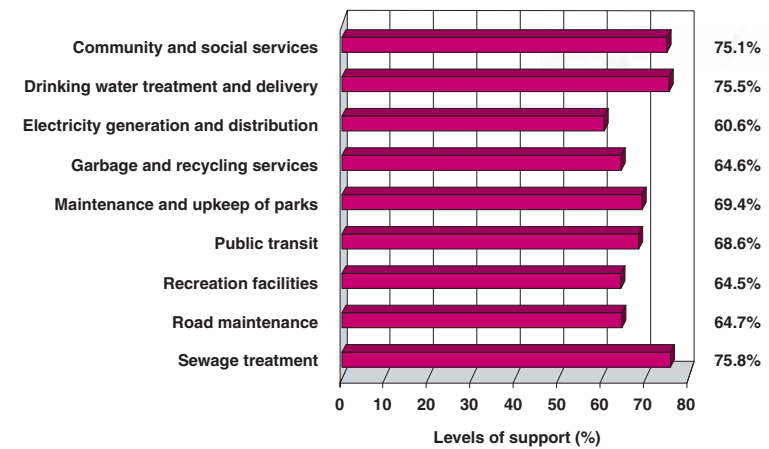
National polling and focus group work will get underway this fall to help sharpen our language and develop common messages.

National Coordinator Mary Catherine McCarthy is tracking, evaluating and sharing the experiences of local, divisional and national campaigns. A team of national and regional staff is working with her to strengthen strategies across the union. McCarthy advises members interested in getting involved to call their provincial division and to check out online resources. She asks to be informed about privatization campaigns at mmccarthy@cupe.ca.

Tools and resources can be found on page 25 of this issue, and at www.endprivatization.ca



Canadians who prefer municipal governments and their employees to deliver public services



A total of 1,004 random telephone interviews were conducted by Nanos Research across Canada between May 7 and 11, 2008. The survey is accurate ±3.1 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Majority of Canadians agree with CUPE

According to a major poll conducted by Nanos Research for CUPE in May, CUPE's fight for public services represents a majority sentiment.

Asked who they would trust more to deliver public services, their municipal government and its employees or a private corporation, a majority of respondents chose their municipal government.

Almost three-quarters (73.7 per cent) of Canadians said they want municipalities in charge of providing and operating public services on a not-for-profit basis rather than revenue-focused corporations.

"These results confirm that CUPE is fighting for precisely what Canadians want," says Paul Moist, CUPE National President. "We must ramp up our efforts to convince all levels of government to protect the public services that Canadians prefer in public hands."

The same study found that a whopping 87.6 per cent of Canadians agree that public services like drinking water, sewage treatment, garbage and recycling services, road maintenance and recreation facilities play an essential role in their community.

"Municipal governments facing pressure from the Harper government to privatize public services should be bolstered by the results of this poll," adds Moist. "People clearly want public services delivered by democratically elected local governments and workers."

■ Pam Kapoor



Eric Pineault

Diane Urquhart

Pensions: Part of the privatization fight back

Taking the lead from CUPE's strategic direction plan adopted at the CUPE National convention, pension trustees and other pension practitioners came to Ottawa in June to discuss the growing concern that pension funds are being invested in P3 privatization schemes.

CUPE National's strategic directions paper makes it clear that CUPE will take on a concerted campaign to ensure that pension plans for public and private sector workers and the Canada Pension Plan do not invest in P3s in any of our sectors.

Éric Pineault of the Université du Québec à Montréal was one of two keynote speakers at the June conference. Pineault packed as much information as possible into a one-hour presentation, and left participants wanting more. "P3s," says Pineault, "are designed to be advantageous to investors, and so it is not surprising that pension funds are being considered as growing investment source of these schemes."

