

Pressure Point

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM CUPE 2081



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Editorial: Getting it done

During the last BC Federation of Labour conference in Vancouver, I got a lesson in getting things done.

It was Wednesday morning, November 26, 2014. As our delegation approached the convention hall, it was obvious that the situation wasn't normal. Several police vehicles were parked at and around the entrance to Canada Place. A large number of police officers were present both inside and outside the building. Still, nobody stopped us as we entered.

As about 1,600 delegates took their seats, the announcement was made that a bomb threat had been phoned in. Let's just say the words "bomb threat" take on an entirely new significance when they are used in reference to the building you are currently in. Nobody had any hard details or facts other than a report that the suspect had been caught on a security camera.

As the day unfolded, the rest of the facts trickled out. The threat was a hoax, it was directed at another part of the building, and the convention wasn't the target. In hindsight, there wasn't any reason to worry. In the moment, however, a decision had to be made. Would delegates carry on as planned, or would the convention be disrupted?

I was proud but not surprised when a quick test of the room indicated that we were in favour of continuing the day's activities as planned. Other than a quick buzz of conversations and a few quiet stares around the room, the perceived threat barely took five minutes out of the agenda. To put it simply – we did what we came to do.

The consequences would have been catastrophic if the threat had been real, but I find it important to reinforce the fact that not one person got up and left the hall.

It is this kind of courage and determination that stuck with me after the conference, because it showed the strength that lives within us as workers. On top of boredom, stress, fatigue, workplace hazards, and any number of larger or unforeseen challenges that we face every day, we need to remember that within each of us lies the strength to get it done.

- In solidarity, Earle Thompson

My experience at the National Human Rights conference (contributed by Susan Rudiger)

I appreciated the great diversity and quality of the guest speakers, panel discussion, presentations, and workshops at the CUPE National Human Rights Conference, which ran February 5-8 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. As the speakers shared their journeys, I could not help but notice something, and it only made sense, that they started being advocates for human rights because of their own personal challenges & experiences.

Those people had the courage to speak out, and continue to do so, and from that it created change and better conditions not only for our union brothers and sisters, but for Canadians and people around the world. I was inspired by what I heard and was honoured to be in the same room with them, but I am also saddened and horrified of what still goes on both in our own back yard and the planet. The fight goes on!

(continued on page 5)

Welcome to the Centre of the Universe

I think I need to reflect upon the phrase I have chosen for the title of this article. Why do (some) Canadians say Toronto is the centre of the universe? We mere humans have yet to understand the true extent of our universe. Thus, how could we possibly know where its centre might be? And why Toronto? Why not Hamilton, or Barrie, or Pickering? I don't know. Go ask a Torontonians.

In October, I attended CUPE National's inaugural National Sector Council Conference at the centre of, I mean, in Toronto. Accompanied by our President, Tony Nelson, and Vice President, Keith Todd, I was definitely the newbie in our Local's contingent. The bulk of our time was spent attending plenary sessions, sector meetings, and break out groups.

The plenary sessions were held at one end of the lower concourse of the hotel, it being the only area able to accommodate seating for the 1,500 delegates at the Conference. Smaller rooms at the other end of the concourse accommodated the sector meetings and break out groups ventured out into various different areas at the hotel.

I soon learned that the locals of CUPE are assigned to one of eleven sectors. The sectors are: airlines (and other federally regulated workplaces), child care, education, emergency services, energy, health care, library, municipal, provincial government/crown corporations, social services, and post-secondary. Throughout Canada, CUPE's post-secondary sector has 126 Locals representing 57,171 members.

Also, I learned that because this conference was a multilingual event, simultaneous interpretation was provided by way of interpretative devices borrowed from the conference supplier, secured with government issued identification. The devices allowed for seamless communications during the plenary sections, sector meetings, and breakout rooms. There is an expectation that all participants at multilingual events will use an interpretive device.

Two of our plenary sessions warrant special mention. Lee Saunders, President, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, gave a rousing speech, which touched upon many facets of national union organizations. Clearly, unionized workers in Canada and America share many similar concerns.

What matters not is the person, place, or thing, at the centre of your universe. What matters is that you have a centre in your universe, and that it keeps you, well, centred!

