

# CUPE Chronicle



The Free GoKart day was a big success....thanks for your support.

## The Editor's Soap Box

Here we are into another school year. Fall is humming along and winter is just around the corner. As I write this it is Halloween evening and the kids are knocking on the door with their colorful costumes and their loud "trick or treat". I am reminded why we all do what we do.

The purpose of the union is to improve our workplace, our communities and our neighbourhoods. We work towards that every day. But we don't do it just for ourselves. We do it because we know that the changes we are

able to make today are changes that are going to make the lives of our children better tomorrow.

The sacrifices we make today are not the same as the ones our grandparents made for us. In the early days union organizers were ostracized, fired, run out of town, maybe even met with "accidents". The sacrifices that they made for future generations are the reason that we no longer have to fear for our jobs and for our lives when we stand up for what is right.

We are blessed to be able to work, live, and make our life in a country where we have freedom of speech, freedom from prosecution, freedom from oppression. But that doesn't mean that we should sit back on our laurels and watch the world go by. There are new challenges in front of us and I encourage you to stay informed, stay active, and support each other in the fight.

In Solidarity,  
 Sylvia Lindgren

## Upcoming Events

November 15 - local bargaining date

November 23 - OMDC meeting - 10:00 am at the Kelowna office

November 30 - General Meeting (open to all members) - 1:30pm 425 Jermyn Ave. Penticton



## KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

There have been some concerns in our union regarding regular employees who are laid off and can only find temporary employment the following year. What does this mean to a member who had benefits? Well Article 9 (c) (iii) 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph states:

**“On expiration of the two-month period under Article 11(g), a regular employee on layoff may opt at the time of initial layoff to continue on the regular benefit plans provided the plan permits. In such case the employee shall be responsible for payment in advance of both shares of the premium costs for two (2) months at a time which can be done by postdated cheque(s).**

What does this mean to you as a member who has lost the regular position and is now working in a temporary position? It means you can continue with your benefit by paying both yours and the employers share. This will allow you to continue your benefits until you can get a regular position.

It is not the employer’s responsibility to inform you what is written in the Collective Agreement, so if any issues come up that you are not sure of contact any member of your local or unit executive, look in the collective agreement; it is posted on our website [www.523.cupe.ca](http://www.523.cupe.ca) .

Yours in Solidarity  
James L. Fox  
1<sup>st</sup>. Vice-President  
CUPE 523



CUPE donated cheques totaling \$4000 to various organizations in the Salmon Arm area. Pictured (from left) are Second Harvest (Loretta Young), Sorrento Food Bank (Jim Chisholm), Trail Alliance (Joan Mitchell and Winston Pain), CUPE (Heather Reid), Shuswap Women’s Shelter (Sara Inskip), Eagle Valley Resources for the food bank (Pam Beech), Armstrong Food Bank c/o Okanagan Boys and Girls Club (Kirsty Hopkins). Missing from the picture is Enderby Food Bank (Diane Nadeau)

## President's report

On Oct 19, 2013, I was once again elected to be your president of Local 523. Thank you for the vote of confidence. It's an honour to be able to use what I've learnt in the last two years and go forward representing the members of our Local.

The very same day of the election, a group of us left for Quebec City to represent the Local at the National Convention. It was a memorable time there, met old friends, made new ones and got to be a part of a wonderful association of activists; CUPE National is the largest union in Canada with a membership of over 600,000. Convention was quite a lesson in solidarity; solidarity when we voted on resolutions that pertained to all of us, no matter what local or what department we are from. Solidarity when we voted to support locals across this country who are either on strike or are locked out. It was strengthening to show support to the locked-out workers at the North Shore

Winter Club in North Vancouver. Workers who are being locked out by management. Sadly we were told how some people seem to think that it is more important that their child not miss their swimming lessons rather than that the facility is kept running in a safe and efficient way by members of our union, CUPE.

It was an experience to have our resolution on strike pay make it into the resolution book. Kudos to our resolution committee that did such a good job that our resolution stood on its own and wasn't amalgamated with other resolutions. The strike pay resolution that did make it to the floor was passed unanimously "that strike pay will be increased to \$300 per week.". Good news and hopefully we'll never have to use it.

Here's a quick update on bargaining: I'm sure that all of you are aware that there was a tentative provincial agreement

reached. Now we're going into Local bargaining again, on Nov 15. When we've reached agreement at the bargaining table, that agreement and the provincial one will be brought to the members for a vote. I'm optimistic that you'll soon be hearing from us.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to be your president for another term. I'd like to repeat the challenge that I gave to all those at the last meeting "Please come out to the next meeting, Nov 30, in Penticton. And the challenge is to bring two more members with you". Remember that if you drive and bring at least two more members to the meeting with you, your mileage will be paid.

In Solidarity  
Jean Frolek  
President Local 523  
CUPE

## Retirement Seminars

Did you know that the education committee recommends that you attend a retirement workshop 10 years before you are ready to retire?

It is important that if you are to reach your financial goals in time for retirement that you consult the experts. They will help you figure out what your needs will be, where your priorities might lie, and how to make your money work for you.

