

# CUPE 523 Chronicle

## **CUPE·SCFP** / Canadian Union of Public Employees Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique

A strong and democratic union, CUPE is committed to improving the quality of life for workers in Canada. Women and men working together to form local unions built CUPE. They did so to have a stronger voice – a collective voice – in their workplace and in society as a whole.

Together they have won the right to negotiate their wages and working conditions; to stop arbitrary action by employers; and to speak out without fear of reprisal.

CUPE members are service-providers, white-collar workers, technicians, labourers, skilled trades people and professionals. More than half of CUPE members are women. About one-third are part-time workers.



CUPE Local 523 members and our National Rep. at the CUPE National Convention in Quebec.

February 2014

### Inside this issue:

Presidents Report	2
Letter from Naramata Centre	3
Women in Leadership	4
Union Education	5
Bargaining Updates	6
Bargaining Updates	7
Contacts & Events	8



### Uniting for fairness: strengthening our union and our movement

These are difficult times for union members in Canada. Over the past several decades, labour leaders and activists in our country have quite rightly pointed to wave after wave of anti-union sentiment and laws in the United States, as things like so-called “right to work” states emerged and

resulted in a serious decline in union density. But we’re now having to look closer to home—in Ottawa and in Victoria—to guard against right-wing governments bent on making it harder for working people to join together in unions.

CUPE National has created a program that you’re all going to hear a lot more about in the coming weeks, months and years: Unite for Fairness. That program, which CUPE BC strongly supports, is intended to strengthen our union, re-connect with members and demonstrate to those who oppose us that we’re not going anywhere.

Mark Hancock  
President of CUPE BC  
See more at: [www.cupe.bc.ca/news/commentary/3255](http://www.cupe.bc.ca/news/commentary/3255)

[www.523.cupe.ca](http://www.523.cupe.ca)



## Presidents Report

I hope that you had a wonderful holiday and were able to make good memories. I'd like to wish you all the best in this New Year.

Please continue to give us ideas of what you would like to see from your union. I'd like to assure you that if you get involved in any way in your union, you're getting to be with some pretty fantastic people. Please take the time to see what you can do to contribute! I saw a post on Facebook from Unions 4 Workers that said: "Being a Union member is like being on a team. Everyone must participate for the TEAM to succeed." We're all a part of a team called CUPE! I'm asking all of you to help each other out. Let your Unit good and welfare person know about each other's good and not-so-good happenings. Let each other know when a Local meeting is happening; be willing to car-pool to meetings. There are many, many ways in which you can help to strengthen this wonderful organization.

I'm going to be calling members randomly with a phone survey. If you have any concerns in regards the union, please either call me or send me an email. I'd like to hear from you and chat and share concerns.

In Solidarity,

**Jean Frolek**

**President, CUPE Local 523**



*CUPE Local 523 members, January, 2013*

## the Centre at Naramata is considering contracting out

NARAMATA - CUPE Employees at the Naramata Centre are facing layoffs as the Centre considers contracting out their work.

Naramata Centre, which is owned by the United Church of Canada and operated by the Naramata Centre Society, issued layoff notices to food services, grounds maintenance and housekeeping staff and informed CUPE Local 608 of the Centre's intent to contract out these services last December.

"CUPE BC opposes the direction Naramata Centre is taking," says CUPE BC president Mark Hancock. "CUPE has been using Naramata Centre for more than 40 years and we are very disturbed that after all these years

they now want to contract out these services. CUPE BC is committed to supporting CUPE Local 608 in their campaign to stop the contracting out at the Centre."

Naramata Centre employees have been CUPE 608 members for 20 years; however several employees have worked at the Centre even longer.

"CUPE employees at Naramata Centre consider themselves to be loyal partners of the Centre," says CUPE 608 president Brianne Hillson. "The Centre says they have decided to contract out our members work to save money. However, laying off employees who make between \$15,000 and

\$30,000 per year will not solve the pressing issues at Naramata."

Hillson says that CUPE 608 is committed to the continued success of Naramata Centre and that they are hopeful that the employer will engage in meaningful discussion with the union and consider all alternatives to contracting out.

*How can you support CUPE 608 members?*

Visit the CUPE Cares at Naramata Centre campaign website:  
[www.cupe.bc.ca/news](http://www.cupe.bc.ca/news)



## Letter of Response

**From Jim Simpson of the Naramata Centre  
Attention to Deborah Johnson, 3rd VP, CUPE Local 523**

Thank you for your email expressing your concern.

I wanted to clarify a few points to help explain the situation that we find ourselves in and the steps we are taking to move forward. The Centre has been in a negative financial situation for a long time which worsened in the last few years and would have meant closure by the end of 2013 had we not received some interim financial support. This support is contingent on developing a model where we can be a financially sustainable operation which in part may come from finding a different way to deliver some of our services.

