



PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

FALL 2015



**OUR TIME
HAS COME**

TOGETHER, WE CAN
HELP ELECT CANADA'S
FIRST NDP GOVERNMENT



“Getting more people to exercise their right to vote is the first step to defeating the Conservatives and electing a truly progressive, NDP government for the first time in Canadian history.”

Voter turnout will make the difference

OCTOBER 19: YOUR DATE WITH A BALLOT BOX — AND HISTORY

I’m going to start this column with some math. Maybe not my strongest suit — anymore — but these numbers pretty much speak for themselves.

14 / 6,201 / 9.4 million / 1

OK, maybe these numbers need a little help speaking for themselves.

14: That’s how many seats Stephen Harper and the Conservatives needed to gain in the 2011 election to win a majority government.

6,201: That’s the total number of votes those 14 seats were won by.

9.4 million: That’s the number of eligible Canadian voters who didn’t vote in 2011.

1: That’s how many elections we are from an NDP government. Just imagine how different our country would be today if a relative handful of those Canadians who didn’t exercise their right to vote had actually shown up on Election Day and cast their ballot. There are more than 85,000 CUPE members in B.C., so just think of the difference our votes alone could make if we all get out to vote on October 19.

Imagine not just how different, but how much better our country would be if more people had turned out to vote in 2011. Stephen Harper and the Conservatives benefit from low voter turnout. The Conservative base always votes. Getting more people to exercise their right to vote is the first step to defeating the Conservatives and electing a truly progressive, NDP government for the first time in Canadian history.

Stephen Harper claims to be a great economic manager, but he’s run massive deficits every single year he’s been in office, while at the same time gutting funding for health care, education, environmental protection and more. That’s quite a trick. Personally, I don’t mind governments running deficits in tough times, as long as the deficit spending stimulates the economy and helps working people make ends meet. But somehow Harper has done the reverse.



ACTIVIST CHAMPION The right-wing government of Stephen Harper can be defeated if we all work together, says retiring NDP MP Libby Davies (Vancouver East). Davies, seen here at Convention with Mark Hancock, received a standing ovation from delegates after a stirring video tribute to her decades of progressive activism.

Of all the areas that Harper has cut, very few things make me as angry as his treatment of our veterans. It’s one thing to send our men and women in the armed forces off to war — whether we agree on the justification or not — but it’s quite a different thing to simply abandon them when they come home from serving our country with serious injuries or trauma. One of the most telling incidents in the early days of this election campaign was when Harper held a media event at a Legion with reporters and supporters — but our vets were locked outside.

And his shabby treatment of veterans extends to seniors, too. Under Harper, the people who built this country now have to work longer to get less. The Conservatives have made it harder to retire in dignity, they prefer seniors to live in squalor and they’re making it tougher for young Canadians to build a life at home.

For all these reasons, and so many, many more, we must do everything we can to defeat Stephen Harper. I hope you’ll join me on October 19 and help elect an NDP federal government. I know Prime Minister Tom Mulcair will stop the damage the Conservatives have done to our country, both at home and abroad, and bring the kind of change working people and their families so desperately need.

Finally: please vote. Last election, just a handful of folks would have made the difference.

FOLLOW MARK ON TWITTER
@MarkHancockCUPE

PUSHING BACK ON PRIVATIZATION

WHITE ROCK CUPE Local 402-01 is campaigning to raise awareness of the City of White Rock’s proposed residential garbage privatization.

Local president Mike Guraliuk says that single-family homeowners don’t want privatization, especially after the bungled privatizing of multi-family pickup.

“Residents who don’t want garbage and recycling privatized are concerned that private contractors will mean declining and inconsistent service, paying more for less service, less accountability and less concern for the environment,” said Guraliuk.

While Council speculated about privatizing residential pickup by the end of 2014, they had not made a decision as of September.

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMES TO VANCOUVER

Coming up in the Winter 2016 issue of *Public Employee*, we’ll take a look at CUPE’s National Convention, to be held in Vancouver from November 2-6. Coverage will include an update on the union’s “Unite for Fairness” and political action campaigns.



Southern Railway workers back on track

BURNABY CUPE 7000, representing 126 employees of Southern Railway (SRY), reached a tentative agreement with the U.S.-owned company on May 1 — just in time for members attending CUPE BC’s annual convention in Vancouver to receive a rousing May Day tribute from delegates (right).

The seven-year agreement, reached shortly after the Spring issue of *Public Employee*

was mailed out, is retroactive to April 1, 2014. It includes preservation of post-retiree benefits, improvements to dental benefits, improvements to training and working conditions, and annual wage increases of 2.5, 2, 1.5, 1.5, 1.5, and 1.5 per cent, respectively.

Members ratified the agreement on May 4, ending a lockout that lasted 119 days.



BACK TO WORK Members of CUPE 401 celebrate after the end of the five-week lockout, thanking other CUPE and union members who stood with them.

Bitter lockout ends with deal

QUALICUM BEACH It took a mediator’s recommendations, an impending Labour Relations Board hearing and CUPE solidarity on the picket line to end the first labour dispute in this community’s history on September 3.

In the end, the 65 members of CUPE 401 who work for the town got the same two-per-cent wage hikes neighbouring communities had negotiated. That was always the goal — but the Qualicum workers were shut out of their jobs for five weeks before getting it.

“Until this round, negotiations were cooperative, constructive and often done in a day. No one could remember the last time we even had a grievance,” said CUPE 401 President Blaine Gurrie, describing the lockout as “totally unnecessary.”

This time, talks broke down when the recently elected town council and recently hired CAO dug in their heels on wages. When the local took a strike vote and launched an overtime ban, the town locked them out.

Eventually, the employer agreed to mediation but balked at the last minute and even tried to add a new issue after the Union had ratified the deal. CUPE started preparing a bad faith bargaining complaint when the town finally reconsidered and signed.