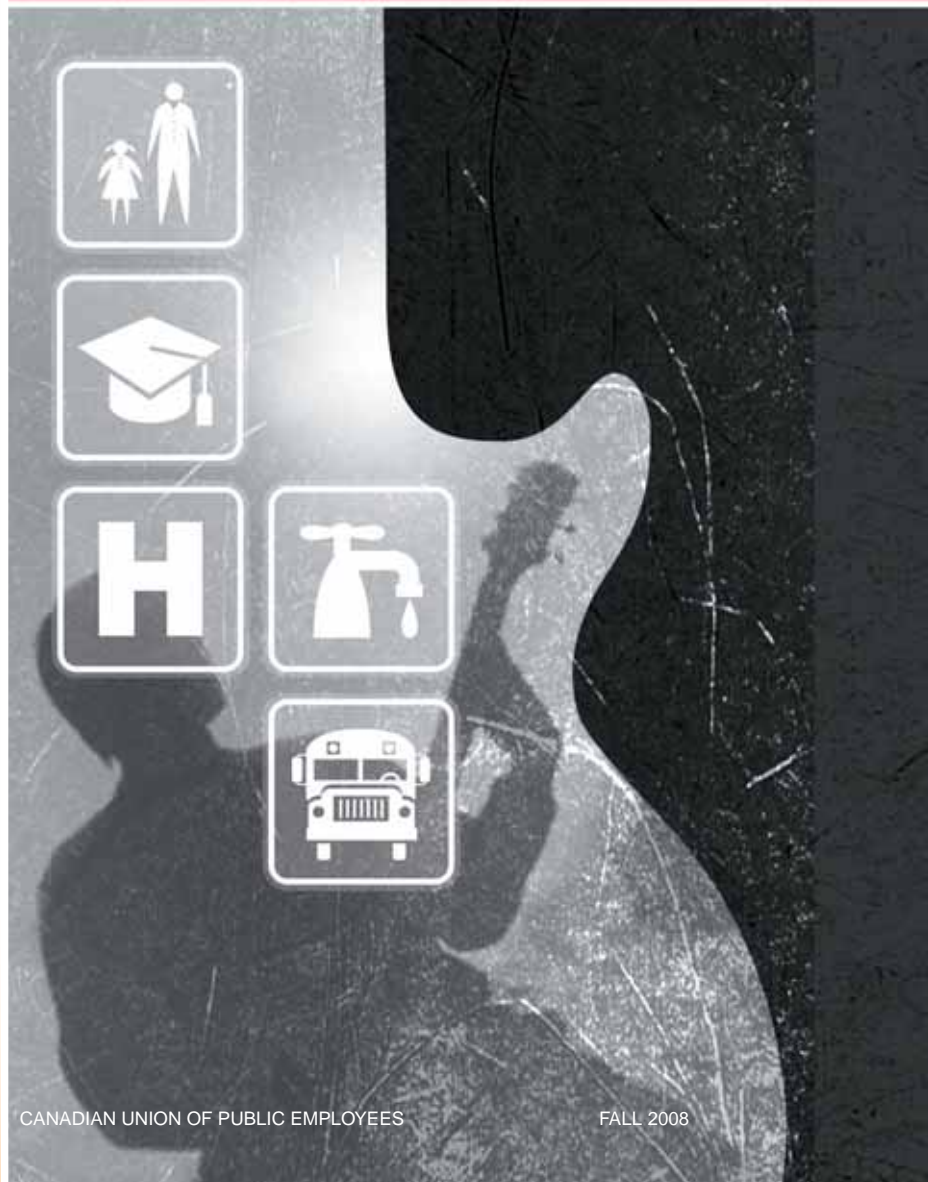
Following Professor Pineault's presentation, independent financial analyst Diane Urquhart spoke to participants about the regulatory gaps that exist in the Canadian financial sector. Urquhart, a vocal proponent of stronger financial sector regulation and enforcement, spoke about the asset-backed commercial paper debacle.

"Worker retirement programs in Canada stand to suffer estimated losses of \$7 to 13 billion from the rerouting of asset-backed commercial paper [ABCP] in Canada which was supposed to have been a 'secure' investment. This example is a reminder of the risks to workers of unstable, under-regulated, and increasingly complex financial markets," says Paul Moist, CUPE National President.

■ Catherine Louli



ONTARIO ROCKS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES



With its series of "Rock for Public Services" concerts, CUPE Ontario is reaching deep into communities to build awareness and support for public services, and for the unique role that CUPE members play in our communities. The concerts, featuring well-known bands like Trooper, April Wine and Kim Mitchell, are being funded as part of CUPE National's anti-privatization campaign.