As you may know the Centre has historically run on a seasonal basis and the numbers you referred to in your email are the total employee range during the summer which is our peak season. In fact, it is only three of our areas that we are considering contracting out as most of our areas will continued to be done by our employees and we will remain a union organization with bargaining unit employees in our guest services, facilities, donor administration and finance areas. While still important to manage with respect for those involved, the people who may no longer be employed by the Centre would likely be more in the area of 15 with many of them being seasonal employees working on a part time basis.

We are committed to finding a way for the Centre to continue to be an important part of this community offering a place for learning and education. We can only achieve this if we are able to be financially viable. Our work at this point is to determine what the impact would be from both a financial and operational basis and we are in an open and continuing dialogue with our employees and union representatives as we look to find a way for the Centre to be financially viable so we continue to operate for many years to come.

We appreciate and share your concerns. Thank you once again for bringing them to our attention.

Thanks & Regards,

Jim Simpson  
Naramata Centre  
250.496.5751 ext 218

### **CUPE523 Supports Naramata Employees**

Leave a comment and tell Naramata Centre managers and board members why employees are a vital part of the Naramata experience.

[www.cupecaresatnaramatacentre.com](http://www.cupecaresatnaramatacentre.com)

[www.523.cupe.ca](http://www.523.cupe.ca)



# Women in Leadership



*Women in Leadership, CLC Winter School, 2014*

I want to share with all of you my experience, taking a week long union course called “Women in Leadership”.

It was an intense week with a diverse group of women, in an open, safe environment, to explore hidden depths of courage, strength and union spirit.

Chantel and Janelle, two amazing instructors; encouraged their highly opinionated, passionate class to share in each other’s stories and learn from each other’s work and life experiences. Enabling me with tools and newfound confidence in myself to push my boundaries of comfort, to find better support for myself, my members of my union and my family.

My week consisted of in class tools/skill building and having amazing speakers: Libby Davis, Andrea Reimer and Amber Hawkens who shared their stories of their journeys allowing us to learn from their successes and failures. I started the week learning to work as a team player becoming “Rosie the Riveters” and plowing through a night of inventive sports emerging by Wednesday night as victorious choir contest winners. It’s hard to sum up a week of self awareness and learning about oneself because each participant’s journey and what they take home will be completely different. The ultimate result however is that I am taking something home – my own personal growth inspired and facilitated by strong women.

I would like to thank all of you for allowing me this opportunity to take the “Women in Leadership” course. I encourage all of you to check out the different courses that are being offering through CUPE BC ([www.cupe.bc.ca/resources/union-education](http://www.cupe.bc.ca/resources/union-education)) in our area and contact your education rep in your unit to request to attend. Thank you again!

In solidarity,  
Jose van Berkel



## Education Opportunities ...

Contact the Education Rep. in your unit to request to attend courses that are being offered through CUPE BC.

[www.cupe.bc.ca/resources/union-education](http://www.cupe.bc.ca/resources/union-education)

[www.523.cupe.ca](http://www.523.cupe.ca)



# EDUCATION

## for UNION Members

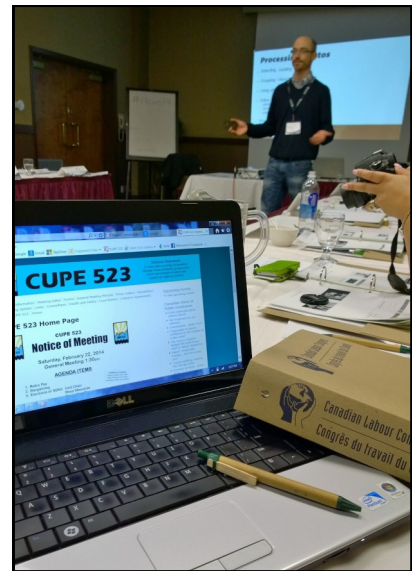
### What kind of member education is offered?

CUPE has lots of courses to pick from. Check out [www.cupe.bc.ca/education](http://www.cupe.bc.ca/education) for a list and *watch the Union boards* for courses coming to our area.

Some examples: stewarding, violence in the workplace, stress, facing management etc.

### How do I get into a CUPE course?

You can request participation with your Education Committee Rep.



CLC Winter School, 2014


## Upcoming Local Education

**April 3** Toxins in the workplace - Kelowna

**April 30** Representing members in investigative/disciplinary meetings - Kelowna

**April** Retirement seminar- Penticton

Education Opportunities are always posted at: [523.cupe.ca/education](http://523.cupe.ca/education) or on your jobsite bulletin board.

**CUPE 523**  
  
**BURSARY APPLICATION**

### Who is eligible?

Students graduating in **2014** whose parent or guardian is a CUPE 523 member in good standing.

**Check your worksite  
bulletin board for  
more details.**

[www.523.cupe.ca](http://www.523.cupe.ca)



# K-12 Local Bargaining Update

Our bargaining committee spent about 100 hours (give or take) working on, preparing for, and bargaining this latest contract. Heart and soul were put on the line while we agonized over decisions. What is best for our members was the constant north star that we followed, sometimes late into the night.