The workers are now back on the job — but not without a price, says Gurrie: “We stayed strong and we prevailed, but this lockout has taught us to mistrust our employer — a sad development in what used to be a happy, productive, caring workforce.”



voices

WHAT CUPE MEMBERS ARE SAYING

“We’re all about worker safety and I think the employer is, too.”

CUPE 5523 President Mark Olsen says all parties welcome a WorkSafe BC investigation into the Vernon School District’s asbestos management.

Vernon Morning Star, Friday, June 12, 2015.

“This new role in community health is well suited for B.C.’s highly trained paramedics. With the Community Paramedicine program will come enhanced patient care and new full-time career opportunities across the province.”

CUPE 873 President Bronwyn Barter heralds the Interior Health region’s launch of the Community Paramedicine initiative in Creston and Princeton by BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS).

Kelowna Capital News, Wednesday, August 12, 2015.

“Our members thought the program was a great way to help provide a healthy addition of protein to the food bank supplies while also providing some variety.”

CUPE 556 President Karen Garrett says this year’s Protein for People campaign contributed 70 cases of tinned wild salmon to the Comox Valley Food Bank.

Comox Valley Record, Monday, July 6, 2015.

“For transit systems comparable in a metropolitan city like ours, (international agencies) recommend a ratio of ... one supervisor for about every 32 transit operators.”

CUPE 4500 President Rob Woods notes that staff ratio for transit supervisors is less than half of what it should be, thanks to Translink cuts.

24 Hours Vancouver, Tuesday, June 30, 2015.

“A lot of people feel uncomfortable in the library because they are not academics. They shouldn’t. The library is a public place where everyone should feel comfortable.”

CUPE 1123 member David Finnis, a circulations desk worker and Storytime leader, shares some of his reflections as he retires from Okanagan Regional Library after 15 years.

Kelowna Daily Courier, Monday, August 10, 2015.

“We are glad to be able to return to our focus of helping to make Qualicum Beach the great community it is.”

CUPE 401 President Blaine Gurrie accentuates the positive at the end of a bitter, five-week lockout by the municipal employer.

Parksville Qualicum Beach News, Tuesday, September 8, 2015.



MAKING CONTACT CUPE members under the age of 30 came away from the Young Workers conference with a fully stocked activist toolkit and renewed confidence to get involved with their union.

Young workers, unite!

NEXT GENERATION OF CUPE ACTIVISTS URGED TO EMBRACE LEADERSHIP ROLES

PRINCE GEORGE The 70 members who attended CUPE BC’s Young Workers Task Force conference (“Building a Better Future,” August 19 – 21), learned that they make their union stronger by getting more involved as activists.

CUPE BC Secretary-Treasurer Paul Faoro, in his welcoming remarks, recalled how he became an activist in his local. He said his “magic moment” came when he had to file a grievance to get his first full-time job with the City of Vancouver.

“It felt so good to file a grievance and know I had someone who had my back,” said Faoro. “And the Union got me the job.”

Noting the significant impact of retirements on CUPE, he said that a big part of the conference was about building capacity and fostering leadership. “We need people like you,” he said.

NDP MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert, in his keynote speech, said that young people need to step forward as leaders because, by 2030, one in six people will be over the age of 70.

“My message has always been that we are leaders of today,” said Chandra Herbert. “We need to get the future we want by building it ourselves.”

BC Federation of Labour Secretary-Treasurer Aaron Ekman, a Prince George resident, captivated delegates with his speech on the role unions play in politics. “Working people absolutely have a right to participate in the process,” said Ekman. “It’s incumbent on us, we have a responsibility to elect folks more like us.”

At the closing session, Faoro demonstrated the online procedure to register to vote, pointing delegates to www.elections.ca. And he shared late federal NDP leader Jack Layton’s final words to young Canadians: “There are great challenges before you...I believe in you. Your energy, your vision, your passion for justice is exactly what this country needs today.”



MAKING THEIR VOICES HEARD During the public discussion after the forum, local residents talked about the impact of education cuts and the litany of problems that have resulted. Many took advantage of the opportunity to write a letter to their MLA.

Memo to Clark: Stop the cuts!

FORUM REVEALS PUBLIC OUTRAGE OVER BC LIBERAL EDUCATION POLICIES

PRINCE GEORGE A community forum on public education cuts held in the spring concluded that the K-12, colleges, and university education systems have suffered from more than a decade of chronic underfunding and cannot sustain further cuts.

Karen Wong, president of CUPE 3742 (school district support staff) told the forum that 22 schools have closed and K-12 is running on a skeleton staff.

“In School District 57 there is no ‘low-hanging fruit,’” said Wong, referring to Premier Christy Clark’s insensitive comment about programs targeted for cuts. “There’s nothing

left to cut. We did that years ago and the students and staff are suffering for it.”

Brian Trotter, president of CUPE 4991 (maintenance & grounds workers), spoke about the high costs of ensuring that closed facilities are kept safe.

Lily Bachand, president of CUPE 4951 (operational staff, CNC) spoke about chronic cuts to colleges: “If training is not provided to local communities, it will remain a challenge to attract skilled professionals to the north.”

Caroline Sewell, president of CUPE 3799 (UNBC) said that education funding is a community issue that goes beyond the campus or school.

“It’s a Prince George and northern B.C. issue, and we need to start talking about it,” she said.

CUPE LOCALS SEEK ANSWERS ON THE EXIT OF UBC’S PRESIDENT

VANCOUVER In a joint letter to UBC Board of Governors Chair John Montalbano, all three presidents from CUPE locals raised concerns about the handling of the recent departure of UBC President, Dr. Arvind Gupta.

The CUPE locals expressed concern that the Board had simply “accepted” Dr. Gupta’s resignation and given no explanation of what had happened. As a publicly-funded institution, the August 20 letter noted, the Board has a responsibility to the broader community to ensure that UBC’s reputation is “beyond reproach.”

The letter, signed by CUPE 116 President Colleen Garbe, CUPE 2278 President Trish Everett-Kabut, and CUPE 2950 President Karen Ranalletta, called on the Board to clarify the real reason for Dr. Gupta’s unexpected resignation and to obey the principles of “openness, transparency and effective communication” as necessary pillars for a respected public institution.

