

CUPE 523 Chronicle



National Convention

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National Convention, held in November 2015, was a hotbed of activity and debate. Much of the excitement centered around the elections. Paul Moist retired as National President and there was a lively campaign between Mark Hancock, president of CUPE BC, and Fred Hahn, president of CUPE Ontario. 2500 members from across the country participated enthusiastically to eventually elect Mark

Hancock as the new National President.

There were also a number of very interesting speakers including Mohamad Fahmy, a journalist for Al Jazeera, who was recently released from prison in Egypt, Tom Mulcair, who spoke eloquently about the direction of our country and Justice Murray Sinclair, who brought us the emotional stories of the First Nations people who spoke out at the

Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There was a presentation and rally to promote the Leap Manifesto, which is a movement to encourage the giant leap we must make to transition from a fossil fuel based economy to a pollution free economy. More information can be found at leapmanifesto.org. Check it out.

Upcoming Events

- February 13 - Winter Social Unit 67 - Penticton
 - February 20 - General Meeting - 341 Shuswap ST. SW, Salmon Arm
 - April 16 - General Meeting - Kelowna Area Office - #301-1912 Enterprise Way
 - May 14 - IMC 425 Jermyn Avenue, Penticton
 - June 11 - The DESC - 341 Shuswap ST, Salmon Arm
- All meetings begin at 10:00 am



KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

Leaves of Absence

Article 23 in the **K-12 contract** covers when you are eligible for a leave of absence. 23(c) guarantees 5 paid days of leave for a death in the family. 23(f) allows for up to 12 days of paid leave due to critical illness of a family member. Union leaves, jury duty and pregnancy leaves are also outlined. Family responsibility leave is in accordance with the Employment Standards Act which states:

An employee is entitled to up to 5 days of unpaid leave during each employment year to meet responsibilities related to

- (a) the care, health or education of a child in the employee's care, or*
- (b) the care or health of any other member of the employee's immediate family.*

Leaves other than those described in the collective agreement are at the discretion of the employer. General leaves are granted sparingly for extraordinary circumstances which do not include vacations.

If in doubt when applying for a leave, contact one of your shop stewards or unit chair for advice.

In the **social services contract**, article 20 is where you will find information about leaves of absence. Article 20.1 allows for up to 3 days paid leave and two paid travel days in the event of a death in the family. Article 20.2 allows for varying leaves for marriages, emergencies, births, adoptions, moving and court appearances. Family responsibility leave is the right of the employee as per the Employment Standards Act (as above in the K-12 contract).

The social services contract also makes note of benefits while on leaves. Article 20.7 states that benefits will be paid by the employer for up to 20 days of leave. After 20 days in a given year, an employee may be required to pay for benefits in order to maintain them.

Read your contract carefully to be sure you know your rights. If you have questions regarding leaves of absence or other articles in your contract, contact your shop steward or your unit chair.

All Contracts can be found on our website: <http://523.cupe.ca/collective-agreements>

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. If you need to update your information, please download the form from our website: <http://523.cupe.ca/forms>. Then mail it to our CUPE Local 523, c/o José van Berkel #2 - 624 Young Street Penticton, BC V2A 5T2

President's Report

Ours is a busy local brimming with news. I'll give you the good news first.

Both the social services and the school districts are in a time of labour peace, since both are in five year contracts until 2019. Grievances are down in all our units and new administrative staff that has come on board in the last 6 months seems to be having a positive effect on the relationship between staff and admin. The social services sector is still very good at working together as a team to resolve issues and have developed relationships that foster cooperation. North Okanagan Youth and Family Social Services in Vernon has just completed an intense 3 year accreditation and have also been awarded a new contract for a specialized residential youth program. John Howard Society has also opened a new program for men in a converted motel in Vernon. Both of these

programs entailed hiring new staff, so our membership has grown.

The bad news is, we still have a government bent on reducing funding in both of our sectors. School Boards in all of our districts are facing shortfalls as funding protection ends. The LNG "Magical Cure for the Economy" hasn't quite panned out in the proportions predicted by the premier and we are seeing that all the eggs being in one basket isn't the best financial plan. Public monies are being diverted to private schools, public schools are seeing the lowest funding in the country, teachers are still battling to be able to negotiate classroom composition, and morale seems to be an all time low.

But, take heart. I want to take this opportunity to remind you that you have the power to effect change. Stay involved in



your union, attend school board and council meetings, read the paper, and most of all, VOTE. We are one year out from a provincial election and CUPE members are plentiful and powerful. Take the time now to get informed and in May 2017, get out and vote.

In Solidarity,
Sylvia Lindgren
President
CUPE Local 523



A petition has been circulated in Osoyoos to protest the possible closure of a school in their community. Similar petitions are being circulated in Armstrong to protest the closure of Armstrong Elementary School. School closures are affecting small communities across the province as public school funding continues to decline in BC.

Unit 83

Unit 83 members, Kim Bojey, Alvian Gooch, and Sylvia Lindgren deliver food that was donated at the free movie day to Second Harvest.



Sylvia Lindgren, President of CUPE 523, delivers a cheque to the Refugee Coalition to support refugees coming from Syria.



Unit 83 gives enthusiastically of their EI Rebate money to various worthwhile organizations in the Shuswap and North Okanagan. In addition to the regular donations to food banks in 5 communities and to the women's shelter, which totaled \$5000 this year, they also voted to support the Coalition bringing refugee families from Syria to the region. An additional \$5000 was donated to this very worthwhile cause. Members are particularly proud of the message of welcome this sends both to the community and to the refugees who will soon arrive.

