

*Season's*

*Greetings*

*To all*

*CLPE 116*

*Members*

On behalf of the Executive, I wish all our members the very best for a happy and peaceful Holiday Season. You will need to get lots of rest over the holidays, as we all are going to be very busy in 2008!

In October delegates from our Local attended the 23rd CUPE National Convention in Toronto. Over the week, while our members were at home continuing to work hard to deliver exceptional services at the University of British Columbia, your delegates participated in strategizing with other CUPE members from all over Canada to ensure public services remain public.

Securing our Future is the title of the CUPE 2007-2009 Strategic Directions policy document. The three major areas we debated were Fighting Privatization and P3s, Strengthening Bargaining Power while Achieving Equality, and Meeting Global Green Targets while Building Global Solidarity.

The centerpiece of our adopted policy document is a multi-million dollar commitment to fight privatization in all its forms, and wherever it arises across the country.

One of our many goals will be to achieve University coordinated bargaining right across Canada. We will also set targets to develop a plan of action for open, accessible, public and affordable Universities that will include:

- The elimination of student debt loads
- Accountable boards of governors
- Adequately government funded public Universities
- Transparent, public governance to protect the public assets
- Lifelong access to learning

In a show of solidarity and support, the delegates at the convention donated and pledged over \$163,000 for locked out and striking members, which included three of our Vancouver Locals (CUPE Locals 15, 1004, and 391) who were on strike for over 13 weeks. Our Local donated \$1,000.00, and for every dollar raised, CUPE National matched the dollars, for a total of over \$326,000.

Saskatchewan-born recording star and activist, Buffy Saint-Marie was our keynote speaker, and was one of the most inspirational speakers I have had the opportunity to listen to. Her thought provoking words,

***“When one has a billion,  
and a billion have  
none...something is wrong”***

connected deeply with many of the delegates in the convention hall.

In the New Year let us all work together to try and change that!

Yours in Solidarity,  
Colleen



**Delegates rally to fight poverty at CUPE National Convention**

Those of you who are members of the University Staff Pension Plan (SPP) will have recently received a newsletter from the SPP Board of Directors outlining some significant proposals for changes in the plan. As the newsletter states, the proposals are designed to improve the plan on a number of different levels, particularly concerning equity within the plan for its members. The changes are also intended to make the plan easier to understand, as well as to improve the benefits for members of the plan.

The CUPE 116 executive was presented with the proposals in September and given an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. We thoroughly examined what was presented and sought clarification and gave feedback where necessary. Ultimately, we believe that the proposed changes are positive and beneficial to CUPE 116 members of the plan (as well as most other members of the plan). Although the issues and changes are quite complicated, I will try to explain as best I can what the main changes are and why we believe they are positive:

1) The 'normal form' change

In essence, all this change means is that now all members will have the same normal form regardless of marital status. The normal form is the pension benefit that is calculated by the pension formula. Now any member's pension will have the same value, regardless of whether they are married or are single – i.e. the options for their pensions start from the same formula.

2) The contribution rate / benefit formula change

This is the most significant change and the one that will most impact what people contribute to the plan, but also what they gain from it. Currently, the plan is set up so that people who earn more can contribute a higher percentage of their income to the plan, and so enjoy a higher level of pension benefit.

This means that lower and middle income earners (our membership) do not get to maximize the full advantage of the plan and thus end up with a lower pension benefit.

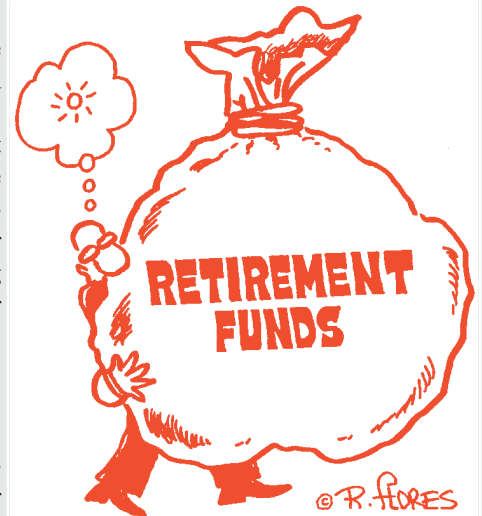
The proposed changes will result in a 'flat' contribution rate, meaning that the same percentage of income will be contributed to the plan regardless of rate of pay. Also, and most importantly, the pension benefit formula will also be evened out and the same percentage benefit will result regardless of rate of pay. Therefore, higher income earners (for example, those making more than \$90,000/year) will no longer enjoy the disproportionately higher pension benefit.