“We had selected someone — a professor, Canadian, person of colour and internal candidate — and hoped that we had someone with a different style, a breath of fresh air,” said Garbe, commenting on Dr. Gupta.

Ranalletta and Everett-Kabut noted that UBC, as a public institution and one of the three largest research institutions in the country with a significant reputation, must be held more accountable.

“We deserve more than silence,” said Ranalletta.



ALL IN THE FAMILY In July, CUPE Local 50 welcomed 19 new members who provide support services to the RCMP detachment in the City of Langford. The new members joined a large Capital Region CUPE local that represents workers for the City of Victoria, Victoria Police Board, BCSPCA Victoria Branch, Gorge Vale Golf Club, Royal Oak Burial Park, and United Way of Greater Victoria.

TAKING ON THE CHALLENGES TOGETHER

Delegates to Convention 2015 elected a new Executive Board for CUPE BC on May 2. Re-elected President Mark Hancock and Secretary-Treasurer Paul Faoro welcomed new and returning General, Regional, and Diversity Vice Presidents, as well as Trustees, to the Union's first post-Convention Executive Board meetings in July.

"Paul and I would like to thank all outgoing executive members for their years of service to CUPE," said Hancock. "It's also good to see others returning to the board, and to see so many new faces. We'll need that mix of experience and fresh ideas as we meet the many challenges that lie ahead."



Mark Hancock,
President



Paul Faoro
Secretary-Treasurer



John Hall, General
Vice-President



Karen Ranalletta,
General Vice-President



Trevor Davies, General
Vice-President



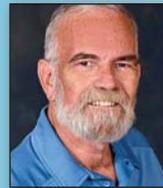
Cindy McQueen,
General Vice-President



Jacqueline Hall,
Regional Vice-President
Fraser Valley Region



Ken Vaughn-Evans,
Regional Vice-President
Kootenays



Michael Lanier,
Regional Vice-President
Metro Vancouver
Region



Frank Lee, Regional
Vice-President
Metro Vancouver
Region



Tanya Paterson,
Regional Vice-President
Metro Vancouver
Region



Karen Wong, Regional
Vice-President
North Region



Jolene Lamoureux,
Regional Vice-President
Okanagan Region



Amber Leonard
Regional Vice-President
Vancouver Island
Region



Michelle Waite,
Regional Vice-President
Vancouver Island
Region



Debra Merrier,
Diversity Vice-President
Representing
Aboriginal Workers



Michele Alexander,
Diversity Vice-President
Representing Workers
of Colour



Laurie Whyte -
Trustee One Year



Alexandra Youngberg -
Trustee Two Year



José van Berkel -
Trustee Three Year



Tracey O'Hara,
Alternate Regional
Vice-President
Fraser Valley Region



Sarah Bjorknas,
Alternate Regional
Vice-President
Metro Vancouver



Nicole Edmondson,
Alternate Regional
Vice-President
Okanagan Region



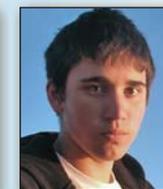
Monica Brady,
Alternate Regional
Vice-President
North Region



Niki Lord, Alternate
Regional Vice-President
Kootenays Region



Alison Pringle,
Alternate Regional
Vice-President
Vancouver Island



Quinton Alexander
Tutin, Alternate
Diversity Vice-President
Representing
Aboriginal Workers



Drew Parris, Alternate
Diversity Vice-President
Representing Workers
of Colour



CELEBRATING THE MANY REWARDS OF OUR ACTIVISM

Tales of courage inspire delegates at Union's 52nd annual convention

VANCOUVER In addition to electing a new executive to lead the Union, delegates to CUPE BC's 52nd annual Convention heard from a wide range of guest speakers while debating resolutions that covered all sectors and issues that impact CUPE members and their communities.

Kicking off the proceedings with his opening night address, CUPE BC President Mark Hancock moved delegates with a personal story of his recent health issues while urging all members to get involved in the federal election campaign.

Secretary-Treasurer Paul Faoro's report showed delegates that CUPE BC's finances remain strong and stable, despite the large costs associated with last year's BCTF strike.

This year's Convention featured the May 1 premiere of *A History of Action*, an animated film that covers the history of collective actions taken by workers to win rights. The film was written and produced by Vancouver filmmaker and CUPE 1004 member Colin Askey, who also produced the 50th anniversary history of CUPE BC.

Delegates also marked May Day by honouring members who were either on strike or had been locked out. A thank-you presentation to CUPE National President Paul Moist, from members of CUPE



VIVA CUPE! CODEMUH's Reyna Mateo, seen with CoDev's Kathryn Janzen, thanked delegates for CUPE BC's support.

608, noted CUPE's strong support for locked-out members at Naramata Centre. As well, delegates recognized other locals in current disputes and celebrated with CUPE 7000 members who had just negotiated an end to the Southern Railway lockout.

Stephen Lewis, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations, delivered a moving address focusing on the Lewis Foundation's work in war-torn areas of Africa. Lewis thanked CUPE for the Union's long-time support of his foundation's efforts. Federal NDP leader Tom Mulcair appeared at Convention via video, paying tribute to retiring long-time Vancouver East MP (and former CUPE member) Libby Davies. BC NDP leader John Horgan delivered a campaign-style speech and was joined onstage by many members of his caucus.

Delegates also heard from Reyna Isabel Tejada Mateo, regional coordinator for the Honduran trade union CODEMUH. Mateo told delegates about the many challenges that she and her members face on a daily basis just to survive as activists. She also thanked CUPE BC members for their continued sponsorship of CODEMUH through a partnership with Co-Development Canada.

Delegates also had an opportunity to participate in a demonstration of electronic voting on a number of light-hearted "issues." In one example, a majority of delegates voted for the Vancouver Canucks to be "Canada's team." In another, past-president and elections chair Barry O'Neill was encouraged to "stick to golf."