Because of the Provincial Framework Agreement, we were not in a position to argue wages, but we were able to secure some benefit improvements that were long overdue and I hope that the ones we fought so hard for are the ones that you will get the most benefit from. It's impossible to please everyone all the time, but we think that these changes will benefit the majority of our members.

**We were able to increase our benefit coverage for chiropractic, dental, massage, physiotherapy, birth control, and prescriptions.**

Some of these changes came in the increased maximum available, and some came in the form of **increased reimbursement from 80 to 85%.**

We are very please to relay to you that these ***new changes will come into effect on March 1, 2014.*** New Blue Rx cards will be delivered to you so that you **no longer have to pay up front for prescriptions.** Higher rebates will come into effect, and the higher maximums also. If you are planning to get pricey items like glasses and you can wait until March, you will notice a significant change in how much you pay.

I would like to express my thanks to those of you who supported us when we issued strike notice. We know that it was short notice and it was very difficult to communicate with members in advance. There were issues on the table that we were confident that you would want us to hold firm on, and because we did, we all won. I would also like to say thank you to the school districts who supported us in the effort to improve our work place. We know that they were in a tough position and that choosing to support their employees was a benefit to us all.

Sylvia Lindgren,  
on behalf of the Bargaining Committee  
Jean Frolek, Sean Harris, Alison Reigh, Jose Vanberkel



**IMPORTANT**

**2014 Bargaining Survey**, please take the time to fill out this quick and very Important survey as we will be heading into another round of bargaining.

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q23HGS5](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q23HGS5)

**For More Information:**  
<http://www.pac.bluecross.ca/cupek12>



# Community Social Services Bargaining Update

The Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) has reached a tentative five-year agreement for the 11,000 union members working in community-based social services across the province.

The new community social services agreement expires March 31, 2019.

BCGEU, CUPE, HEU, HSA and six other unions together make up the multi-union Community Social Services Bargaining Association, representing 11,000 unionized community social service workers in British Columbia, including community living workers supporting youths and adults with developmental disabilities, youth-at-risk, infant and child development, women services, substance addictions, First Nations, and employment services, among others.

Copyright © 2012, BCGEU  
[www.cssfairdeal.ca/news/five-year-tentative-agreement-reached-communi](http://www.cssfairdeal.ca/news/five-year-tentative-agreement-reached-communi)

## Highlights of the tentative agreement include:

Wage comparability adjustments over five years for members with occupations similar to those covered by the Community Health agreement. These wage adjustments will affect about three-quarters of all workers in the sector.

Four general wage increases of one percent each over the term of the agreement.

Wage adjustments to address specific job classifications within the joint job evaluation plan.

The Economic Stability Dividend will generate added wage increases in years when the provincial GDP growth exceeds projections.

Modest improvements to health benefits, including vision care. Also agreed to by the parties is the establishment of a Joint Benefits Working Group that will monitor and make recommendations to control the costs of benefits in the community social services sector.

Modest increases to mileage and meal allowance reimbursements.

Current provisions for employment security are maintained for the five years of the agreement.



## Executive List

### **President:**

Jean Frolek Email: jeanfrolek@members.cupe.ca  
Phone: 250-803-6732

### **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:**

James Fox Email: james.april@shaw.ca  
Phone: 250-550-6067

### **Secretary Treasurer:**

José van Berkel Email: cupe523@telus.net  
Phone: 250-492-2982 (union office)

### **Recording Secretary:**

Erica McDowell Email: ericamcdo@gmail.com  
Phone: 250-462-8590

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:**

Karsten Bellows Email: karstenbellows@gmail.com  
Phone: 250-306-8715

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President:**

Deb Johnson Email: deborahleej@yahoo.ca  
Phone: 250-515-4115

### **National Rep:**

Rob Hewitt

## Unit Chairs

### **JHS:**

Eric Denison Email: eric.denison@gmail.com  
Phone: 250-938-6058

### **NOYFSS:**

Craig Pohorelic Email: craeg@telus.net  
Phone: 250-260-1758

### **SD53:**

Sean Harris Email: ekay44@gmail.com  
Phone: 250-460-0470

### **SD 67:**

Alison Reigh Email: c.a.reigh@telus.net  
Phone: 250-809-5824

### **SD83:**

Sylvia Lindgren Email: lindgren.sylvia@gmail.com  
Phone: 250-832-5259

Contacts

# Upcoming General Meetings

All members are encouraged to attend!

April 5	CUPE Kelowna Area Office #301 1912 Enterprise Way	Kelowna
May 10	IMC 425 Jermyn Avenue	Penticton
June 7	The Dec 110 - 2960 Okanagan Ave. SE	Salmon Arm

*If you have any ideas or additions for the next issue  
please contact a member of the communication committee.*

**Local 523 Office**, 416 Westminster Ave., Penticton, BC

**Union Office:** 250-492-2982

### **Mailing Address:**

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

[www.523.cupe.ca](http://www.523.cupe.ca)

