

CUPE'S QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

WINTER 2016

Counterpoint

BUILDING OUR POWER!

FOCUS: VANCOUVER 2015

**Mark Hancock,
CUPE's new National
President**

Hopes for
post-Harper
era

**Profile –
Maureen O'Reilly's
library battles**

KEEPSAKE POSTER:
HIV AND AIDS, A WORKER ISSUE



SHE SAID

“If you believe strongly about the issues you’re bringing forward, sometimes you have to take action”

Maureen O’Reilly, President of the Toronto Public Library Workers Unions

CUPE 79 campaigns to stop precarious work

As bargaining commences for workers employed at the City of Toronto, CUPE 79 is sparking a discussion about the proliferation of precarious work in Toronto.

CUPE 79 represents the City of Toronto inside workers. They launched the campaign in November to highlight the increasingly unstable nature of work in Canada’s biggest city.

“Our members are on the frontline, providing services to people who can’t

make ends meet because they don’t have a stable and secure job,” said CUPE 79 President Tim Maguire. “Sadly, some of our members are experiencing the very same challenge.”

The GoodJobsTO.ca campaign is designed to encourage people to contact Toronto Mayor John Tory, who has made poverty reduction a centrepiece of his administration, and call on him to:

- Champion living wage standards across the city;

- Set better job standards, including reliable shifts, guaranteed minimum work hours, secure employment and benefits for city jobs and city contractor jobs, and to ensure city procurement processes have these criteria attached to them;
- Create stable and secure jobs for local residents through a community benefit program for major infrastructure investments;
- Support efforts to strengthen provincial employment standards.

CUPE 79 represents approximately 20,000 workers at the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and Bridgepoint Hospital.

■ Kevin Wilson

CUPE releases Domestic violence and the workplace: A bargaining guide

CUPE’s Equality branch has released a new guide to help locals bargain language to support victims of domestic violence. It’s called *Domestic violence and the workplace: A bargaining guide*.

The guide covers the following areas:

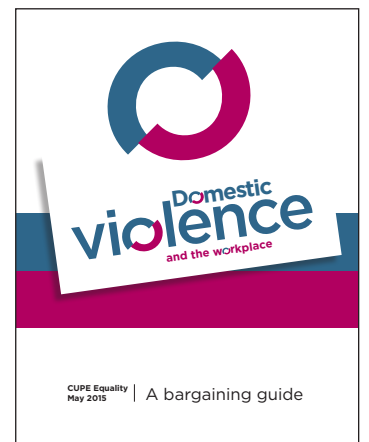
- The definition of domestic violence and how it’s a workplace issue;
- How the union can negotiate protections regarding domestic

violence related to the workplace;

- Examples of collective agreement language;
- A checklist for workplace policy and collective agreement language.

Find the guide on our website at cupe.ca. You can also order printed copies through our online store at CUPE.CA/STORE

■ Wes Payne



LET’S MAKE TORONTO A LEADER IN BUILDING GOOD JOBS AND BETTER LIVES.

52% of workers in Toronto don’t have stable, secure jobs.

Go to goodjobsTO.ca

Newfoundland government hits pause on P3 plans

On the verge of a provincial election, the government of Newfoundland announced it was “delaying” a deadline on tenders for four new P3 nursing homes.

The plan to build the new nursing homes via the public-private partnership model was met with immediate resistance from CUPE NL, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour and other public sector unions.

The original timeline set out in the Request For Proposals suggested an agreement for the 360 new care beds could be signed before the November election. The plan to privatize health care has been opposed by both the NDP and the Liberals.

CUPE NL sponsored a mini-symposium on P3s over the summer in St. John’s and brought in experts such as labour economist Hugh MacKenzie to debunk the model.

With the tendering process now put off until the New Year and a newly-elected provincial Liberal government, the P3 scheme for long term care is expected to end up in the trashcan.

