



CUPE CONNECTION

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Ian, Wendy, Dick, Margaret, Treena, Duane, Dave, Allan, Ronn, attending BC Federation of Labour Conference



Raise the Minimum Wage, It's Only Fair

By: Treena Harley

Why do we need to concern ourselves with minimum wage?

Fortunately for CUPE 3523 members, we do not have to worry about minimum wage. Or do we?

Unions are based on the principle that all workers deserve to be treated fairly and respectfully. Unions have been instrumental in shaping health and safety laws, paid vacation, sick leave, overtime pay, collective bargaining rights for employees, pregnancy and parental leave, the right to strike and so much more. Minimum wage has been a fundamental core of concern for unions.

Here are some statistics provided by BC Federation of Labour:

- 47% of BC Minimum wage workers are over the age of 25

- 63% of BC minimum wage workers are women
- Minimum wage workers aren't all new to the job. The majority have worked in their jobs for at least a year
- BC has the highest cost of living in the country but yet the minimum wage is eighth in Canada

\$15/hour wage would give people a fair chance to cover the cost of the most basic necessities.

Join the campaign at www.fightfor15bc.ca

Please email Treena Harley with your personal email address to recording.secretary@cupe3523.ca if you would like to be included on the email list for CUPE Connection. (We can't use the District system for Union business). This is the best way to view CUPE Connection, as it will just arrive in your inbox. You can also access the newsletter at www.3523.cupe.ca and copies will be delivered to each worksite.

President's Message



Welcome to Issue 2 of CUPE Connection. This newsletter, along with our CUPE website, keeps members aware of what is happening in our Union.

School reopening following Christmas break was certainly interesting! The unprecedented snowfall Kelowna received caught everyone by surprise. The Union repeatedly heard praise for our Operations employees who worked tirelessly to remove snow from school parking lots and walkways to ensure the safety of staff and students. Many supervisors across the district voiced praise for all School District No. 23 support staff who showed dedication to their jobs under these adverse conditions. Well done!

As we move into spring, planning will soon be underway for AFG projects and staffing considerations for the coming school year. The annual CEA postings for next year will begin soon, as well.

This school year has seen many of our long-time members retire. The Union sends heartfelt wishes for a long, happy and healthy retirement.

■
In solidarity, Wendy Johnson
CUPE 3523

Contract Language Explained

Collective Agreement – Benefit Improvements

Our new Collective Agreement (CA) was fully ratified as of July 25, 2014. The terms of our agreement are in place from July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2019. The terms of this agreement will remain in place until such time as a new agreement is negotiated and ratified.

CUPE Local 3523 made significant improvements to our benefits plan during this round of bargaining.

Improvements/changes were:

Dental Plan

- Frequency of checkups for adults from every six (6) months to every nine (9) months. Checkups for children remain at every six (6) months.
- Increase in orthodontics coverage from 60% to 70%.

Extended Health Plan

Deductible is increased from \$25.00 to \$100.00.

- Reimbursement for oral contraceptives has been added.
- Massage Therapy - \$10.00 cap per visit has been deleted. Maximum reimbursement is \$500.00 per year.
- Physiotherapy - \$10.00 cap per visit has been deleted. Maximum reimbursement is \$500.00 per year.
- Chiropractic - \$10.00 cap per visit has been deleted. Maximum reimbursement is \$250.00 per year.

Vision Care

- Reimbursement for eye examinations every 24 months will be a maximum of \$75.00.
- Coverage increases from \$150.00 every 24 months to \$250.00 every 24 months. ■

SOCIAL JUSTICE

CUPE 3523 has a Social Justice Committee. The Social Justice Committee (also known as Global Justice by CUPE National) is working to educate and promote to our members the importance of challenging injustice and promote diversity. All persons deserve to be treated equally.

We would like to see the committee develop and in order to do that, we would like to have some input by our members. Myrna Flaman and Kelly Blasco are the current committee members. Please email Myrna at myrnamavis@yahoo.ca if you have any ideas on activities or events to promote social justice. ■



CUPE BEHIND THE SCENES



Did you know that SD23 has its very own mechanics shop? We have 1 coordinator, 3 full time and 2 casual mechanics and 1 helper.