JUSTICE SEEKER Stephen Lewis described the Prime Minister's Office under Stephen Harper as "retrograde, reactionary, fossilized...a kind of autocratic narcissism run rampant."



“Believe you me, Sisters and Brothers, the Harperites are coming after us — in fact, they’ve already begun.”

Together, we can stop the bleeding

DUMPING HARPER GOVERNMENT IS NOW A MATTER OF SURVIVAL FOR ALL UNIONS IN CANADA

Of all the extreme right-wing policies that Stephen Harper has forced on Canadians during his dreadful decade in power — and there are far too many to fit on one page — nothing sums up his contempt for workers quite like Bill C-377.

This piece of union-bashing legislation, which we predicted from the moment Harper took office, is now law. It imposes restrictions and oversight on unions that — surprise, surprise — are not required of the corporations, employer associations, and right-wing think tanks who lobbied like hell for its passage. (On the contrary: many of these folks enjoy the tax advantages of charitable organization status.)

Believe you me, Sisters and Brothers, the Harperites are coming after us — in fact, they’ve already begun.

U.S.-STYLE UNION BASHING

The Harperites don’t care that the bill is unconstitutional. They’re more than happy to pay good lawyers to hold this thing up at the Supreme Court — and to do so on the taxpayers’ dime. You don’t have to be a public sector union to know that Bill C-377 stinks: a whole bunch of groups, from the Canadian Bar Association to the National Hockey League Players’ Association, have come out against it. So have the association representing police unions, the federal privacy commissioner, and at least seven provinces.

Bill C-377 is a copycat of U.S. anti-union law brought in by George W. Bush’s Republicans in 2003. It is the Conservative Party’s way of turning Canada into a right-to-work state, like Scott Walker’s Wisconsin. Among other things, it requires unions, labour trusts and employee associations to disclose any transaction of more than \$5,000, along with the names of the payer and payee, to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Plus a host of other privacy-violating intrusions that will send costs soaring at the



SEEKING VOLUNTEERS CUPE BC General Vice-President Karen Ranalletta, left, and CUPE’s federal election campaign coordinator Tania Jarzebiak, seen here with Robin Jones, say there are still plenty of ways to help out in the final weeks of the campaign to elect the NDP.

CRA just to maintain this new monitoring system being forced upon it.

Bill C-377 is just one reason CUPE is pulling out all the stops to get the vote out this time and make sure that our members do what they can to defeat this disaster of a government.

As regional director, I don’t normally make such a direct appeal for staff and members to get involved in election campaigns. However, as we head into the home stretch of this one, I am doing just that. What’s at stake is the very future of the labour movement. It is too important to sit this one out.

GETTING OUT THE VOTE

We’re not asking you to leave your families for two weeks — just to volunteer a few hours at the campaign office of your local NDP candidate. A day or two working the phones, delivering leaflets, knocking on doors, or picking up pizza for your fellow volunteers.

If you don’t know who your local NDP candidate is, you can find out by visiting the party’s website at ndp.ca/candidates. Also, make sure we have your contact information, so that we can reach you with important updates. Just e-mail the B.C. Division at info@cupe.bc.ca. You can also stay informed by visiting CUPE BC’s Facebook page, or CUPE National’s elections page, cupe.ca/vote. Oh, and don’t forget to make sure you’re registered to vote. It’s quick and easy to do online, at elections.ca.

Finally, just remember Alberta. No one thought it could happen there, either. But if we all work together on this, who knows? Perhaps this November’s CUPE National Convention in Vancouver will be the very first to feature a speech by the Prime Minister of Canada.



OUR TIME HAS COME

TOGETHER WE CAN HELP ELECT CANADA'S FIRST NDP GOVERNMENT

A CARING CANADA Seen with federal NDP Leader Tom Mulcair promoting the Union's childcare campaign are CUPE 1936 members Cindy Chisholm and Valeria Mancilla, and Valeria's son Emilio.

AS this edition of *Public Employee* lands on your doorstep, one of the longest election campaigns in Canadian history is finally nearing its end. If all goes well on Election Day, October 19 will mark the end of nearly ten years of the most right-wing government Canada has ever seen.

CUPE BC is committed to electing Canada's first-ever federal NDP government under Tom Mulcair. The Union has been pulling out all the stops to encourage CUPE members in B.C. to elect a truly progressive government — one that understands the real issues facing working people and their families.

"This is the most important federal election, certainly in my lifetime," says CUPE BC President Mark Hancock. "After nearly a decade of attacks on workers' rights, a steady erosion of civil liberties and a total failure to manage the economy, it's time to defeat Stephen Harper.

"But it's not enough, as some so-called progressives believe, to simply defeat Harper. It's absolutely essential that we elect a positive alternative, and the only party capable of defeating Harper is the NDP, both here in B.C. and across the country."

Stacking the deck

New election rules imposed by the Conservatives mean that CUPE BC can't operate member-to-member phone banks, as in previous elections. So the Union is encouraging members who want to get involved in the election to work directly with local NDP campaigns.

“Harper has tried to stack the deck in a desperate attempt to hang on to power,” says CUPE BC Secretary-Treasurer Paul Faoro. “Whether by using the Canada Revenue Agency to shut down voices of opposition before the election, or using a gag law to silence them during the campaign, Harper has made sure that defeating him will be the toughest political campaign we’ve ever seen.”

Despite the roadblocks to union participation in the election campaign, adds Faoro, the Union’s top priority is to encourage as many CUPE members in B.C. as possible to vote. “We saw the difference the votes of CUPE members can have in community after community across the province in the last civic elections, where we helped elect a record number

of progressive candidates,” says Faoro. “We’re asking CUPE members to ask themselves a serious question: am I better off after ten years of Stephen Harper? And if the answer to that question is ‘no’ — as it is for the vast majority of working people — then we want them to ask a second question: ‘what’s the best way to defeat Harper?’ In this election, especially here in B.C., the answer is to vote for Tom Mulcair and your local NDP candidate.”