■ John McCracken

CUPE’S QUARTERLY PUBLICATION WINTER 2016

Counterpoint

ISSN print 1920-2857
ISSN online 1920-2865

Counterpoint is published by the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Address all letters to the editor to: CUPE Communications, 1375 St. Laurent Blvd. Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z7 T: 613-237-1590 F: 613-237-5508 Publications Mail Agreement Number 40005741

Union-printed on 50% recycled, 30% post-consumer waste, elemental chlorine-free paper, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: CUPE Communications, 1375 St. Laurent Blvd. Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z7

Visit CUPE’s website at cupe.ca or contact us at cupemail@cupe.ca

Managing Editor Cybelle Morin
Acting Communications Director Catherine Louli

Graphic Designer Jocelyn Renaud
Editorial Assistants H el ene B elanger • Genevi eve Robichaud • M eliza Fournier • Michel Saucier

Contributors Kevin Wilson • John McCracken • Riccardo Filippone • Pierre Ducasse • Greg Taylor • Wes Payne • Stella Yeadon • Janet Szliske • Philippe Gagnon

CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

National President Mark Hancock
National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury

General Vice-Presidents Daniel L eg ere • Lucie Levasseur • Fred Hahn • Kelly Moist • Marle Roberts

Regional Vice-Presidents Wayne Lucas / Newfoundland & Labrador • Mike McNeil / Nova Scotia • Odette Robichaud / New Brunswick • Lori MacKay / Prince Edward Island • Denis Bolduc, Beno t Bouchard / Quebec • Michael Hurley, Candace Rennick / Ontario • Henri Giroux / Northern Ontario • Mike Davidson / Manitoba • Judy Henley / Saskatchewan • David Graham / Alberta • Paul Faoro, Victor Elkins / British Columbia

Diversity Vice-Presidents Gloria Lepine • Yolanda McClean



The courage of her convictions

It's an article of faith that when the library workers start marching, you know things are bad, and Maureen O'Reilly is somewhere near the front of the march.

"I was elected president of the library workers one month before Rob Ford was elected and lived to tell about it," quips Maureen O'Reilly President of the Toronto Public Library Workers Union, CUPE 4948.

Ford rode a wave of voter anger to become Toronto's Mayor in 2011, promising to

stop the 'Gravy Train' of perceived overspending at Toronto City Hall. Ford and his brother Doug, who was elected Councillor in the same election, made it their mission to attack anyone who dared question their agenda of austerity.

O'Reilly, also co-chairs CUPE's National Library Workers Committee and is Chair of the CUPE Ontario Library Workers Committee. She and the members she represents found themselves in Doug's crosshairs early.

After Doug Ford claimed his Ward had more libraries than it had Tim Hortons coffee shops, O'Reilly got

some high-powered support from the likes of Margaret Atwood and other Canadian authors, drawing attention to the importance of quality library services to at-risk communities like the ones the Ford Brothers represent.

"If you believe strongly about the issues you're bringing forward, sometimes you have to take action," says O'Reilly.

With collective agreements up for renewal, CUPE 4948 is taking aim at the epidemic of precarious and part-time employment in the sector. Currently, half of the local's membership can be classified as either

precarious or part-time.

"When Melvil Dewey was establishing the librarian profession, he said he was establishing a labour force of high moral character and low pay," says O'Reilly, adding that cash-strapped municipalities often "consider library services to be a soft service and they always seem to be the first service municipalities think about cutting."

Four years ago, in the face of Ford Nation, O'Reilly and her members stood firm,

resorting to strike action to push back the cuts demanded by Rob and Doug Ford and their supporters. They pushed back the concessions and in the most challenging of environments, managed to achieve gains in bargaining.

And while the Ford Brothers no longer run the City of Toronto, O'Reilly is still going strong as president of CUPE 4948 and she's gearing up for another round of bargaining with John Tory as Mayor.

■ Kevin Wilson



A new day on Parliament Hill

On October 19, 2015 the end of the Stephen Harper era was welcomed by all but the Conservative Party's most faithful.