The SPP newsletter lays out the four potential contribution rates and corresponding benefit formulas. Here each member can provide input into which rate and formula they would prefer. While a higher contribution rate does mean more money set aside from our paycheques, it will result in a better pension when we come to retire. The generally understood concept 'that the pension is pretty good for what we put into it' comes into play. We have the opportunity here to put more into the plan, but to gain greatly at the end of the day when our pensions are calculated.

3) The minimum pension refund

This change impacts plan members who leave the University or retire and choose to take their pension benefit as a lump sum or cash payment. As stated, the change will result in the minimum pension benefit changing from 2 times the employee contributions to 1.5 times the employee contributions. It is important to note a couple of points here. First, this change only impacts the minimum benefit payout, and even then employees would still receive more than their original contribution amount. Second, for most plan members who choose to take the payout option, they would receive the 'commuted value' of their pension – which is the accrued amount or sum that their pension is worth.

In the majority of cases this amount is higher than the double refund (or the new 1.5 times refund) and so members would receive the commuted value amount anyway.



Hopefully this brief explanation clarifies the proposals and answers some questions. We hope that SPP members with questions have had an opportunity to attend one of the information sessions provided by the SPP office that were held at the end of November. If not, we encourage you to contact the SPP office with your questions. As well you can view the SPP website which has additional information and example scenarios. The local also plans on holding a special meeting sometime in the New Year with members of the SPP Board and office present to further explain the changes and to answer questions. You can also contact me at the Union Office (604 – 222 – 0116) and I will try to explain further as well.

I will close by saying that the local does believe that the changes discussed in the SPP newsletter are beneficial to our members in the plan and that we as plan members should seriously consider them as this is a rare opportunity to improve our pension plan.

In Solidarity,

Dave

How's your morale today...?

It is a healthy exercise to revisit accomplishments we have made over the past year, and in this case, safety issues. I find it helps to set my goals for the following year.

This past year my articles have touched on Working Alone, Wellness, and Young Workers. I hope for the most part you have found the information useful in some way, and hopefully it has either made a difference in the way that you look at certain situations, or just learned something you didn't know.

It can be a challenge to create articles that have an impact on the majority of our membership, seeing that we are represented in so many different fields. It has never been my intent to exclude anyone from things that I write.

This article may not seem like much of an article regarding safety, but I feel it does have an impact on all of us and our ability to work safe.

I would like to deal with the topic of morale; I have probably referred to this word a million times in my life and although I know what it means,

I had never looked it up in dictionary, so I did.

Mo'rale (noun) how somebody feels emotionally, the general level of confidence or optimism felt by a person or group of people, especially as it affects discipline and motivation.

After looking at the word in this light, I realize the huge impact it has on safety. Let's face it, when morale is really low it affects us in so many ways, and risk factors increase immensely. Even through Safestart we learned how "mind not on task" could be detrimental. And when motivation levels are low we just don't seem to be as conscious of our surroundings as is needed.

We all come to work and want to be treated with respect, we all want equal opportunity and to have a say in what we do, as well as to feel appreciated. We want to at the end of the day put our work behind us and have meaningful times with family and friends, without any concerns of arriving to work the following day wondering what it will bring us.

This I don't believe is happening or at least I can't believe it. I see it every day in our membership from every corner of the University.

The Union has filed 84 Grievances at Step 3 this year alone, that's 49 more than last year. We have lost 15 Days to suspensions and have had five members

terminated. We are trying to settle seven separate issues of contracting out, and have 24 cases with harassment attached to them. Our Stewards have sat through countless number of attendance meetings. Oh, but don't feel special if you were one of them, we have 362 members all in the same boat!

And if you were one of those members who sat there and had to answer as to why you were sick, or explain the car accident you had, or feel bad for hurting yourself at work, or even explain the funeral arrangements you had to make for a family member, it's nice to be reminded by your department of the strain this has all caused on your co-workers. Wow, does all this help morale?

Every department is feeling the budget crunch, but it all funnels down to our members, with our workloads and demands increasing. Our trades groups are watching work fly out the window and their duties becoming more demeaning, and on top of that, the new "people plan" is proudly advertising the number of students it employs. What it fails to tell you is that they are doing our work, and in many cases replacing our members.

If all of this does not have an effect on our morale and plays no part in our accident rate, then I guess this University really is a top 40 employer.