Hopefully the big storm of 2015 is a faint memory, but our Operations crews probably remember it very well. They did an amazing job of clearing more snow than Kelowna should ever get. First school closures in 35 years. ■

CUPE Member Highlight – Bryan Spannier

By: Treena Harley

Who: Bryan Spannier, Horticulturist

What: Bryan and 2 other CUPE members are horticulturists for the district. He is also an arborist and equipment operator. The horticulturist/arborist work is done from mid March to snowfall. Bryan cares for the trees, turf and landscapes (which include playgrounds). Right now, focus is on preparing the fields because spring sports teams are anxious to get out and play. If the field is not in good enough condition, it will be closed until the crew deems the field ready. The process of keeping turf healthy is to aerate, over-seed, top dress and then fertilize.

Where: He starts his days at Operations then attends to any of the 44 sites that need to be maintained.

When: Bryan started working for School District 23 in 2007. He has held the horticulturist position since then.

Why: Bryan's previous career was in the golf industry, which is a high-pressure job with a lot of weekend work. Once his children came along, the family/work balance he wanted was made possible with a union position. He has been married to Twyla, who is a CEA with

SD23, for 17 years. They have a 13 year old son, Owen and an 11 year old daughter, Lily.

Highlight: Bryan has been a volunteer for many years. He was an equipment manager with the Okanagan Sun for 4 years. He then coached hockey for 4 years and baseball for 3 years. For the past 2 years he has been a Member at Large with the Winfield Minor Hockey Association. His main duties are managing the equipment and assisting parents with any questions/concerns they may have. He does all of this because he knows what a difference volunteers make and the gratification of helping kids out. Thanks Bryan!



Mike Daley (left) Bryan Spannier (right)

2015 EXECUTIVE

TABLE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT - Wendy Johnson

VICE PRESIDENT - David Tether

SECRETARY TREASURER - Kieran Fahy

RECORDING SECRETARY - Treena Harley

SHOP STEWARDS

SERGEANT AT ARMS - John O'Flaherty

OPERATIONS – Dick Beetlestone

CLERICAL/LIBRARY ASSISTANT – 2 vacant positions

TRANSPORTATION – Duane Wheatley

STUDENT SUPPORT – Margaret Varga and 1 vacancy

CUSTODIAL – Jim Anderson

GENERAL – Allan Miller

TRUSTEES

Ian Gordon
Sandra Ryan
Linda Christie

OFFICE CLERICAL – Shirley Fears

CUPE NATIONAL REP – Rob Hewitt

211 – 1889 Springfield Road
Kelowna, BC V1Y 5V5

250-860-3523

Health & Safety Tips

Health and Safety facts for new and young workers

Courtesy of CUPE National's Health and Safety website

New and young workers are more likely to be injured during the first six months of employment than at any other time. We need to remember that new workers can be someone who has been working with the same employer but may have been moved to a new department. The key to protecting new and young workers is to educate them on their rights, and the questions they can ask to stay safe.

Questions to ask:

- What are the hazards of my job? – By law, your employer must tell you.
- What training will I receive? – Your employer will provide an orientation.
- Is there safety equipment I'll be expected to wear? – Ask your supervisor.

- What do I do if I get hurt? – The law says your employer must provide on-site first aid.
- Who do I go to with safety concerns? – Start by speaking with your supervisor. If you are not satisfied, speak with your Joint Health and Safety Committee CUPE rep.

All people are at particular risk of injury in the first six months of a job as they may be unaware of existing or potential risks. There is a direct relationship between the number of years experience and the number of injuries that happen on the job.

If you do not have a CUPE rep for your Joint Health and Safety Site Committee, please contact Treena Harley, District Support Staff Safety Advisory co-chair at recording.secretary@cupe3523.ca



CUPE BC News

K-12 Clerical Report details impact of relentless budgetary pressure

A new report by John Malcolmson, CUPE Research, B.C. Region called **Under Duress**, was completed December 2014. This report looked at office and clerical work in B.C.'s public school system.

Under Duress compiled research from over 1300 office and clerical staff in 49 B.C. school districts. Some findings are:

- Compression of office/clerical work hours
- Increased workload pressure
- Increases in job requirements
- Rising stress
- Ergonomic issues

Link to document is in Resources on CUPE 3523 website. Tow

Events

March 7, 2015

General Membership Meeting at
Hollywood Road Education Services
1040 Hollywood Road – Room 2

March 16-27, 2015 (inclusive)
Spring Break

April 3-5, 2015 (inclusive)
Easter Weekend

April 11, 2015

General Membership Meeting at
Hollywood Road Education Services
1040 Hollywood Road – Room 2