Maybe you are wondering about pension, benefits, or investments. How much money will you need? How do you ensure that you are not paying more taxes than necessary?

Call your education rep and get on the wait list for a retirement seminar. The list is long so sign up now.

What are you waiting for?

Have you had a life change lately? Got married? Spouse passed away? Separated or divorced? Make sure you revisit your beneficiary form on a regular basis to make sure it still says what you want it to say. This is a legal document and it needs to reflect your wishes. Contact the CUPE 523 office to review this document with the staff there.

## Correspondence and Community

Over the summer and September a number of thank you cards were given to the union in response to events that were recognized for our members. The cards are as follows:

Thank you card from Linda Wiltse for a gift  
Thank you card from Jared Reigh – bursary award  
Thank you card from Jacque Kay - retirement  
Thank you note from Gwen Shaw – retirement  
Thank you card from Tanya Marsel – bursary award

If you are aware of an event in the life of one of our members please speak to your shop steward or one of the executive members so that it can be formally recognized. These events can include graduations, births, deaths, marriages, retirement, etc. Recognizing our members in this way can increase the feeling of community and we can all use a little more love and acceptance in today's busy world.

## Local Trained and Ready!

Although we averted a strike in the K-12 Sector Local 523 was ready for action. From behind the scenes members stepped up to volunteer as picket captains, site supervisors and various other roles to make sure we were prepared and ready to spend time on the line. The executive of your local would like to thank those people for coming forward and organizing their units.



CUPE members and their families enjoyed a wonderful time together at the free Go Kart day. CUPE used some of their Employment Insurance Rebate to pay for everyone to come and access the GoKarts at no charge.

Keep your eyes open for more free events brought to you by CUPE donations. There are two free family movie nights at the Classic scheduled for the near future.



## The Pension Plan

The Municipal Pension Plan (MPP) Annual General meeting (AGM) and Employer/Union forum was recently held in Victoria. As K12 and social services workers, eligible Local 523 members are part of the MPP. This is your pension plan.

It was announced that employer and member pension contributions will go up 1.4% of salary effective July 1, 2014.

The reason is that there is an unfunded liability in the plan. That means there is not enough money coming in to ensure your pension will be there when you retire. But rest easy; this slight increase means your pension is safe and will be there whether you retire in 5, 10 or 25 years. That's important to you because this is your pension.

There are those out there who don't want you to have your pension. The Fraser Institute, the Canadian taxpayers association and others. You've heard them on the news. They refer to your pension as "gold plated". Really?

Its not. It's a pension and that's a good thing so you can live with dignity in your older age. But it's not gold plated. The average annual pension payout is around \$24,000. Nobody's getting rich when they retire. (Except for corporate CEOs but that a whole different issue)

And it's not a freebie. You pay for it along with your employer. You are deferring your wages so you can collect them when you cease working and retire.

What is frustrating about the attack on your pension plan is that 1 in 17 people in BC pays into, or receives a pension from the MPP. That's a lot of people. The economic benefit to BC is over \$2B annually.

That's a lot of BC citizens and a lot of economic benefit for the Province. We need to defend your pension plan for your sake and for the sake of our whole Province. We all need to speak up and tell them to leave your pension alone!

Rob Hewitt

# Looking for Email addresses

## **Future Newsletters will be emailed.**

Please send your email address to [cupe523@telus.net](mailto:cupe523@telus.net) and indicate in the subject line "CUPE 523 Email".

How well do you know your website? Here is a challenge for you. The answers to the following questions can be found on the CUPE 523 website. Submit your correct answers to Jose (email address also found on the CUPE 523 website).

1. What year was CUPE formed?

- a) 1959   b) 1963   c) 1971   d) 1980

2. How many units are there in CUPE 523 and who are they?

- a) SD 83, SD 45, NOYFS, John Smith Society, SD 67  
b) SD 83, SD 53, SD 67, John Howard Society, NOYFS  
c) SD 67, SD 83, SD22, John Howard Inc., NOYFS  
d) SD 83, SD 67, SD 53, John Howard Society, MCFD

3. Section 4 (a) of the Bylaws state that general meetings shall be held how many times per year?

- a) 4  
b) 5  
c) 6  
d) 8

4. When was the local restructured resulting in a new set of Bylaws?

- a) November 2013  
b) September 2011  
c) July 2011  
d) November 2011

## CUPE 523 executive:

President Jean Frolek  
1st VP: James Fox  
2nd VP: Karsten Bellows  
3rd VP: Deb Johnson  
Recording secretary: Erica McDowell  
Secretary- Treasurer: Jose van Berkel

## Unit chairs:

John Howard Society :  
Larry DuPont  
NOYFSS   Craig Pohorelic  
SD 53   Sean Harris  
SD 67   Allison Reigh  
SD 83   Sylvia Lindgren

National Rep: Rob Hewitt

Our office:  
288 Westminster Ave.  
Penticton, BC  
Our phone number:  
250-492-2982  
Our website:  
<http://cupe523.ca>

National Rep Office  
Rob Hewitt  
Suite 303 - 1912  
Enterprise Way  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 9S9