Yours in safety,

Barry Jones



## Success is in Support

Recently the Union received a thank-you letter from one of our members. Our member had just completed an intensive rehabilitation treatment program to overcome his addiction.

He had been suffering from this illness for quite some time. He explained in his letter that without the support of his Union, his co-workers, and senior management, he may have lost not only his job but maybe his life.

This gesture of thanks really hit home, and demonstrates that when we work together we can have a huge effect on helping someone to have the courage and strength to face their problems head on and be successful.

Yours in Solidarity,

Gregg Garbe  
Shop Steward

## Working women leading fight for childcare

Women and children have been abandoned by both the provincial and federal governments. Federally, the Harper government has systematically destroyed programs that would help lift many woman out of poverty, such as a federal minimum wage strategy, national childcare program and funding for women's advocacy.

The Federation and its affiliates have also continued the fight for universal, public childcare. When the Harper Conservatives cancelled the program created under a federal-provincial agreement negotiated by the Liberals, the Campbell Liberals simply walked away. This year's BC surplus, however, which exceeded \$4 billion, was enough to fund a childcare program without federal assistance. Needless to say, the Campbell Liberals have not taken this opportunity.

Similarly, the Harper government has chosen to spend the \$14 billion federal surplus on debt repayment instead of childcare or restoring cuts to Status of Women, and women's advocacy organizations.

During the year, the Federation worked with community organizations on Code Blue, the National Campaign for Childcare, in an effort to have a national childcare program restored, instead of Stephen Harper's \$100 childcare allowance.

We also supported a campaign undertaken by the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and the BCGEU, which saw work to mobilize both union and non-union childcare providers, parents and supporters to demand more public funding for quality, affordable childcare. The campaign came at a crucial time as the provincial government announced significant funding to childcare resource programs, cuts which were partly reinstated because of the strong challenges mounted by childcare advocates.

A national childcare program based on the key criteria - quality, universal, accessible, affordable and developmental - has no support from Harper. At the time of writing this Report, the **NDP Private Members' Bill**, the **Early Learning and Childcare Act**, was at the Committee stage and ready to be brought back to the fall session for final reading. This **Bill** has received support from the other Federal parties, but we must Continue our work to ensure that support does not waver.

Source: BC Federation of Labour



THE CRITIC



Colleen speaking on the motion at the BC Fed to increase the minimum wage.

# MAKE IT TEN!



## Minimum Wage -- Fast Facts

The B.C. Federation of Labour says it's time to increase the minimum wage to give BC's lowest paid workers a raise. The minimum wage in B.C. was last increased to \$8 was six years ago November 1, 2001. At the same time the provincial government rolled back the minimum for new workers through the \$6 training wage.

The Federation has received significant public support for our \$10 NOW Campaign. Close to 45,000 British Columbians have signed our petition at [bcfed.ca](http://bcfed.ca), and at special public petition events that have been held in many B.C. communities.

Some 30 municipal councils have formally endorsed efforts to win higher minimum wage, as has the Union of B.C. Municipalities which passed a high-profile resolution at its recent convention. In addition key community groups are behind the campaign. And 16 B.C. newspapers have editorially endorsed a raise for B.C.'s lowest paid workers.

To ensure that no worker in B.C. lives below the poverty line, we're calling for a three-step increase in the minimum wage:

1. an immediate increase to \$10 combined with the elimination of the \$6 training wage;
2. a subsequent increase to \$11 per hour one year later; and
3. an indexing formula, so that like our provincial politicians, those earning the minimum can be assured of an annual increase in pay.

About 115,000 British Columbians earn the \$8 minimum rate. Another 135,000 earn less than \$10 per hour. Across Canada, a significant majority, 63 percent, of minimum wage earners are women. Many more are new immigrants. Our polling shows that nearly 80 percent of British Columbians support an increase to \$10 NOW.

The B.C. Liberals have approved big pay increases for MLAs and Cabinet Ministers. But flush with a 54 per cent raise, Victoria continues to ignore the needs of our lowest paid workers.

It's expensive to live in our province—we have some of the highest prices anywhere for housing, food, transportation and tuition fees. In fact, when you take living costs into account, we actually have the second lowest minimum wage level in the country.

The \$10 figure will allow single full-time workers to just barely climb above the poverty line set by Statistics Canada. The \$11 rate will raise the income of a single earner family of two above the low-income cut off.