Several years ago, the Free Movie/Free Swim committee started with a two-fold purpose-- to show unions in a more favourable light and to give back to the community in a different way than just writing a cheque (which CUPE 523 does regularly in all the units). We pay the cost of the theater and the pool and invite community members. The community then brings donations for the food bank, thereby extending the reach of these events.



Always an exciting time when Santa comes to visit.



Four year old Skye and six year old Autumn give their donations to Kim Bojey, Free Movie/Free Swim coordinator, at the recent Free Movie/Free by CUPE 523 Unit 83 at the Salmon Arm Recreation Centre.

North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society

Congratulations are in order! NOYFSS has received another 3-year CARF. They had a lot of positive feedback from the CARF

accreditation through Surveyors, our Stakeholders, our staff and the people they serve.

The Survey Report can be read at: <http://www.noyfss.org/index.php/publications-reports/> NOYFSS Unit Chair, Craig Pohorelic, humbly reported to the CUPE 523 executive that they received the highest recommendations ever given on this review.



new provincial contract to provide services to children with complex behaviour issues. This program will be a four bed residential home with full-time staff. This is one of only two programs in the province. Congratulations to the excellent staff at NOYFSS. This is quite an achievement.

NOYSS has also worked to secure a

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?

Get your names on the wait list now.

John Howard Society

Blair Apartments is located at 3000 28th Avenue, Vernon BC. It is a five minute walk to most of the social services in Vernon. The thirty nine bachelor units are available to woman and men who are in need of affordable housing who can live independently and understand the importance of being good tenants and neighbours. Residents are able to access all services and programs delivered through the Society. Referrals and assistance to community resources and programs is provided.

Tenants will include singles and couples who are referred to the apartment manager through various local community agencies. To be eligible, tenants must be low-income, in need of affordable housing, and able to live independently.



Occupational Health and Safety

Every employer must ensure everyone understands their responsibilities in connection with bullying and harassment. This includes providing specific training with regard to the employer's policy and procedures. Workers and supervisors should be trained on the following:

- How to recognize bullying and harassment
- How workers who experience or witness bullying and harassment should respond
- Who workers can go to for help and what help will be provided
- Who the contacts are for reporting incidents
- Who is responsible for following up on complaints and incidents

Workers who investigate incidents and complaints should receive specific training and instruction that is appropriate for the sensitive and challenging task of responding to bullying and harassment complaints.

If you haven't received training please make your shop steward or unit chair aware.

Unit 53

Unit 53 held a winter social on December 5 at the Campo Marina in Osoyoos. The decorating (as seen in the photos) was really amazing and a great time was had by all who attended. Many thanks to the organizing committee for putting on this great event. CUPE 523 would like to recognize the following retirees who were also honoured at the social: Lori Petreny, Dick Fulbrook, Geza Laposa, Larry Luhowy, Kirk Northrup.



Sean Harris, 1st VP of Local 523, and Charlene Turnbull, shop steward, pose for a photo at the winter social.

Harrison Winter School

The Canadian Labour Congress Harrison Winter School is the largest union education school in Canada. It takes place in January and February in Harrison Hot Springs. I was very thankful to have gone this February. My experience has let me gain more education and I also made great connections with other union activist. Having more knowledge to bring back to work with my union members is the greatest feeling!

Thanks for this opportunity,
Charlene Turnbull
Shop steward
CUPE 523 (unit 53)



Unit 67

President, Sylvia Lindgren, swears in the new unit chair, Dean Brotto, and shop stewards in Unit 67.



Progressive changes for Educations Assistants

There are big changes is the wind for School District 67. Starting in September, 2016, this next school year, all Education Assistants will become district based. This means that they will no longer be tied to school sites, but rather will be assigned to the district. This will mean that they are somewhat protected from layoffs due to the fact that the employer will have the ability to move Education Assistants to other schools when the need arises. Instead of being laid off and having to bid on new postings, the employer will be able to move people from schools where there is a surplus to schools where there is a need.

At the end of the present school year all education assistants will be laid off and on May 24, 2016 a Post and Fill meeting will be held. All positions will be available and will be awarded in order of seniority. Once this is complete, new positions will be posted in the same manner they are now and Education Assistants will still have the ability to bid on these positions as they become available.

A positive change that has come out of this new plan is that all education assistants will now be working bell to bell. Increased hours will be a welcome change to this department. This moves School District 67 to the forefront of the wave to improve work hours for education assistants.

Discussion of this change is on the agenda for our April 9 unit meeting. On April 27, 2016 there will be a another meeting for SD 67 to go over the process and answer questions. Dave Burgoyne and your union representatives will be available throughout.



The new president of CUPE National, Mark Hancock, poses with Paul Faoro, interim president of CUPE BC, and CUPE 523 Executive members Jose Vanberkel and Karsten Bellows.

CUPE 523 executive:

President Sylvia Lindgren
1st VP: Sean Harris
2nd VP: Deb Johnson
3rd VP: Karsten Bellows
Rec.sec: Erica McDowell
Sec Treas.: Jose vanberkel

Unit chairs:

JHS : vacant
NOYFSS Craeg Pohorelic
SD 53 Ray Haddow
SD 67 Dean Botto
SD 83 Cory Thomas

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

Bursary Information:



Who is eligible?

Students graduating in 2016 whose parent or guardian is a CUPE 523 member is good standing.

What is being awarded?

\$400.00 bursary (to a maximum of \$12,000 – first come first serve basis)

How do I apply?

Complete the application form found on our website: <http://523.cupe.ca/forms> (applications must be received by June 1, 2016)

Send to: CUPE 523
c/o José van Berkel
#2 - 624 Young Street
Penticton, BC V2A 5T2

Any Questions? – email: cupe523@telus.net or call 250-490-7787