The Liberals had promised and indeed have begun the process of undoing some of the worst measures introduced during a decade of Conservative rule.

The long-form census has been reinstated. An

equal number of men and women have been named to cabinet. Municipalities are no longer forced to partner with for-profit companies (P3s) in order to apply for infrastructure funding. Scientists and other public sector workers no longer have a target on their back. And important meetings between our Prime Minister and Canada's premiers are

once again on the horizon.

As we continue to celebrate Harper's exit, we welcome this swift action with enthusiasm.

This would normally be the part where we ask you to curb your enthusiasm. In this case, the opposite is in order – we need to set our expectations higher. Not because of cynicism or misplaced partisanship,

but because we simply can't allow our joy of ousting Harper to skew the value of these recent changes.

These changes, as important as they are, are largely just a return to normalcy. Getting back what we already had is just that. Not quite a step forward.

This should also be considered in the context of some worrying recent moves on the part of our new government. As Trudeau participated in critical climate change talks in Paris, he declared that Canada has adopted the US position of no longer supporting legally binding carbon reduction targets. At the same time, he is expected to sign the legally binding Trans-Pacific

Partnership free trade agreement, which among many other negative impacts will inhibit our ability to fight climate change here at home. All this while our federal natural resources minister appoints a former top oil and gas lobbyist as his chief of staff. That isn't the change we were promised.

In opposition, the NDP has raised these problems and will continue to raise expectations.

While we celebrate getting back the valuable things we lost during a decade of Conservative rule, we should also make sure to demand a lot more from our new government.

■ Riccardo Filippone

NATIONAL PRESIDENT MARK HANCOCK

A New Year for building union power

The New Year brings many challenges for CUPE members across the country. The labour movement has successfully fought off many attacks on our rights as workers, and we still have much to do in 2016 to achieve progressive change for workers, our families and our communities.

It was an honour to be elected your National President at the 2015 National Convention in Vancouver, and in the New Year I'm looking forward to working with CUPE members on building our strength as a union.

In 2016 we will put organizing front and centre, focusing first on increasing the protection for precarious workers, and continuing our fight against contracting

out and the privatization of the public services our members deliver.

This work will depend on strong locals. By engaging our members, and providing locals with the resources they need at the bargaining table, CUPE will continue to back up our members in the fight for decent wages, better benefits, and stronger pensions.

2016 will also be CUPE's Year of Health and Safety. We will renew our attention to achieving safer workplaces – for our members, and all workers in Canada and around the world, particularly for those in the most precarious and vulnerable jobs.

The new federal Liberal government has made many promises - such as rolling back the Conservatives' regressive attacks on workers rights, and on moving forward with real action on climate change, just to name a few. In 2016 we are committed to standing with our allies to ensure the Liberals live up to their promises.

I wish you and your family all the best in the New Year, and hope you will join me in renewing our commitment to building workers' power across the country and around the world. Together we will make CUPE an even stronger and louder voice for workers everywhere.

MARK HANCOCK ONLINE twitter.com/CUPENatPres



Focus:

CONVENTION 2015



Building our power at the bargaining table and beyond

Following several days of fruitful discussions, delegates to the CUPE National Convention adopted the Strategic Directions 2015-2017 document.

Organizing and unionization are the heart of our work as a trade union, and the document devotes particular attention to the needs of precarious workers. The fate of these workers is identified as a high priority, notably by fighting to expand the

scope of our collective agreements to include all workers in our workplaces. We need to integrate precarious workers into our bargaining units as much as possible.

CUPE is committed to pursue and increase our recruitment strategies, locally, regionally and by sector.

In CUPE, we care deeply about issues affecting marginalized workers, and we aim to negotiate collective agreements that are both strong and inclusive. Thus, special attention must also be

given to diversity and equity – both in our workplaces and within our union.

To strengthen this organizational work, CUPE will hold two key events: our second National Sector Council Conference, in October 2016, and another conference in 2017 centred on empowering locals, where our members will be able to share their best practices.