"These concerts are an innovative, non-traditional way to get people thinking about how important public services are in their lives," says CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan. "Our messaging is helping people to understand CUPE members' work – that we're not just about strikes."

The concerts have exceeded expectations, drawing 4,000 spectators in Sturgeon Falls, 1,000 in Kenora, 2,500 in Thorold and Kingston, 6,000-7,000 in Ajax, and over 1,200 in Lindsay/Kawartha Lakes. A concert is also planned for Ottawa on November 1. Combined with paid media advertising and extensive

media coverage from press conferences, the impact of the event in communities has been substantial.

Ads and audience handouts spell out the range of public services provided in communities, and describe how privatization, P3s and contracting out cost more, deliver less and cheat people out of the services they need and deserve. Materials address local issues where government underfunding or privatization is threatening services. Audience members are asked to fill out plebiscite-like cards called, "Count me in for public services."

With 40-50 local volunteers required for each venue, participation from locals and national reps has been strong. "These concerts are a great way for locals to work together on anti-privatization efforts in their towns," says Judy Bain, concert series coordinator and President of CUPE 1781 in Kenora.

■ Valerie Dugale



Wage increases in Newfoundland and Labrador

In sharp contrast with the last round of provincial bargaining in Newfoundland and Labrador, which saw a 28-day, province-wide strike end with back to work legislation, CUPE members there are celebrating an historic new deal with dramatic wage increases.



Wayne Lucas and Donna Ryan are re-elected as President and Vice-President respectively at the CUPE NL convention.

Under a four-year deal between close to 6,000 CUPE members and the provincial government, employees will see almost 21.5 per cent wage increases and increases to standby premiums, a job evaluation plan to be implemented by 2010, improvements in clothing allowances for housing and school board employees, and an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all school board employees.

■ John McCracken

Trenching death in Nova Scotia



CUPE Nova Scotia hopes charges in the trenching death of one of its members sends a strong message to employers in both the public and private sectors.

The Town of New Glasgow was charged with five counts under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* in the October 2006 death of Michael Bonvie, who had just started working for the municipality and was a member of CUPE 281.

CUPE Health and Safety Representative Robert Wells says: "Sadly, a survey from our municipal locals showed that safe trenching practices in this province are, at best, hit and miss. The CUPE survey showed that only 33 per cent of our locals said their employer even had a trench cage or box that they could use. This is unacceptable."

CUPE Nova Scotia President Danny Cavanagh says: "With charges now being laid in the New Glasgow fatality, it is our hope that employers in both the public and private sectors start taking their responsibility to provide a safe workplace a lot more seriously. This is the least we owe the family of Michael Bonvie."

■ John McCracken



More than 60 CUPE members and allies gather for the first PEI human rights conference, including (l to r) Joey Jeffrey, Education and Liaison Officer for the PEI Association of Newcomers to Canada, Yolanda McClean, CUPE Diversity Vice-President, Leo Cheverie, member of the CUPE PEI Division Executive, and Marian White, Atlantic Outreach Officer for CUSO.

■ Danielle Savoie



Casino and hydro workers make gains in Quebec

Summer 2008 marked a major breakthrough for the 1,700 members of CUPE 3892, 3939, 3959 and 3993 who work at the casinos in Montreal and Lac-Leamy in Gatineau. After a long deadlock in negotiations on the issues of pensions and group insurance, new agreements have achieved significant gains. A separate private pension plan with defined benefits on a par with the existing Loto-Québec plan has been created, which could be charac-

terized as a turning point in the history of the labour relations with these employers. In addition, the employers' contributions to group insurance have increased while those of the employees have been reduced, giving the workers better coverage at a lower cost.

The four locals that together represent the 17,000 employees of Hydro-Québec – CUPE 957, 1500, 2000 and 4250 – have renewed their collective agreements for five years.

In other news from the same sector, on August 19, Hydro-Québec announced that it would proceed with repairs to the Gentilly-2 nuclear generating station. At the Quebec Federation of Labour convention, CUPE members and all other delegates were unanimous in their support for repairing Gentilly-2 in a context of safety and environmental protection.