Betsy Hoover, Director of Digital Organizing for the 2012 Obama campaign, gave a fascinating speech about our current digital age and shared, by example, how easy it is to underestimate the savvy of the general public. Social media has driven lead time in the public arena down to mere nanoseconds. Keep this in mind, when next campaigning!

Conference publications promoted the conference as "Share ideas, get results." For me, this promotion rang truest, during the sector meetings. Individual successes were offered as solutions to tra-

ditional problems. Where there were no successes, brainstorming provided opportunities to share unique, creative solutions with potential for success. Commonalities fostered feelings of camaraderie and kinship. The benefits of continued communications among locals in our sector are waiting to be realized. We are only hindered by the very real practicalities of progressing such realization, which is sorely needed.

Two publications are available in our office for review: Public Education for the Public Good, by the Canadian Federation of Students, and Post-Secondary Education: Our Choices, Our Future, by The Canadian Union of Public Employees (National Office).

Is the centre of your universe a place, like Toronto? Or is it your favourite chair in a special room in your personal castle? Or, is the centre of your universe a person, place, or thing? While my loved ones are always in the centre of my universe, other things make their way there, too. Like a hummingbird hovering over sweet crimson blossoms. Or a relegation game at the end of the English Premier League soccer season. Rocking to "Halo of Flies" with an imaginary guitar!

What matters not is the person, place, or thing, at the centre of your universe. What matters is that you have a centre in your universe, and that it keeps you, well, centred!

With unity,
Dawn Svendsen
January 2015

Spotted your name in 9 point Impact bold?

Email CUPE2081@camosun.bc.ca



It's Time to Act Against C-51

Have you ever signed a petition about a cause you believed in? Have you participated in a demonstration at the Legislature? Were you involved in an organization that opposes the Northern Gateway pipeline? Did you support a First Nations campaign, such as Idle No More? Have you been involved in strike activity with your union? Did you attend or support the Clayoquot or Carmanah Valley demonstrations to protect old-growth forests?

Very likely your answer to the above is yes - and if not, you most certainly are close to someone who was...perhaps your spouse, son, daughter or friend. Thankfully many Canadians believe and act on their values to participate in the political process. They are a fundamental part of democracy.

How would you feel if CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) was monitoring your conversations, email, bank accounts, and getting information about you from any government department or agency? What if your son or daughter was whisked away by the police in the middle of the night, and held in jail for up to 7 days without any charge, ultimately to have a trial in secret where the witness testified behind a screen? What if your close friend was informed that he was on the "no fly" list, and could no longer take any flights, anywhere?

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Sharon Glynn

Certainly not all of the activities mentioned at the beginning of the article would result in monitoring or action by CSIS, however, many of them could be.

This is not fantasy. This is what is proposed under the Conservative Government's Bill C-51.

In the most significant proposed Canadian law in decades, Bill C-51 has the power to change the very ground that we stand on – rights and freedoms that we take for granted. The reason is that it would criminalize "activities that undermine the security of Canada" — including "interference with the capability of the government of Canada in relation to ... the economic or financial stability of Canada."

It also refers to interference with "critical infrastructure", which can be interpreted as pipelines and environmental opposition, according to an RCMP report. It is also widely expected that unions will be targets under the new law, particularly where a strike may affect economic interests – which is usually the case.

The broad sweep of the above definition in Bill C-51's so called "Anti-terrorism" law have caused the alarm bells to ring across the country, because it is intentionally so vague as to cover many of the activities that we believe are protected rights. It is important to understand that we already have an Anti-Terrorism Act in place that has powerful provisions to prevent actual terrorism.

While the powers of CSIS are vastly expanded, their oversight by Parliament is not. This means that their activity can be unchecked,

an extremely dangerous situation which strikes at the very heart of a democracy.

Law professors have analyzed the proposed Bill and written several critical articles in the Globe & Mail, including "How Ottawa's New Terrorism Act Could Chill Free Speech" and "Bill C-51 Moves Us One Step Closer To the End of Privacy".

The editors of the Globe & Mail wrote an article "Parliament Must Reject Harper's Secret Policeman Bill" and other critical articles have appeared throughout media outlets. The Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the BC Civil Liberties Association have expressed a deep concern about the provisions of the bill.

Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party, strongly opposes the bill and the federal NDP has finally come out against the bill, however, it took them 3 long weeks to do so.

How can you make a difference during this important time in our history? As always, any small action counts. Educate yourself and then contact your MP, or your CUPE provincial or national office at www.cupe.bc.ca and www.cupe.ca and tell them how you feel. They need to know that their constituents and members are deeply concerned and won't stand for this. Our silence speaks volumes and this is one issue where we must speak out. Our real freedom depends on it.

-Sharon Glynn

"Without debate, without criticism, no administration and no country can succeed and no republic can survive." - John F. Kennedy

All workers in British Columbia have four basic Health & Safety Rights:

The Right to Know:

Workers have the Right to Know about any potential hazards in the workplace. You have a right to training and information on machinery, equipment, working conditions, processes and hazardous substances.

Examples of a worker's right to know:

-*The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)*

-*Violence in the Workplace (Past experience or occurrences)*

-*Ergonomics (Known Hazards)*

-*Asbestos (Known Locations)*

-*Employer must post WCB inspection reports*

You can ask the employer to provide information on:

-*Hazards in your workplace*

-*Experience of other workplaces*

-*WCB orders and penalties*

The Right to Participate:

Workers have the Right to Participate in the process of identifying and resolving workplace health and safety concerns. They participate through worker membership on Joint Health and Safety Committees and reporting concerns to their supervisor or employer. Workers also have the Right to Participate in workplace inspections and investigations.

The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work:

Workers have the Right to Refuse work they believe is dangerous to their own health and safety or to another worker. The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work is one of the few exceptions to the "work now, grieve later" rule in labour relations.

Section 3.12 of the Workers Compensation Act (Canada Labour Code Part II - Section 128 & 129) includes the process for refusing work and employer responsibilities for responding to refusals. Legislation also provides workers with protection from reprisal from the employer.

The Right to No Discrimination:

You cannot be fired or disciplined for participating in Health and Safety activities.

Discrimination Defined:
Suspension, lay-off, or dismissal
Demotion or loss of opportunity for promotion
Transfer of duties, reduction in wages
Coercion or intimidation
Discipline, reprimand

(Source: BCFED Health & Safety Centre website)

Shirley Wendland

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Human Rights:

What can I do? I can apply it to almost everything I say, I do, where I am, and anyone I am with. It does start with our own journey, what our own experiences are; our thoughts, our attitudes, and actions.

Having the courage to speak out, and having a voice is the key. It is one of the most important pieces for us because we are fortunate enough to have the freedom to do this. Our voices can travel, like the waves on our oceans around the world. Look at what Nelson Mandela did for human rights, and so many more, some of which I was able to read about or see at the exhibit, when all who attended the conference went to the Canadian Human Rights Museum. It was phenomenal! I could spend a week touring it, instead of two hours.

Two things: Please speak out and have a voice, whether it is by way of our own workplace or by voting the government parties in that respect human rights and are advocates for them. Finally, but certainly not last in importance, a huge thank you to our local membership for electing me to go, and to CUPE National for holding such an inspiring and quality conference. I was just too excited to worry about the cold in Winnipeg. It bit my nose when I was out in it but hey, I bundled up.

-Susan Rudiger

for more information, please see
<http://cupe.ca/event/cupe-national-hu->

Submissions for Pressure Point:

Your opinion matters!

Please send via email, and make sure to include your pictures. Email submissions to: CUPE2081@camosun.bc.ca and thompson@camosun.bc.ca.

Drop off written submissions at the CUPE 2081 office on the second floor of the Young Building, Lansdowne campus.



Meet Your Members: Mona Jensen

If you have ever had the need to make a purchase at the Bookstore at the Lansdowne campus, you may have had the privilege of meeting Mona Jensen. Mona is a long time Camosun employee, having worked at the College since 1992. She has seen a lot of changes during the last 23 years, yet continues to marvel at the ever present diversity, knowledge, and sense of community, which exist on campus. As she says, “diversity is huge.”

Many years ago, Mona’s parents emigrated from Scandinavia to Canada, opting to live in a “large” Canada, rather than a “small” Europe. At the time, Cadboro Bay was considered to be too far out of town, so they didn’t build there, and instead, chose an in-town location.