The mobilization of members also involves specific issues such as health and safety: CUPE will make 2016 the year of Health and Safety, focusing on members who are most vulnerable or living with violence.

It goes without saying that the fight against privatization and outsourcing remains a priority for our union, in order to protect our members' working conditions and the quality of public services.

However, CUPE also recognizes that many battles must take place beyond the bargaining table. Political action will remain a priority, both in the arena of partisan politics and in social movements.

Since many issues such as poverty, trade, human rights, privatization and austerity are global phenomena, our international solidarity work is an intrinsic part of our fight-back strategy. Strategic Directions also highlights other priority issues such as the fight against climate change.

We recognize that our strength comes primarily from our members. Building the power of our members builds the power of our union. And it is from that power that we are helping to create a better country with greater solidarity for all.

■ Pierre Ducas



More than 2,000 CUPE members came together in Vancouver from Nov. 2 to 6 for CUPE's 27th National Convention.

Top ten highlights:

1 Elected a new National President – Mark Hancock. He is CUPE's sixth National President and will provide strong leadership in the coming years. Re-elected Charles Fleury for a third mandate as National Secretary-Treasurer.

2 Took the leap! With a rally to show our support for the leap manifesto, we called on Canada to act decisively to transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to a pollution-free economy.

3 Passed a resolution to reorganize our National Defence Fund so that more resources can go to funding our critical ongoing work while protecting a healthy strike fund.

“We need to listen to each other and defend our public services, keep our workplaces healthy and safe, and protect decent paying jobs in our communities”

Mark Hancock, CUPE’s sixth National President.

2,208 delegates

VANCOUVER
CUPE · SCFP 2015



Meeting the new National President

Mark Hancock became CUPE’s sixth National President at the 2015 National Convention in Vancouver, BC, his home province.

Mark has been a CUPE member since 1984. At 25 years old, he was elected president of his local, CUPE 498, Port Coquitlam Municipal Employees – a post he held for 15 years.

He went on to sit on the CUPE BC executive board for over 12 years before being elected the division’s Secretary-Treasurer in 2005. That year he was also first elected to the National Executive Board as the Regional Vice-president representing BC. After four terms as Secretary-Treasurer, he succeeded Barry O’Neil as president of CUPE BC April 2013.

“My experience at the local and division have taught me that we need to keep having one-to-one conversations with our members,” Hancock said. “We need to listen to each other and defend our public services, keep our workplaces healthy and safe, and protect decent paying jobs in our communities.”

An active member of the New Democratic Party, Mark was the first chair of CUPE’s National Political Action Committee. He has also worked with CUPE’s Global Justice Committee.

■ Greg Taylor



VANCOUVER
CUPE · SCFP 2015



CUPE National Convention 2015 has gone mobile!

Get the app >

Available for iPhone, Android, Google & Blackberry



4 Paid tribute to our activists and honoured our award recipients in Literacy (Danny Cavanagh), Health and Safety (Pearl Blommaert), the Grace Hartman award (Katie McGovern), the Ed Blackman award (Elizabeth Paris) and the National Disability rights award (Ann Ramsay).

5 Launched a convention app – a first for CUPE – with more than 1,900 people accessing convention resources and communicating with fellow delegates on their mobile devices.

6 Set an ambitious course for the next two years by adopting Strategic Directions with a focus on building workers’ power.

7 Increased our knowledge and capacity by sharing our challenges and successes at forums, sector meetings, caucuses, the CUPE Village, and on the floor of convention.

8 Built international solidarity with guests who reminded us that our issues are similar around the globe and the important role we can play across borders.

9 Celebrated the defeat of the Harper government and highlighted the important work ahead for the NDP in holding the Liberal government to account in Parliament.

10 Found inspiration and insight in passionate speeches from Naomi Klein, Justice Murray Sinclair, Lee Saunders, Rosa Pavanelli, Hassan Yussuff, Mohamed Fahmy and Tom Mulcair.