■ Robert Bellerose

Ontario school board workers achieve coordinated bargaining



The members of the OSBCC (pictured here) led a sector-wide bargaining conference in Toronto, September 20 to 21.

The Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee (OSBCC) unites more than 45,000 school board workers under the CUPE banner. After years of hard work and lobbying, the group is about to seize a major opportunity in achieving a coordinated bargaining process.

The Ministry of Education facilitated a series of tripartite meetings with representatives from all Ontario school boards and CUPE. A first province-wide tentative agreement was negotiated last May. This tentative settlement has been recommended to all CUPE school board locals by the OSBCC and the leadership of the locals. The next step is local bargaining, which is intended to conclude by late fall 2008.

■ Luc Tittley



CUPE Manitoba welcomes 350 new members

CUPE will formally welcome 350 new members from the Northern Manitoba Regional Health Authority.

Earlier this year, health care support workers at the Nor-Man RHA had the opportunity to choose a new union. The workers, who belonged to the Service Employees International Union, voted in an overwhelming majority to join CUPE. They will now be members of CUPE 8600.

CUPE now represents almost 11,000 health care support workers in most of the regional health authorities in the province.

■ Dennis Lewycky



Mike Desautels facilitates a "Unionism and Turtle Island" workshop as part of the CUPE Manitoba Summer School, May 25-30, 2008.

Regina city workers douse closures



CUPE members know that hockey rinks and swimming pools are important to communities.

City workers are pouring cold water over a consultant's report commissioned by the City of Regina last year. The Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants' final report, released in July, recommended the closure of two pools and up to four community hockey rinks.

"Closing indoor hockey rinks and swimming pools, especially in low-income neighbourhoods, makes no sense," says Tim Anderson, President of CUPE 21, which represents about 1,100 city employees. Regina's eight city arenas have a utilization rate of

98 per cent in the after-school hours and attendance at the city's five outdoor pools has increased by 40 per cent in recent years.

A campaign by CUPE 21, cost-shared with CUPE National, is urging Regina's city councillors to reject the consultant's recommendations "for the sake of the kids." The local is mobilizing community opposition to the proposed closures through leaflets, billboards and radio ads.

■ Beth Smillie

Check out the local's campaign website: www.publicrinks4all.ca



Organizing always a challenge in Alberta ... but looking up in the N.W.T.

A group of 30 municipal employees in St. Albert, Alberta is learning that nothing comes without a fight in the Wild Rose province. The employees are on their second attempt to join CUPE. A majority of employees has signed union cards, but the result of that vote has been delayed by the employer while the Labour Board hears objections.

Twenty employees of an intensive residential treatment centre in Fort Smith, N.W.T. may soon gain the benefit of CUPE representation after Woods Homes of Calgary was contracted to manage their facility. Woods Homes employees are represented by CUPE 4731. CUPE has a large presence in Alberta workplaces, but doesn't have many members in the north. The employees will see improvements almost immediately in wages and working conditions upon joining Canada's largest union.

■ Lou Arab

Speaking up in B.C.



CUPE joined six of B.C.'s largest unions to launch a legal challenge against Bill 42, the *Election Amendment Act*. The bill, which was rammed through the house during the spring legislative session, originally attempted to restrict third party election advertising for five months before the next provincial election – a period eventually reduced to three months, thanks to broad-based public criticism. CUPE and the other unions see Bill 42 as a gag

and the public – ended on March 31 with Victoria's public library workers winning wage equity with municipal workers. Consensus on pay equity had been reached through a joint union/management comparison study, but the Greater Victoria Library Board (GVLB) refused to implement it fully.

In response, CUPE members launched a creative, energetic campaign. Building on the groundswell of public support, CUPE 410



Oak Bay high school student Ellen Hunter-Perkins (centre) and Greater Victoria Water Watch Coalition co-ordinator Kim Manton (CUPE 1978) join Maude Barlow for a reading on her cross-Canada tour about the importance of public ownership of water.

law, and are challenging the bill in the Supreme Court of Canada because several aspects of it violate freedom of expression guarantees under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

In the library sector, a six-week lockout of CUPE 410 members –

members organized town hall meetings to hold local politicians accountable. After 454 days without a contract, library workers succeeded in winning equal pay for work of equal value.

