



off the shelf

Newsletter of Vancouver and Gibsons Public Library Workers



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And Much More...

391 Has Heart!

by Janis Parker

Recently, our membership demonstrated generosity and compassion in response to the tsunami disaster in Asia. Our Local has also stepped up to the plate to help our community and province. This spirit of caring is also extended to our own members in times of trouble. Ever since our most senior employees can remember our union Flower Committee has extended comfort on our behalf. This is not a service ordinarily provided by unions, and reflects the personal support offered among the members.

This committee currently consists of Melina Bowden in Special Collections (331-3678) and Joan Brookes in Admin (331-4000). Usually, when a member is seriously ill or bereaved, one of their co-workers will contact Melina or Joan, (preferably by email) with the particulars. The sympathy gift will be ordered for delivery at an appropriate time. Some years there have been as many as two dozen arrangements or fruit baskets sent out, and in others as few as six. If a fruit basket is desired rather than flowers, this needs to be specially ordered, and charitable donations are disbursed by the union office and not by the flower committee.

The guidelines are as follows:

EXPENDITURES:

- a) Sympathy Gifts – The Union shall send flowers or make a charitable donation not to exceed \$40 on the following occasions:
 1. As an expression of sympathy to Union Members who are confined by serious illness to the hospital or to their home for periods exceeding two weeks.
 2. As an expression of sympathy in the case of bereavement in the immediate family of a Union Member. *Immediate family does not include in-laws.*
 3. As an expression of esteem on the death of a Union Member.
 4. As a token of esteem or sympathy when it is deemed suitable by the Executive.

*“According to UNICEF, it is estimated that the world's poorest countries make **\$100 million each day in debt repayments**, money that could be more fruitfully spent on development.”*

Source: CBC News, From OCT. 28, 2004:

Looking back at how we looked ahead
Gibsons Workers bargaining 2004-2005

By Laura Houle

*Chair, Gibsons Library Workers,
CUPE 391*

*May you have the foresight to know where you're going,
the hindsight to know where you've been,
and the insight to know when you've gone too far.
(Irish toast)*

I'll open with a toast... I raise my glass in celebration of a successful round of bargaining for the Gibsons Library Workers, sub-local to CUPE 391. This toast seems apropos as I look back at our second time participating in the collective bargaining process where foresight at times felt myopic and insight made us weary. Well, at least there's always hindsight...

We met four times with our employer and we were able to make some good changes in our language, wages and benefits. The highlights are as follows:

- 2.5% across-the-board wage increases on Jan. 1 of 2005, 2006 and 2007. It's a three year contract.
- Superannuation under the Municipal Pension Plan for all regular employees (including part-time employees). It goes without saying: this was a critical issue for us.
- Increases to annual vacation entitlement: small increases yes, but nonetheless, a little more vacation, a little sooner.
- Small but important improvements to our Extended Health and Dental benefits.
- An increase to the amount of sick leave that can be banked. Previously, a full time employee could use up to 191 hours per year as paid sick leave and it could not be banked. This amount was prorated for part time employees. Now we can bank up to 630 hours of sick leave, earned at a rate of 7% of regular hours per year.

I won't bore you with the details because if you want you can look (in the coming months) at our Collective Agreement on the new, improved CUPE 391 website:
http://www.cupe391.ca/gibsons/gibsons_contract.pdf

Hindsight is indeed 20/20. Looking back at what made this round of bargaining easier than the first time back in 2002, I would have to name three things. First, our bargaining committee was prepared and we worked well together as a group. Second, we are fortunate to have a good relationship with our Chief Librarian. We met with her before we started the bargaining process to resolve some of the easy issues. This helped us all start out in a spirit of cooperation. Last but not least, we benefited immensely from the moral and financial support of CUPE 391 (special thanks to Peter, who attended a few of our early meetings) and, of course, from CUPE National and our excellent representative, Jim Gorman. He's the one with the foresight and the insight! Now, raise your glasses with me...

Environmental Awareness Committee

By Keith Edwards

Kimberly-Clark and Kleenex are wiping away ancient boreal forests!