Member to member activism

CUPE BC’s Political Action Committee chair Trevor Davies says a key focus of the committee’s work during the campaign has been to connect with members on the job — particularly younger workers.

“We want to make sure that as many CUPE members as possible are registered to vote before October 19,” says Davies. “And we are really focusing our efforts on new and young CUPE members, especially those who will be eligible to vote for the first time this election.

“Studies all over the world show that the relatively simple act of registering to vote makes it much more likely that a person will actually vote on election day, and we know that a high voter turnout will be bad news for Harper and the Conservatives, and good news for the NDP.”

Davies also points to last year’s local elections in B.C. as an example of how increased activism by CUPE members can lead to political change.

“Prince George is a great example of how, if we are strategic and focused, we can make progressive change,” he says. “In the 2012 local elections, CUPE members in Prince George weren’t particularly active in the campaign, and we ended up with a right-wing council that forced a strike and wasted hundreds of thousands of dollars on a botched ‘core review.’ Two

“STUDIES ALL OVER THE WORLD SHOW THAT THE RELATIVELY SIMPLE ACT OF REGISTERING TO VOTE MAKES IT MUCH MORE LIKELY THAT A PERSON WILL ACTUALLY VOTE ON ELECTION DAY.”



GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT CUPE members volunteered on the campaign to re-elect NDP MP Fin Donnelly by spending an evening talking to voters in his Port Moody-Coquitlam riding. With Donnelly are Marcel Marsolais, campaign manager Tania Jarzebiak, Karen Ranalletta, Keeghan Hughes, Frank Lee and Raman Braich.

years later, CUPE members played a significant role in getting out the vote for progressive candidates and today we have a progressive mayor and majority council.

“That’s the kind of impact political action can have, and it’s the kind of impact we hope to have in communities across B.C. on October 19.”

Hancock says that Conservative legislation like Bill C-377, which aims to hobble the trade union movement and silence its political voice, should be a loud warning sign to workers and their families.

“The Conservative attacks on the labour movement haven’t received as much attention as they should,” he notes. “But I know this: if Harper gets re-elected, he’s going to make the anti-union approach of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker look progressive by comparison.”

No safe seats for Harper

Previous federal elections have featured generally predictable results in some ridings. It’s conventional wisdom that Vancouver East is reliably NDP, while the eastern Fraser Valley is reliably Conservative. This election, though, some of that conventional wisdom may need a reboot, as a desire for change seems to be growing across the province — and the country.



Jen Martel

No one is suggesting that Jenny Kwan won’t be successful in her bid to replace the retiring Libby Davies, but there just might be something

happening out in the Valley that could surprise political observers across the country.

Although a Fraser Valley riding like Abbotsford is regarded as a safe bastion for the Conservatives, don’t forget that just a few months ago Alberta voters elected

Q&A WITH MP NATHAN CULLEN

Nathan Cullen is MP for Skeena-Bulkley Valley and Finance critic for the federal NDP caucus. CUPE members who attended the BC Division Convention in 2014 will know he's a great speaker. (For those who missed it, visit www.cupe.bc.ca/videos and check out his keynote address.)

We talked with Cullen in the early days of the marathon election campaign.

Q: What's this election about?

A: What I'm hearing from voters is pretty simple. This election is about one question: "Change, or more of the same?" An overwhelming number of people are saying it's time for a change — and they're looking to us as New Democrats to deliver that change.



TIME FOR CHANGE A Tom Mulcair government would be a breath of fresh air after a decade of Stephen Harper's narrow, ideological approach, says Nathan Cullen.

For almost ten years, the Conservative government has had a narrow and ideological view of our country and our place in the international community. That view is increasingly out of step and out of touch with Canadians, and I think that's one of the main reasons Tom Mulcair and the NDP are

resonating so deeply with voters during this campaign.

For the first time, really, voters are seeing the NDP as having the ability to actually form government, and that's giving people an alternative they hadn't considered before.

Q: Why should CUPE members vote for the NDP?

A: CUPE members know the pressures that funding cuts have created, whether in health care, education or even at the civic level due to federal downloading.

The issues that CUPE members care about — health care, living wages, and public services — are the issues we're fighting for in the NDP. So I think CUPE members are looking to the NDP as a serious and credible way to get rid of Harper and the Conservatives, and to elect a government that shares their values and cares about their issues.



ACTIVISM 101 On September 1, CUPE's Metro Council hosted an election training session for union activists at CUPE's B.C. regional office.

an NDP provincial government after more than 40 years of Conservative rule. CUPE 774 Vice President Jen Martel is the NDP candidate in Abbotsford.

NDP MP Nathan Cullen is bullish about the NDP's potential in places like Abbotsford.

"For me, one of the most amazing moments on election night in 2011 was watching Gilles Duceppe concede his seat," he says. "Imagine, a New Democrat knocking off the leader of the Bloc Quebecois! If we can make that kind of breakthrough in Quebec, I think anything is possible. This election, there is such a strong demand for change all across B.C. that I think we could see candidates like Jen Martel surprise a whole bunch of people."

WHERE THE PARTIES STAND

	NDP	Conservatives	Liberals
Retirement security Protect our pensions and expand CPP	✓	X	✓
Child care \$15 a day national child care program	✓	X	X
Health care Reversing \$36 billion in Conservative cuts	✓	X	X
Good jobs and the economy Create good paying jobs by supporting public services and fighting privatization	✓	X	?
Post-secondary education Stable and predictable long term funding	✓	X	✓
Airline safety Work to restore health and safety regulations like the ratio of one flight attendant per 40 passengers	✓	X	X
Civil liberties and human rights Repeal C-51, respect aboriginal sovereignty and restore funding to women's and other development organizations	✓	X	X
Workers' rights Support free collective bargaining and repeal C-377 and C-525	✓	X	?
Climate change Federal leadership and action	✓	X	✓



CLEANER MEANS SAFER CUPE 561 members wear T-shirts with the message “Campaign for Clean Schools,” to let everyone know that cutting back on custodial services in schools could put children’s health at risk.