■ Daniel Gawthrop



End Privatization

By CUPE National

Privatization can be like dominos. Knock over one public service and they all start to fall. But solidarity works like that too. One victory can bring the whole sell-off to a halt.

That's the message in CUPE's video on the power of collective action against P3s and other privatization. The video was shown at division conventions this spring, and has been sent to all CUPE locals.

The two-minute DVD is a useful mobilizing tool for locals. Use it to start a discussion with members – and share it with friends and allies in your community.

■ Karin Jordan

Check it out: http://cupe.ca/privwatch-mayjune08/Privatization_domino

Bargaining, organizing, and fighting privatization like never before

When Stan Little spoke at our founding convention, he asked delegates to work hard on the three pillars of public sector trade unionism: negotiating, organizing and fighting privatization. While CUPE has made major strides on all fronts since then, the latter has taken on a whole new meaning since our 2007 convention, when delegates passed an historic resolution to invest \$5 million over two years to fight privatization.

Last spring, National Executive Board members met to plan the anti-privatization campaign, and recommended a decentralized approach for this initiative. CUPE's provincial divisions have taken the lead to plan and bring our campaign to the front lines. And local unions have been encouraged to mobilize and join with their provincial divisions to maximize the strength of our voice locally, provincially and nationally.

I am happy to report that we are on track to reach, if not surpass, the \$2.5 million campaign target by the end of this year, with plans already in the works for 2009. While \$750,000 is being spent nationally this year on

resources, polling and research to support this major campaign initiative, the bulk of our spending, over \$1.75 million, is being invested in our regions.

All over Canada, fighting privatization and protecting our members' jobs have attracted media attention and put governments and employers on notice: we're defending jobs and public services like never before.

These campaigns offer many other benefits, multiplying our strength in organizing, bargaining, and moving ever forward on the long march to equality.

Next October, when delegates gather for the 2009 convention, we will be in a position to report back on this exciting initiative and lay the groundwork for future efforts, building on our successes leading into the next decade.

In solidarity,

Claude Généreux
National Secretary-Treasurer



National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux joins PEI delegates in a quiz on privatization at their division convention in May.



Resources to FIGHT PRIVATIZATION

Plug into the many CUPE resources you and your local can use to fight P3s, contracting out and other forms of privatization:

- Start by visiting www.endprivatization.ca, the new webpage for CUPE's anti-privatization work. There you'll find the latest developments in defending public services and fighting privatization. New campaign tools and updates will be posted this fall, so bookmark this page and check back regularly. Your provincial division website is another great source of information.
- Find out more about what's planned in your region or community by contacting your provincial division. Connect with your local executive about fighting privatization. If your local doesn't already have an anti-privatization committee, consider starting one.
- Connect with specialist communications, research, education and legal staff at CUPE National regarding collective bargaining, member education, campaign planning and funding, research and much more.
- Be alert for the early warning signs of privatization in your workplace and community. (There's a tool to help you learn the signs – download it at <http://cupe.ca/privatization/signs>)
- Order materials free from CUPE National's online store, including copies of the P3 dominos video (see story on page 24), buttons and other campaign materials. Place your order at <http://cupe.ca/store>
- Subscribe to Privatization Watch, CUPE's monthly electronic newsletter about defending public services and stopping privatization. Sign up and read past issues at www.cupe.ca/privatizationwatch
- Visit www.cupe.ca/privatization/resources to download the latest tools, research and analysis about P3s, contracting out and other forms of privatization.
- Use cupe.ca's search engine to browse many other privatization-related news stories, research reports and campaign updates.

Together, we can **STOP THE SPREAD OF PRIVATIZATION** and strengthen public services.





Keep tabs on the privateers

Read **Privatization Watch**, CUPE's monthly update on defending public services from P3s, contracting out and other forms of privatization.

Sign up and see past issues at

cupe.ca/privatizationwatch

CUPE / Canadian Union
of Public Employees