Source: Wildcanada.net Action Alert - January 27, 2005

Kimberly-Clark, the largest manufacturer of tissue products in the world, is wiping away ancient forests in Canada to create toilet paper and facial tissue. Kimberly-Clark produces 3.7 million tonnes of tissue products annually including the well-known Kleenex brand of toilet paper, facial tissue, and napkins. Unfortunately, in North America, less than 19% of the pulp that Kimberly-Clark uses for its disposable tissue products comes from recycled sources. Much of the remaining pulp comes from ancient forests like the Canadian Boreal. In fact, most of Kimberly-Clark's tissue products available in local grocery stores are made from 100% virgin tree fibre.

Canadian forests are paying the price to create products that are used once and then thrown away or flushed down the toilet.

The forests of Alberta's Rocky Mountain Foothills, home to threatened caribou herds, are being clearcut to provide Kimberly-Clark with pulp.

Forests in other provinces, including Ontario's 2.3 million hectare Kenogami Forest, are also being logged to supply inexpensive pulp.

Take action now at www.kleercut.net/sendmessage to stop Kimberly-Clark from clearcutting ancient boreal forests to create disposable tissue products.



UNION WEBPAGE IS BACK!

After many months, our local's webpage has returned in a dynamic new format. Many thanks to our page designer **Chris Jang** for his work on creating an elegantly functional communication tool.

And thanks in advance to Chris and **Peggy Watkins**, our **new webmasters**, who will be updating and maintaining the page.

The CBC television musical special "**Gung Haggis Fat Choy**" was re-broadcasted on February 9th

This is the tv special that was based on **VPLer Todd Wong's Robbie Burns Chinese New Year Dinner** also named "Gung Haggis Fat Choy." The CBC tv show was nominated for 2 Leo Awards in 2004 for best musical variety show and best direction for a musical variety show. It was produced and directed by Moyra Rodger, who also produced the Vancouver Arts Awards that was held in the VPL promenade last year.



Co-hosts **Tom Chin, Shelagh Rogers & Todd Wong**
@ **Gung Haggis Fat Choy 2005** – photo Borus Mann

This show blends together elements and traditions of Canada's pioneering Scots and Chinese heritage. The musical segments feature: The Paper Boys, chinese flautist Jin Zhi-ming and bagpiper Tim Fanning - all performing in Dr. Sun Yat Sen Gardens. Silk Road Music performs on Chinatown's Keefer St at night time. Ottawa born Greek-Canadian George Sampanopoulos performs singing in Mandarin with the Vancouver Academy of Dance's chinese fan dancers; and Joe McDonald (whose bagpipes were heard at VPL on Jan 17 evening for Gung Haggis Poetry Night) & Brave Waves perform a rousing version of Auld Lang Syne.

Todd is seen in the special on two occasions. The first is for the origin of Gung Haggis Fat Choy, and the second is with his family for a Chinese New Year Celebration, which includes **his mother Betty Wong, a retired VPLer.**

Library Life in Vienna, Austria

by Thomas Quigley (JFS)

On a recent vacation in Austria, I had the opportunity to job shadow at the Buechereien Wien (Vienna Public Library) for a week. It was very interesting, and different from our experience here at VPL. So I thought I'd write a short article to share

Vienna is a city of 1.5 million inhabitants. The City is divided into 23 districts (Bezirk). The Library system consists of a Central Branch (Hauptbuecherei) and 40 Branches (Zweigstelle). The emphasis is on lifelong learning and reading for pleasure, not on reference. Most of the branches are small, about 2/3 the size of Joe Fortes Branch, and many of them were built in the 1920's. There is a program to consolidate branches in the districts to make up bigger branches, and while I was there one of these newer branches opened. It was 900 sq. meters (9687 sq. ft.) in size, the second biggest branch in the system after Central Branch. Their Central Branch is in a relatively new building; it opened in Spring 2003. Branch public hours run from Monday-Saturday, but the Central Branch is the only branch open on Wednesday and Saturdays. Generally branch public hours are around 20-24 hr./week. There are no bookdrops.