POST-SECONDARY BARGAINING

As the fall session began on college campuses throughout B.C., bargaining had wrapped up for all College sector locals (CUPE 15, 1858, 2773, 2081, 3479 and 4951) with the exception of CUPE 4627 (Vancouver Community College).

It was a different story for CUPE universities. The following locals had achieved collective agreements: CUPE 3799 (University of Northern BC), CUPE locals 116, 2278 and 2950 from the University of British Columbia, CUPE 3338 (Simon Fraser University), and the University of Victoria’s CUPE 4163 (Component 3).

At press time, UVic locals CUPE 917, 951 and 4163 (Components 1 and 2), as well as CUPE 3886 (Royal Roads University), were at the table. CUPE 4879 (Thompson Rivers University) was in mediation.

CUPE 873-03 GETS DEAL

RICHMOND Thanks to a mediated settlement in June, CUPE 873-03 members achieved their first collective agreement with SN Transport nearly a year after certifying with the union.

The three-year contract includes general wage increases, improvements to hours of work and leave provisions, and other benefits unavailable to members before the agreement.

The 115 CUPE 873-03 members who work at SN Transport are transfer drivers and

patient care assistants who bring patients to and from medical appointments at hospitals and clinics throughout the Lower Mainland. They joined CUPE in July 2014 and began bargaining for their first contract a month later.

BC NDP CONVENTION

Hot on the heels of the CUPE National Convention in Vancouver, the BCNDP will hold its biennial convention November 6-8. The convention will feature BC NDP Leader John Horgan and his caucus team as they gear up for the next provincial election in 2017.

HONOURING THE FALLEN

VICTORIA Ambulance paramedics put their lives at risk every day and cannot be thanked enough for the critical role they play in emergency health services. That message was loud and clear during a solemn dedication ceremony on May 6 to memorialize ten paramedics who have died on the job since the BC Ambulance Service was established in 1974.

The granite memorial, funded by BC Emergency Health Services and the Ambulance Paramedics of BC, was unveiled on the south lawn of the provincial Legislature, where it joined similar memorials for firefighters and law enforcement officials.



NEVER FORGOTTEN Etched on this granite memorial are the names of ten CUPE 873 members who died in the line of duty: C.A. Sunderland, Theresa Hunt, Carolyn May Schlamp, Wendy Ann Thompson, Andreas Goedicke, Shawn Michael Courier, Kim Karlene Weitzel, Michael Scott Gray, Jo-Ann Dorothea Fuller, and Ivan Polivka.

A SOBERING LOOK BEHIND THE STACKS

NEW SURVEY COULD POINT THE WAY TO SAFER, HEALTHIER LIBRARIES

An unprecedented survey of CUPE's library sector in B.C. is providing new insight into workplace conditions, particularly some of the health and safety challenges that workers in this sector face on a daily basis.

Phase One of the CUPE BC Library Health & Safety Study, an online survey conducted in May and June, drew responses from more than 500 of the union's 4,500 library workers throughout the province. The sample represented library workers at schools, universities, colleges and municipalities in 50 communities.

Confirming anecdotal evidence

Initial survey analysis was made available to the public in early September. The data shows that, in addition to understaffing and salary pressure, library workers face situations outside the general perception of library work including safety issues, dealing with biohazards, and criminal behaviour.

Exposure to urine, feces, vomit, bed bugs and used needles, as well as routine encounters with mentally-ill patrons, threats, and incidents of theft or clients using the library to watch porn, deal drugs or ply the sex trade, all showed up in the results. Among other findings, the survey found that 65 per cent of respondents had encountered the biohazards mentioned above, but only 37 per cent said they had adequate training to deal with them.

"The survey results support anecdotal reports we've been receiving from front line library workers for years," says CUPE's libraries coordinator Zoe Magnus.

A draft version of the survey report suggests that the results may be inevitable, given the nature of the workplace involved. "Libraries are one of the most accessible indoor public spaces that exist in communities, campuses and schools," it says. "In addition to being information and technology hubs, libraries are also centres for community building and social interaction. As a



COMMON FRONT CUPE library workers face the same health and safety challenges throughout B.C. From left, CUPE 1123 members Vicky White, Kelly Long, Glenda Livolsi, and Marigje Toepfer work for Okanagan Regional Library.

result, at times, libraries can be unpredictable workplaces."

External pressures to the system

One factor putting more pressure on libraries and the people who work in them is government cut-backs to community social services.

CUPE 23 member Sarah Bjorknas, a supervisor at Burnaby's Bob Prittie Metrotown Library and CUPE BC's alternate regional vice-president for Metro Vancouver, told the *Burnaby Now* newspaper that local libraries have seen a rise, over the past decade or so, in the number of apparently mentally-ill and homeless patrons coming to the library because they have no place else to go.

"We absolutely want to continue to be a welcoming space for everyone and a safe space for everyone, and that means different things for different people," Bjorknas said, "[but] "it came to a point where we needed to shift how we were thinking and doing things."



Looking for solutions

Meanwhile, Phase Two of the survey will consist of follow up one-on-one interviews with CUPE members who work in libraries. The interviews will allow survey respondents to go into more detail on key questions and provide an opportunity for deeper analysis of the issues facing library workers, as well as exploring front line solutions and recommendations.

The Committee looks forward to the final report and recommendations on how libraries can continue to be very open and, at the same time, safer workplaces. Once the final report is released in December, CUPE BC and locals will be talking to library boards and other employers about the key findings and solutions.

"The information our members are sharing with us is invaluable. It will really help us move forward on proposals to improve the workplace environment in public libraries throughout B.C.," says Committee Chair and General Vice-President Karen Ranalletta.

A \$20,000 BOOST FOR NORTH SHORE SEARCH AND RESCUE

NORTH VANCOUVER In May, CUPE BC donated \$20,000 to the North Shore Search and Rescue Society (NSR) to help develop a new rope rescue catwalk training facility that will provide additional training capacity for the Society.

President Mark Hancock and Secretary-Treasurer Paul Faoro presented the donation to NSR Team Leader Mike Danks and Society members at the NSR headquarters.