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1000-07rep-SH Minimum wage campaign fast facts.doc  
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## We've got the power, says Moist

CUPE National President Paul Moist opened the 23<sup>rd</sup> national convention in Toronto on Monday by declaring war on privatization and vowing to defend public services.

"Canada is built on strong public services," he said. "As Canada's biggest union, we pride ourselves on our collective delivery of quality public services in communities across our country."

Moist welcomed delegates from coast to coast and congratulated members' victories in strikes, bargaining, P3 fightbacks and contracting out campaigns. "Our battles for fairness at work and social justice in our communities are what make us CUPE," he said.

Moist also emphasized the importance of solidarity and unity as one strong national union, in our continuing fight against privatization – which is key to defending and building strong public services.

## Climate change threatens public health

NewsBulletin/UNA/CALM

The biggest public health issue facing Canada may not be the coming flu pandemic.

It's possible that poverty or housing, the two giant "determinants of health" are becoming secondary concerns. In the 21st century, many Canadian experts say the environment and climate change will have the biggest impact on the health and well-being of Canadians.

Back in 2002, Health Canada gathered a group of population health experts for a workshop.

The report on that meeting contained a fairly strident note of concern: "Long-term direct health impacts of climate change include premature death and disabling illness due to increased temperature, extreme weather events, water and food borne enteric diseases, and cancer risks from ozone depletion."

The experts also noted that "Climate change will place greater demands on the social infrastructure (including emergency services and social support systems) supporting public health and well-being."

The panel concluded: "Because of the significant health risks that are likely to occur in the absence of global action on climate change, the uncertainties surrounding the magnitude of such risks, and the long-term ecological consequences of failing to take action, a precautionary approach to climate change risk management policy development is needed,

as required by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change."

The precautionary approach is important because even the climate scientists from the International Panel on Climate Change don't know for sure what is going to happen.

Canadian journalist Gwynne Dyer summed things up in a recent column. "The IPCC says that global temperature rises of between two degrees and 4.5 degrees are almost inevitable in the course of this century—but much higher increases of six degrees or more cannot be ruled out."

We are in the neighbourhood of one degree warmer already and the upward swing is gaining momentum.

Dwyer points out that it is not just a matter of extreme weather, hot summers or even flooded coastlines. "If the global average temperature rises by 4.5 degrees, shifting rainfall patterns will bring perpetual drought to most of the world's major breadbaskets (the north India plain, the Chinese river valleys, the U.S. Midwest, the Nile watershed), and reduce global food production by 25–50 per cent. If it goes to six degrees we lose most of our food production worldwide. Any major reduction in food production means mass migrations, war and mass death. It is getting very serious."

British commentator George Monbiot says in his book, *Heat: How To Stop the Planet From Burning*, that two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels is the temperature level beyond which major eco-systems begin to collapse to prevent this from happening, rich nations must cut their greenhouse gasses by 90 per cent or more by the year 2030.

Monbiot warns that an upper limit of even two degrees Celsius may be too high. At 1.5 degrees or less, millions of people will be deprived of water and food and the complete melting of Greenland's ice will begin. We are at close to one Celsius degree today, and we need only to look out our windows or pick up a newspaper to see that severe climatic effects are already occurring. Environment Canada says "Climate change could have a profound impact on the Canadian way of life." Changes in temperature and precipitation may help the survival of insect (vector) borne diseases, causing increases or invasions into Canada of diseases such as Lyme disease and malaria.

In the western mountain regions of B.C. and Alberta, there could be less late-season runoff because of an accelerated retreat of glaciers. This will threaten water supplies in small communities and have an effect on the cattle industry.

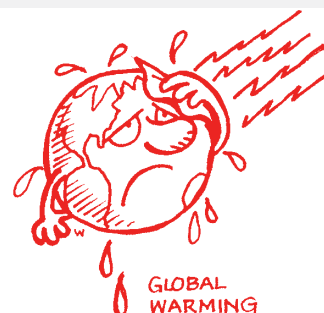
In the north, loss of permafrost may cause massive terrain slumping, drainage of small lakes and increased sediment loads in rivers, threatening northern wetlands and such deltas as the Mackenzie and Peace-Athabasca.

Water levels in the Great Lakes are forecast to drop by more than one metre. In shallow lakes such as Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie, the existing shoreline would move up to six kilometres offshore from where it sits today.