Mona’s mother worked as a housekeeper for a neighbourhood shopkeeper. Mona, too young to be on her own, or to work with her mother, remembers chatting with the shop customers. She feels these days may very well have been the beginning of the development of her “Social Animal” personality, which working at the Bookstore accommodates nicely.

Mona has lived in Victoria, Pennsylvania, and further north on Vancouver Island, but says, “Vic-

toria is pretty well paradise.” Her family home has been well populated with a husband, four kids, seven grandkids, three cats and a dog. She says “there is nothing more entertaining than little people,” and “when the four year old isn’t four any more, my life will be different again.” Her “deep family roots” reach as far as Scandinavia and she has been able to visit many times over the years.

“...she may wear black, but she’s colourful.”

Mona discovered she had a passion for gardening, when she was about eight years old, which was also a religious phase, which she remembers by planting a cross and forget-me-nots. At ten, she tried to get a job at a garden centre. At age eleven, too! Understandably, she wasn’t hired, but her passion for gardening continues.

Residing in Thetis Heights on a third of an acre provides her with the opportunity to indulge that passion and she is an avid, knowledgeable gardener. By the way, she did eventually get a job at her girlfriend’s garden centre, when she was a single parent. A win-win for both of them!

Mona went on a car rally with a couple of people she had met, who worked at Camosun’s Cook Training Program. Encouraged by them, along with culinary skills gained through catering, salmon barbeques at Norway House, etc., Mona successfully applied for a new job at the Interurban cafeteria.

Later, a wave of layoffs hit the college, and she filled a position left vacant by an employee taking a buyout. Her position with the Bookstore opened after they took

over looking after lockers. The work was five months of the year, which fit nicely with her seven months of grounds work. After several years of the more physically demanding outside work, the needs of the Bookstore conveniently changed, and she won a regular, year-round “inside job” in the Bookstore.

Mona says she has lots of little interests, rather than one big focus. She describes herself as a “spiritual” person, believing “we have souls, we have something.” Also, she is a “crafty” person, partaking of knitting, a little bit of painting, and folk dancing.

Currently, her “House of Seven” keeps her busy as she meets the demands of lacrosse, dance, soccer, swimming, her husband’s golf, and all that goes with a busy household. Yet, she has “never felt hobbled by it” and “doesn’t want to blink,” because she “might miss something.”

...Diversity Abounds...

Mona feels diversity abounds at the College. One day, she had a thought about taking up the art of rowing, and her very next customer turned out to be an Olympic rower! She has had similar discoveries about walking, electricity, and water snakes, among other things. Ahh, the art of chatting! Perhaps you will see Mona hard at work in the Bookstore the next time you go by. One of the last things she said to me during her interview was something someone said about her, “she may wear black, but she’s colourful.” I wonder when she heard it. During a chat, perhaps?

With unity,
Dawn Svendsen - January 2015

Human Rights Conference, February 5-8, Winnipeg

(photos courtesy of [CUPE National](#))



On February 5-8, 2015, 500 CUPE members from across the country were in Winnipeg for CUPE's second National Human Rights Conference. The conference highlighted the role unions have in creating safe workplaces devoid of racism and discrimination.

Paul Moist CUPE national President opened the conference greeting members and reminding us that, "Defending human rights is at the very core of what unions do every day." Paul was followed by guest speaker NDP MP Romeo Saganash pictured above with national president Paul Moist and secretary treasure Charles Fleury



Ausma Malik, panel member

For me the word courage stood out whether it was spoken, implied during a speech or realized during debate. For every major Human Right someone or a collective of people had to have the courage to do so; where did they find that courage? We all have it, some more than others, some may never know, while others will find courage they never thought they possessed. The Lion always had the courage. It took Oz for him to

realize it was there, without courage Dorothy may have never been rescued. As Unionist we are and will be put to the test find courage and earn respect.



Panel Discussion

Our Plenary sessions covered: Labour and the pursuit of human rights, CUPE's membership survey, in context, of note here is that members identified their locals' Newsletter as the main source for local information, Human rights in Canada: Our History, our future, Winning equality through political action, Engaging members and the community. We learned through panel discussion and workshops that we have the power to bring change and without that we cannot move forward. We also visited the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, a very eye opening experience.



