



CUPE 2011

CUPE NATIONAL CONVENTION – VANCOUVER

Wednesday, November 2

Delegates support Occupy Vancouver



Several hundred delegates marched to the Art Gallery site of the Occupy Vancouver movement on Tuesday in support of the worldwide “ninety-nine per cent.” The march followed a rally, held in front of CUPE BC’s brand-new community events trailer, that featured speakers from CUPE and Occupy Vancouver.

CUPE, Chow share memories of “Union Jack”



Jack Layton was honoured on Tuesday morning with a convention tribute shared by the late NDP leader’s partner and NDP MP, Olivia Chow.

“I’m so grateful to have this opportunity to thank so many of you for your comfort, your strength and your commitment to Jack,” said Chow, who joined CUPE brothers and sisters for the celebration of Jack’s life and his legacy. “It was a great honour

for him to be called ‘Union Jack,’” said Chow.

CUPE “a hotbed of social activism” - Lewis

One of English Canada’s greatest orators, Stephen Lewis, had delegates on their feet yesterday with a rallying cry against what he called “criminal passivity” around the world.

Lewis accused the Harper government of trying to “change the landscape and values of Canadian society to the point where it will be unrecognizable” and urged delegates not to be self-conscious about the labour movement’s “central” role in the NDP. He offered a bouquet to the Global Justice Committee, for its important work on women’s issues, as well as to CUPE’s leading role in defending the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

“CUPE reaches out to the rest of the world like no other union I have ever seen,” he said.



Mapping a blueprint for the future

The Committee on Strategic Directions Policy presented the 2011-2013 Strategic Directions document on Tuesday. Brother Dan Crow (CUPE 4207) set the tone for debate with his comment: “Only when we have democratic control of the economy will we have an economy that works for people.”

The Committee began discussions on the first two sections of the document: The Assault on the Public Sector and the Working Class, and Strategic Priority 1a: Reaching CUPE Members. The Strategic Directions Plan will be referred back to the Committee for review following each day’s discussions, with a revised document to be presented to delegates on Friday.

National Literacy Award

Terry Bennett, a proud and active member of Local 569 at the City of St. John’s, is this year’s National Literacy Award winner.



Terry, a long-time literacy champion, helped develop his workplace literacy program and completed his General Education Development in 2005, helping him run for municipal office in 2009.

Making a better world

Supporting burgeoning global democratic movements led by young people and building alliances with non-unionized young workers must be a priority for young union members across Canada, said guest speakers at the youth forum on Monday night.

“Building bridges between unions and non-union young workers is key to making work for youth better and rebuilding unions,” said Stephen von Sychowski of B.C.’s Employees Action Rights Network (EARN), which advocates for increases to the minimum wage, better jobs and better labour policies.

Burmese pro-democracy activist Aung Naing Soe encouraged delegates to support a postcard campaign to free Burma’s 2,000 political prisoners.

Tackling HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a workplace issue, and unions play a vital role in creating safe, discrimination-free environments and equal access to treatment for workers and community members with HIV/AIDS. That was the message from the international panel of the Equality forum, held on Monday night.

Guest speakers Ken Clement, Junéia Batista, and David Onyalo addressed how the labour movement can fight HIV/AIDS in aboriginal communities in Canada, Brazil, and different parts of Africa.

Tonight

8:00 p.m. Global Justice Forum, Ballroom D