You must buy a subscription to borrow materials. An Adult (18 years and older) pays €18/year (children are free). You pay to reserve materials, you pay to renew materials, and you also pay extra (€1/item) to borrow Videos, DVDs and CD-ROMs. You can have a maximum of 25 items out at a time (including 6 CDs, 4 Videos, 4 CD-Roms). The loan period is 2 weeks for CD-ROMs und Videos; it's 4 weeks for everything else.

Working in a library is a different experience from here in North America. There are three classes of employees in the Library System: Librarians (Bibliothekar), Helpers (Hilftskraefter) and non-librarian personnel. The Helpers are university students who work 8-16 hours/week, 2 hour

shifts at a time; the non-librarian personnel are the office support staff and shipping/delivery staff. There is nothing like our Library Assistant positions. Librarians do everything, from working at the Circulation/Information Desk to shelving; from ordering materials for the collection, to community outreach and programming. Getting a job in a library is very different, too.



Here in North America you study first and then apply for library work; in Austria first you apply and get the job, and then you begin your study. Staff are public civil servants (Beamter), they take a test either by the time they are 26 years old, or after 6 years, to attain this status. If they fail this test (they can repeat it once), then they are dismissed. There isn't a North American style labour union. There's a Workers' Group (Gewerkschaft) that functions in the same way EXCEPT there is no negotiating of working conditions at the local level.

See `Vienna' on page 7...

Vienna, from page 6...

In Austria, all labour relations matters are set out in the law. A change in working conditions has to be dealt with through the political process, not through local contract bargaining. This includes wages.

Public Library staff work 40 hours/week, almost 1/2 of it in nonpublic hours. This may sound like heaven to us, but they don't have a centralized materials processing system. Materials are ordered for each branch (with lists, similar to our AOLs) and then the items are shipped directly to the branch where they await direction on how items are to be classified, so that they can label and process the materials for their worksite. There is no replacement when staff are sick or go on vacation; everyone gets 25 working days of vacation per calendar year from the day they start (with no increment until after almost 20 years of service).

I appreciated being able to shadow at both information desks and circulation desks. The staff-public interactions were just like what we experience here, with lots of requests for using the internet and information on topics like Slovakian cookbooks, travelling Route 66 in the USA and finding books for school assignments. My favourite transaction was an older man complaining at the circulation desk that he had taken out a video and the soundtrack was only in English!

Some things the same, but lots of differences. That's a good way to sum up my job shadow experience. I hope you enjoyed reading about my experience!

for [partial] information in english, try:
[http://www.buechereien.wien.at/buechereienportal/\(jyqsjd55oxknaw55gmwi4455\)/index.aspx?tabId=12](http://www.buechereien.wien.at/buechereienportal/(jyqsjd55oxknaw55gmwi4455)/index.aspx?tabId=12)

The Constance Devine Scholarship Award

By Judi Walker

In the fall of 2004, it was suggested that we name one of our new scholarships “The Constance Devine” scholarship to honour our delightful friend and co-worker. This idea was heartily approved by all.

Constance has suggested that she would like the scholarship to go to a mature student—since she, herself, went to Library school as a mature student.

For those of you who only know Constance as the wonderful woman with the red hat who sits front and centre at every Union meeting, who moves to approve the minutes, who leaps up to move to adjourn, and whose motto in all things is “onward,” here is a bit more about Constance and her relationship with the Vancouver Public Library.

Constance started work at the South Hill Branch in 1954. From 1955 to 1957, she worked as the Senior Clerical in the Boys and Girls Department at the old Central Library. (Who knew?) While she was in B&G, the Head of the Department, Isabel McTavish recognized the spark in this young gal and encouraged her to participate in meetings and book selection and—I’m guessing from the photos—programming.

In September 1957, Constance, who had already completed her Bachelor’s degree, went on to the University of Washington to get her degree in Library Science. She received a bursary from the British Columbia Library Association to help her continue her studies. She

feels it’s fitting that the BCLA bursary did for her what the “Constance Devine Scholarship” will do for someone else.