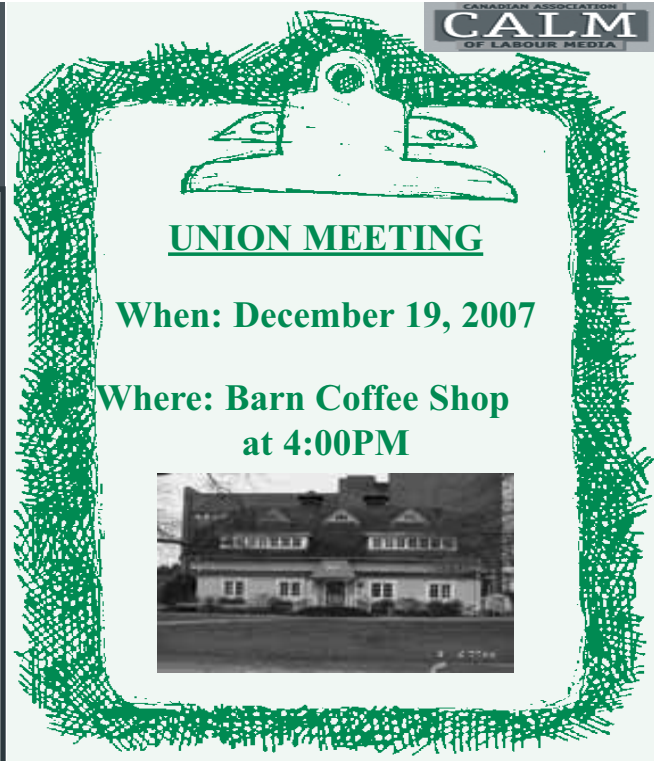
Health Canada says climate change has become a global policy issue widespread environmental and human health impacts.

The widespread consensus is that climate change, and specifically changes to temperature and precipitation levels, has the potential to significantly affect human health, as well as economies, and physical and social environments in every region of the world including Canada.

The scientific evidence is overwhelming: climate change presents very serious global risks, and demands an urgent global response. Sectors at all levels are being challenged to find collective solutions to safeguard the planet ecosystem and the health of its inhabitants, while maintaining a reasonable quality of life for communities and individuals.



**Canadian Union of Public Employees**  
**Local 116**  
**"On the front line"**



**UNION MEETING**

**When: December 19, 2007**

**Where: Barn Coffee Shop  
at 4:00PM**



**Suite 209 - 2150 Western Parkway (In the Village)**  
**Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3**

**Phone: 604-222-0116**  
**Fax: 604-222-0113**  
**Fax: 604-222-0119**  
**Email: [cupe116@cupe116.com](mailto:cupe116@cupe116.com)**  
**Website: <http://www.116.cupe.ca>**  
**Facebook: CUPE Local 116 (UBC)**



**UNION ORIENTATION**

Will be held the 3rd Wednesday of every month at the Union Office from 10:00-11:00am. Please contact the Union office to make an appointment.

**Bulletin Board**

**Return to Work Process**

Please be advised if you are going through the Return to Work process and requiring any form of accommodation you are entitled to a Shop Steward to assist you through all meetings in respect to your return to work.

If you are currently in the process and do not have a Shop Steward working on your behalf please call the Union Office.

**Basics for Babies**

Our local is once again participating in Basics for Babies. Throughout the month of December we will be collecting much needed cash or supplies for the less fortunate.

We are looking to fill our boxes up!



Please bring any diapers, formula, pabulum, toys, or any other baby necessities and drop them off at either our office or at the upcoming General membership meeting.

In addition, at the meeting there will be a 50/50 draw to raise funds for the United Way.

**Turkey Draw**

As a reminder to all our members at this months meeting we will be holding our annual turkey draw.

The more turkeys that show up the more turkeys will be drawn.  
(Gift Certificate)  
Good luck! See you there!

**Don't you look great!**

We now have a logo for our local and we have purchased a few items to show it off!



We will be displaying our clothes at the general membership meetings, so if you are interested in purchasing items you can come to the office and put an order in.

All items are reasonably priced.  
Ranging from \$18-\$36

We have a catalogue to view or you can go to the Cavan website at [www.cavanadv.com](http://www.cavanadv.com) and see what is available.

**DISCLAIMER:** The opinions expressed or the articles published in the Union Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or Executives. If you have any questions, comments, or letters, please contact the editor Roger De Pieri at the Union Office 604-222-0116 or Fax at 604-222-0113 or E-mail at [newsletters@cupe116.com](mailto:newsletters@cupe116.com)



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