Brian Barron, CUPE Diversity VP

I would like to thank the members and executive of CUPE 2081 for sending me to this conference. The knowledge and experience gained will be used in my role as a member and member of the executive.

- With courage and in solidarity,
Keith Todd



The Fight for \$15

Have you seen these signs around Victoria yet? If not, you probably will. The fight for a \$15/hr minimum wage in British Columbia is gaining momentum, thanks to a BC Federation of Labour campaign that will see major events and rallies take place on the 15th day of each month throughout 2015.

Why fight for \$15/hr? Simple: BC's minimum wage leaves some full-time workers living below the poverty line.

Learn more and join the fight at <http://www.fightfor15bc.ca/>

Make sure you sign the petition!



Campaigning in Victoria, Jan 15



Cover photo: Shirley Wendland & Keith Todd, November 25, at the Fight for 15 rally in Vancouver, B.C.

Sister Sharon comes of age

Across this great country of ours, I have worked in three provinces, Nova Scotia, Ontario and British Columbia, in a wide variety of jobs. From waitressing during my university years, to working as a lawyer, to my current career in communications including web & graphic design, I have experienced working environments of all shapes and sizes.

Over the past 3 decades of my working career, the one common factor in all of these workplaces was no union! That even included working for a municipal government in Halifax, where the lawyers were not included in the union.

My experience in these positions was not always pleasant. At times I have experienced sexism, harassment, lack of support and disrespectful behaviour – not to mention low pay and few benefits. Was there anything I could do? Not much. The overwhelming feeling in the workplace was “keep quiet – don’t make a fuss, or you’ll be in trouble”. This had a very chilling effect which meant that needed change was often ignored, and people constantly watched their back. It also led to stressful environments, and the mental and physical repercussions.

Fast-forward to January 2015... Here I am at Camosun College, working with the wonderful team in Communications & Advancement. It’s a term position as a Web Assistant, but who cares...it’s great!

Interestingly, when I applied for the position, I knew three people who were present or previous faculty at Camosun. “It’s a great place to work” they said. When I started the job I was introduced to

many people who said “It’s a great place to work”, and judging from the lengthy service many people hold, it seems to be true.

There is a difference here, and it is palpable: It is an atmosphere of respect. Naturally, I am brand new, and I am sure it is not a perfect workplace, however, I believe that the difference is because of the union. In fact, I am willing to bet that that is the case.

So when I enthusiastically attended the last general meeting, and much to my surprise was sworn in and received my pins, I thoroughly enjoyed it. More than anything, I loved how each member was referred to as “Sister” or “Brother”. That is cool, because it really reflects the democratic nature of the union.

So as a “newbie” member, for however long my job lasts, I’m mighty glad and I’m sticking to the union.

In Solidarity,
Sharon Glynn

Stewarding Workshop Report

From October 20-21, 2014, a co-worker and I had the privilege of participating in the Introduction to Stewarding course provided courtesy of CUPE BC and our membership. I have always known I wanted to give back to my local so I excitedly took the opportunity for steward education. How do we help each other, strengthen our community and find ways to be the change we want to see? We go to school!

We were a group of 25 people from various Unions all over Vancouver Island ready to learn, pens

poised with a collective readiness to engage. Our facilitators, Pat and Steve were friendly, knowledgeable and happy to share their insight, humour and experiences. Our conversations ran the gamut of what happens when... who can do what if... and where do we start? When the sessions wrapped we were well tooled with our notes, our books and a collective sense of empowerment to take back to our work groups.

Regardless of where we work or our day to day duties, everyone has or will experience some form of conflict in the workplace. The goal is to help each other resolve conflict, mitigate hurt feelings and work towards meaningful resolution. I know I lean towards idealism and I carry that with me in all my learning experiences. I have also found it is infectious because it is sincere.

If you have thought about what you can do, how you could give back or just want to learn about education opportunities-raise your voice, reach out and ask. At the very least you will learn something that will better yourself and at the most our numbers will swell with able hands at the ready to help out, step up and lean in.

Erynne Grant and Vashti Southern

Website update:

The new website is available at <http://2081.wplocals.cupe.ca/>

For general updates, check <http://2081.wplocals.cupe.ca/news/>

For forms and other resources, use <http://2081.wplocals.cupe.ca/resources/>

Please bookmark these links!