After receiving her degree in 1958, Constance went to work in the Fine Arts and Music Division. She worked there until 1961 when she contributed to the library world in a different way: she stopped to raise daughters Jane and Anne (both former VPL staff members).

She says she was badgered by Sheila Burndorfer to come back to work—and was finally lured back in 1980. Over the next 24 years, she had regular part-time hours at Kitsilano, Oakridge, South Granville (Firehall), Fraserview and Renfrew.

My first memory of Constance was when she became an “orange card-carrying casual” and was coming to fill a shift at South Hill in 1980. The staff member who had booked her announced that the new librarian had a name that sounded like a Harlequin Romance (assuming that her name was pronounced “De-vyne” rather than “De-veen”). We learned immediately that her name is “De-veen”—and over the years I have learned over and over again that Constance, my good friend in the lovely red hat, is indeed “de-vyne!”

I move to adjourn this short article.
Onward!

A few thoughts on labour negotiations... N.H.L. style

By Ed Dickson

In a previous issue of Off The Shelf, I talked a little bit about Trevor Linden, President of the N.H.L.P.A. and Vancouver Canuck forward, and current talks on the CBA. I outlined the main issues surrounding the N.H.L. and its players, and what was at stake in this set of labour negotiations.

As of this moment as I write this article, the N.H.L. continues to lock out its players, and the season is in jeopardy of being completely lost. Trevor Linden, and the players were taking big hits in the media, and by the general public for being greedy, and unwilling to discuss a hard salary cap. The hard salary cap would limit each team in the N.H.L. to paying no more than a set amount. 31 million U.S. dollars per team was the amount being thrown around earlier. The Canucks, one of the leagues better managed teams, has an annual player budget, currently, of around 40 million U.S. and managed a healthy profit last year. The cap if adopted would force a team like Vancouver to release several players and replace them with younger and cheaper players. This system would, in the owners eyes, control costs, giving them "cost certainty".

In late December Bob Goodenow organized meetings with the N.H.L. to make a surprise offer. The players agreed with the concept that some teams were losing money, and players wanted to be part of the solution. They proposed a cap on rookie salaries, changes to player arbitration rights in favour of the owners, a luxury tax on team budgets that exceeded approx. 40 million. But the real surprise was an across the board wage roll back of 24% ! The very next day the N.H.L. took the roll back, increased it to 34% for the highest paid players, rejected the players soft cap luxury tax, and slapped a hard cap back onto the table. The players were rightly offended and walked away from the bargaining table.

With the season hanging in the balance, Trevor Linden organized one last set of meetings in an attempt to get a deal. Both Goodenow, and N.H.L. president Gary Bettman were not at these meetings. The feeling being both men were too entrenched in their positions, and personal animosity to one another was standing in the way

of final settlement. After 2 days of meetings, a conclusion could not be found. However media, and public sentiment towards the players position was improving, as it appeared the players were genuine in their effort to secure a fair deal. As we speak, the 2 sides are engaged in talks but I am not feeling too confident that a settlement will be reached in time to save this season. And some observers feel that the N.H.L. doesn't want to settle for anything less than its original position of a hard salary cap. They seem to feel the need for an "idiot proof system", as many of these same owners are the ones responsible for throwing around this money in the first place - driving up salaries to obscene levels. If a deal cannot be found, it is felt that the N.H.L. will file for an impasse in the U.S. which may pave the way for replacement players. However, as labor law is different in Canada than in the U.S. many Canadian teams legally would not be able to participate in this scheme. Needless to say it is going to get interesting before it is over. The players through their representation are trying to get a deal. The owners are trying to get something, cost certainty, which does not exist in the private sector where they made their fortunes. It seems odd they expect to get that out of this round of bargaining? Oh and one other thing, it is alleged through the media that Gary Bettman has a 1 million dollar bonus available to him should the players agree to the cap. What incentive is that for him to bargain in good faith? I hope this all ends soon, and we can get back to watching hockey. I also hope that Trevor and players stay strong and get a fair deal.

Ed Dickson V.P. CUPE 391