VANCOUVER
CUPE · SCFP 2015

Net zero: New name, same old zeroes

Across the country, CUPE locals are increasingly running into a new ploy introduced by employers at the bargaining table. “Net zero” bargaining means employers expect workers to pay for any improvement to their contract by sacrificing something else. The result is little or no increase in overall compensation—or a net zero result.

It’s a strategy that tries to shift responsibility for compensation improvements entirely onto workers, without giving them a real chance to make gains.

The strategy seems to be a favourite of Liberal governments, as CUPE members under Liberal governments in BC, Ontario and now Nova Scotia have had to bargain under net zero mandates.

What can locals do? Given that governments typically seek mandates across the board and not just with one union, there’s a good chance that other unions in your province are facing the same challenge. It’s a good idea to reach out to other unions and try to work together on the issue.

It’s also important to

examine each proposal individually to see exactly how the employer is positioning proposed trade-offs. Not all proposals are created equal, and bargaining committees may find some opportunities to make gains with careful analysis.

However, locals should also be on the lookout for attempts to create two-tier contracts with proposed trade-offs. Such proposals are often tempting to accept, but the long-term implications for locals can be devastating.

■ **Wes Payne**



Long-term care in crisis

To provide better care and keep residents safer, long-term care (LTC) workers in Ontario have actively advocated for a legislated four hour daily care standard under the *Time to Care* campaign banner. They say the Ontario government is failing to protect vulnerable residents by not increasing staffing levels and it is not taking action against increasing violence in nursing homes, including patient-on-patient violence. Understaffing also creates excessive workloads that hamper front line staff’s ability to provide compassionate care to residents.

Now two recent reports agree with them. One report from the Ontario coroner’s office that says that between 2013 and 2014, 13 residents were killed by homicide, at the hands of another resident. The other report from the provincial auditor general notes that a lack of staff and training have hindered long-term care homes’ ability to comply with government orders following complaints.

“The increase in the number of complaints reflects a system in turmoil,” says Kelly O’Sullivan, chair for Health Care Workers Committee. “The number of deaths by homicide should be the catalyst for change and spur the province to act and make a daily care standard the law. We are doing all we can to bring the issue to the government’s doorstep.”

Learn more about the LTC campaign at CUPE.ON.CA/TIME-TO-CARE-LONG-TERM-CARE

■ **Stella Yeadon**

Têtes-à-têtes!



in brief

A win in Surrey

Members of CUPE 402 in the City of Surrey now provide services at the Surrey Animal Resource Centre, following an agreement between the union and the city.

Surrey agreed with CUPE 402, who had initially proposed the idea in bargaining, that staffing the centre with CUPE workers will optimize customer service and provide excellent animal care.

White Rock brings water utility in-house

In neighbouring White Rock, the City has taken over ownership and operation of its water utility from Edmonton-based EPCOR. Mike Guraliuk, president of CUPE 402-01, whose local had run a campaign to bring the water utility into city ownership, is pleased that water workers will be part of the city’s CUPE workforce. “It’s about controlling our resources and the quality of services that White Rock’s public workers provide.”

Defending good services and jobs in our community - CUPE 416 in Toronto

What a difference a year makes.

Faced with a public waking up to the importance of protecting good jobs, coupled with overwhelming evidence showing city workers delivered better value, recently-elected City of Toronto Mayor John Tory and his Public Works Committee chair backed away from their pledge to contract out remaining solid waste jobs.

It was a victory nearly a year in the making. Following Tory’s election, activists from Toronto Civic Employees Union CUPE 416 began a campaign to defend about 600 Solid Waste jobs. CUPE 416 members, CUPE National Staff, allies and community supporters worked together to gather data, meet councillors, and talk to anyone who would listen about the importance of keeping services public and protecting good jobs.

The effort paid dividends. The Mayor and his supporters have deferred any decision on contracting out solid waste for at least another year.