“The catwalk will allow members to practice their life-saving skills in a controlled environment,” said Danks. “This will decrease wear and tear on equipment, reduce the time involved in driving to training sites, and allow for increased safety for our members.”

“We started talking about making a significant donation last year when the Society had equipment stolen from its bases in the mountains,” said Hancock. “But when we approached NSR about making a donation, they told us that the rope rescue training equipment was their top priority.”

CUPE BC will be invited back to the training facility to dedicate the new equipment once it’s been installed.

HIGH VISIBILITY AT LIBRARY CONFERENCE

In an active year for our library workers, CUPE BC was once again a Gold Sponsor of the President’s Reception at the BC Library Association 2015 conference in May.

The CUPE BC Library Committee’s updated book and film lists were a big hit at the conference and can be found at cupebclibraries.ca. Also at the event, Committee Chair and CUPE BC General Vice-President Karen Ranalletta led a “CUPE 101” workshop on the role the Union and its workers play in our libraries.



BRIDGING BARRIERS Seva Canada’s Gretchen Ladd, left, and Executive Director Penny Lyons say that union contributions such as CUPE BC’s have helped countless Ethiopians receive treatment to prevent blindness.

Preventing blindness, improving lives

COLLEEN JORDAN HUMANITY FUND CONTRIBUTION HELPS SEVA CANADA FIGHT EYE DISEASE IN ETHIOPIA

In the developing world, lack of water and sanitation can often be a recipe for infectious disease. In Ethiopia, for example, trachoma — a contagious bacterial infection of the eye — affects about 30 million people, mostly women and children.

Trachoma strikes when flies land on the eyes and infect them, causing an inflamed granulation on the inner surface of the lids. Cataract surgery can cost up to \$50 US for an adult. With monthly incomes averaging less than \$40, blindness is a fact of life for many.

That’s where Seva comes in.

Seva Canada (“Seva” is Sanskrit for “service,” or “compassion in action”) is an international development organization that has restored sight and prevented blindness to

more than 3.5 million people in the developing world since 1985. Thanks to a \$5,000 contribution from the Colleen Jordan Humanity Fund, CUPE BC recently supported Seva’s developing eye care program in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.

“What is crucial is that this aid is not just going to direct services, it’s also helping to build capacity to improve those services,” says Seva Canada’s executive director, Penny Lyons.

“The people who need these services don’t necessarily live in cities and can’t afford the surgery. This program is creating outreach services, so that the number of people that they reach will grow. It makes a huge difference.” For more info, visit: www.seva.ca



TRADITIONAL FEAST CUPE BC executive and local CUPE members handed out apples to the crowd as they joined more than 250,000 people in Surrey on April 18 for the largest Vaisakhi parade outside of India.



GREAT TEAMWORK Critical Care Paramedics (L-R) Kevin Lambert, Chris Naples, and Rico Ruffy brought home the Gold from the Rallye Rejviz International Medical Rescue Competition on May 29.

Bringing home the gold

IT'S A MEDAL HAT TRICK FOR B.C.'S PARAMEDICS

RICHMOND For the third year running, CUPE 873 paramedics from B.C. made it to the podium at the Rallye Rejviz International Medical Rescue Competition in the Czech Republic on May 29. After winning silver twice in a row, the team placed first — winning gold — thanks to some amazing teamwork and expertise.

Critical Care Paramedics Kevin Lambert, Chris Naples, and Rico Ruffy trained all year for this competitive event. Team manager John Richmond (Advanced Care Paramedic) and international judge Clarke McGuire

(retired paramedic) provided support.

“We’re all so proud of this team,” said CUPE 873 President Bronwyn Barter. “The dedication and hard work that led to this win is reflected daily by ambulance paramedics across B.C.”

Paramedics from Great Britain and the USA won silver and bronze, respectively.

The event featured 30 teams from 20 countries including the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, Estonia, Austria, Denmark, Slovenia, Switzerland, Poland, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Turkey, and New Zealand.

CUPE BC and CUPE 873 co-sponsored the team, which also received support through fundraising.

\$25,000 for earthquake relief in Nepal

BURNABY CUPE BC donated \$25,000 to Oxfam Canada’s relief efforts in Nepal following the second of two deadly earthquakes that ravaged the impoverished country in May.

Delegates to the B.C. Division Convention unanimously passed an emergency resolution to make the donation. CUPE National contributed \$35,000



to relief efforts after the first earthquake struck.

“We are so fortunate to live in this part of the world,” said CUPE BC Secretary-Treasurer Paul Faoro.

“While our province faces serious challenges, they pale in comparison to the tragedy in Nepal. When disasters strike in other parts of the world, our members want to help.”

CAR SHOW BUILDS ON COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

CHILLIWACK

A heat wave didn’t deter visitors from CUPE 411’s new tent



at the Chilliwack Classic Car Show in June — the second time K-12 education support workers participated. CUPE 411 President Rod Isaac said that the local has been connecting with folks ‘slowly and surely.’

“We’re just talking common sense and sharing our values,” said Isaac. “By doing that, people see how closely our values are aligned with their own.”

Button making was a popular addition this year, as children coloured templates and left wearing their own creations. Local 411 water bottles were a hit with the hot and thirsty public, as many appreciated the donation of locally sourced water.

The CUPE 411 executive contributed again in a big way and more members than ever got involved this year.



MAKING THINGS BETTER

CUPE Local 798 participates in the long-standing food bank drive Christmas in July. This year the local hosted another successful event, inviting the community to drop off donations and join them for food and refreshments in the Quality Foods parking lot in Powell River.



PROVINCEWIDE DIVERSITY

CUPE members attended summer parades and festivals for LGBT pride throughout B.C. this year. DOWN FROM TOP LEFT: Members celebrate in Victoria, Quesnel, Vancouver, and Prince George.