Lee Saunders delivers rousing speech to CUPE delegates

Lee Saunders is president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). AFSCME represents 1.6 million members from almost every state in the U.S. Saunders spoke with Counterpoint after delivering a fiery speech at CUPE's National Convention.

What would you say to union activists who may get discouraged because of attacks against the labour movement?

Well, I would just urge that we can't get discouraged. They want us to get discouraged. They want us to get frustrated and we've just got to stand up together. We've got to come together like never before because these attacks are vicious. They want us gone and it's up to us to stand up. To stand up for public services. To stand up for working families, those who are in unions, those who are not in unions. To stand up for an economy that works for all. To give people a fair shot to

achieve that dream to have a better life.

The numbers on how AFSCME has grown are phenomenal. How do you actually talk to your members?

You've got to change the way that the union is doing business essentially. You've got to devote resources and staff time to talk with members. And just as important, we've got to engage our members to talk to their co-workers. We do that through training programs, like our volunteer member-organizing program where we are training people to talk. We want to train 8,000 folks so that they can talk to their co-workers across the country. Our affiliates are completely engaged in this effort, but you must have the engagement of your activists and you've got to have the engagement of members to pick up the ball and to talk to folks. That's the only way we're going to get it done.

What can a local do to build collective action?

The first thing you have to do is engage members and talk with them so that they are involved, so they are the union. The union is the strength of its members



and the actions that are taken by its members. So you've got to identify the issues those members are confronted with at the local level, what are they concerned about, the attacks they are under and then you develop a plan. You develop a strategy and you talk to folks asking them to be involved and asking them to come together for their own sake, for their livelihood, for their

community's livelihood. I cannot say enough about the importance of having that basic one-on-one communication. I think that we have kind of dropped the ball in the past where we have stopped talking because of all the new technology. We've stopped talking to people. Nothing takes the place of talking to folks.

How do you encourage members to be strong, to be active, to get involved?

The first thing is that I listen to them. I don't think in these conversations you say we want you to do this and we want you to do that, because these folks in many cases have not been talked to before. Seeing where their interests are, seeing where their frustrations are and then you talk about how you resolve those things.

Read the full interview at CUPE.CA/SAUNDERS
■ Janet Szliske

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER CHARLES FLEURY

Stronger National Strike and Defence Funds increase our power as a union

In 2015, we have worked hard to manage CUPE's finances and the results have paid off. As a result of our solid financial foundation, we were able to strengthen the National Strike and Defence Funds for the benefit of our members.

Our National Strike Fund is now over \$80 million and we have the resources to continue to support each and every CUPE member who walks the picket line. However, having enough money in the National Defence Fund to support all the cost-shared campaigns has been an annual budgetary challenge.

To fix this problem, the National Executive Board (NEB) proposed that we change the "split" between our National Strike Fund and National Defence Fund. The delegates at the last National Convention approved this change. From now on five per cent of per capita revenues will go into

each fund so that there are more resources available for campaigns, organizing and Strategic Directions priorities. Previously six per cent went into the Strike Fund and four per cent went to the Defence Fund.

The Strike Fund has also been improved. The NEB approved changes to our regulations to allow for more flexibility in picket line schedules for members who work part-time and precarious hours. In addition, CUPE National will now reimburse 100 per cent of arbitration fees for locals who do not have the right to strike.

In early 2016, a task force will start reviewing all aspects of the Strike Fund including: strike pay waiting period, the amount of weekly strike pay, and determination of strike related duties and activities.

Members from locals across the country will be part of this task force. As the Chair of the task force I will report back to the NEB no later than September 2016.

Our Strike Fund and our Defence Fund give us power as a union. By reinforcing both funds, we have ensured that our members have the ability to cope with the many challenges they face in the years to come.

Happy New Year, brothers and sisters.

CHARLES FLEURY ONLINE twitter.com/CUPENatSec



Educate. Defend. Mobilize.



***HIV and AIDS
is a worker issue***

CUPE | Canadian Union
of Public Employees