CELEBRATING OUR WORK

CUPE members throughout B.C. attended Labour Day events on September 7. LEFT TOP AND CENTRE: At Swangard Stadium in Burnaby, Mark Hancock and Paul Faoro, along with National President Paul Moist, HEU President Victor Elkins, performing members Tanya Paterson and Stevo Knauff, and BC NDP Leader John Horgan join members of rock band Chilliwack while Executive Assistant Sharon Prescott and General Vice President Cindy McQueen serve corn on the cob. CUPE tents were also busy in Kamloops (BOTTOM LEFT) and, FROM TOP RIGHT DOWN: Cranbrook, Campbell River, Victoria, and Abbotsford.





“Only the NDP has a truly progressive platform. It’s also important to remember that our Union is a founding partner to the creation of the NDP — a party dedicated to working people.”

One election away

A FEDERAL NDP GOVERNMENT IS NOW WITHIN OUR GRASP

For many years, the very idea of a federal NDP government was the stuff of fantasy. The party first led by Tommy Douglas seemed forever fated to the backbenches: a protest party of principle, nothing more. Even in 1988 — when expectations were high after the great free trade debate — Ed Broadbent’s NDP gained only 11 seats nationwide, for a total of 43: barely half the seat count for John Turner’s Liberals and a tiny fraction of the Mulroney Conservatives’ reduced majority of 169 seats.

As we all know, Jack Layton and the “Orange Wave” of 2011 dramatically changed all that, transforming the political map of this country. Thanks to an inspiring NDP campaign, widespread opposition to the Stephen Harper agenda, and effective political action campaigns by the labour movement and progressive coalitions, our party emerged from the last federal election, for the very first time, as Canada’s Official Opposition.

Not even the tragic loss of Jack, later that year, has reversed the trend. Under the able leadership of Tom Mulcair, the NDP is stronger than ever and has been doing well in this campaign. But that success is one of my big concerns as Election Day approaches. As you read this issue of *Public Employee*, only a couple of weeks remain before the vote. This is no time to take our foot off the gas pedal. On the contrary: this time, B.C. could prove the difference-maker between another destructive Harper regime and a brave new NDP government on October 19.

Canadians are obviously fed up with the extreme right-wing ideology of Harperism. During this campaign, you’ve no doubt seen those placards bearing the letters “ABC” (Anyone But Conservative). In the same spirit, LeadNow’s “strategic voting” approach assumes that voting for any “progressive” candidate that is not Conservative — regardless of party — is the best way to defeat Harper. It is not.



PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS Electing Canada’s first NDP government will be a 24/7 occupation for the final two weeks of the campaign, says Paul Faoro, seen here joining a ‘Burma shave’ for Vancouver Granville candidate Mira Oreck on September 10.

Strategic voting is a scheme based on the premise that its organizers know how people intend to vote in any one particular electoral district. Promoting strategic voting ignores the platforms of political parties and the issues voters care about, thus fuelling the cynicism of the Canadian electorate. By overshadowing the issues and drowning out the real democratic choices before the electorate, strategic voting only contributes to low voter turn-out on election day.

At CUPE BC, we believe it is not enough just to vote against Harper. We have to vote for the party whose values we share. If you take a good look at the party platforms, the NDP’s clearly has the most checkmarks beside it. Good jobs and workers’ rights, affordable childcare, a strong health care system, retirement security, corporate taxation, leadership on climate change: check, check, check.

Neither the Liberal Party of Canada nor the Green Party are progressive. Both parties have very right-wing economic policies and do not stand for working families or public services. Only the NDP has a truly progressive platform. It’s also important to remember that our Union is a founding partner to the creation of the NDP — a party dedicated to working people.

To build the future we want for ourselves and the generations to come, it’s more important than ever that we unite behind the NDP. So let’s do it. Let’s make the phrase “Prime Minister Tom Mulcair” become reality on October 19.

FOLLOW PAUL ON TWITTER

@PaulFaoro



PUBLISHED BY The Canadian Union of Public Employees, British Columbia Division
510 - 4940 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4T3 POSTAL AGREEMENT # 42016512
TEL 604.291.9119 **FAX** 604.291.9043 **EMAIL** editor@cupe.bc.ca

CUPE BC PRESIDENT Mark Hancock **SECRETARY-TREASURER** Paul Faoro

THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE EDITOR Dan Gawthrop **CONTRIBUTORS** Murray Bush, Roseanne Moran, Clay Suddaby, Janet Szliske

COVER IMAGE Josh Berson **PHOTOS** CUPE Communications, Josh Berson, Trevor Davies, Brent Granby, Jacqueline Hall, John Hall, Amber Leonard, Jen Martel, Ken Vaughn-Evans, Michelle Waite, Karen Wong, CUPE Locals 798 and 873

DESIGN AND LAYOUT Working Design

THE

CURRENT

CUPE BC'S NEWS ROUND-UP

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to miss out on news and issues that matter to CUPE members.

But it's even easier to get connected and stay up to date with what's going on at CUPE in British Columbia. Just visit cupe.bc.ca to sign up for the Current, CUPE BC's news roundup.

It's easy, it's free, and we will never spam you!

SIGN UP TODAY!

 @CUPEBCNews  CUPE BC
cupebcvotes.com info@cupe.bc.ca



Doing it right.

Join us at the Municipal Pension Plan Annual General Meeting

October 15, 2015
10am – noon

Anvil Centre • Third floor theatre
777 Columbia Street, New Westminster, BC

For details visit
mpp.pensionsbc.ca/aggm


#mppagm

ON OCT 19, don't forget TO VOTE!

Only Tom Mulcair and the NDP
can defeat Harper's Conservatives



We're one election away from:

- ✗ Building a national childcare program
- ✗ Repealing Harper's and Trudeau's Bill C-51
- ✗ Abolishing the Senate

And electing Canada's first federal NDP government!

 @CUPEBCNews  CUPE BC
cupebcvotes.com info@cupe.bc.ca

his magazine produced by CUPE for CUPE members.

PUBLICATION MAIL
AGREEMENT 42016512
RETURN REQUESTED

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
CALM
OF LABOUR MEDIA