



# Off The Shelf

*Newsletter of Vancouver and Gibsons Library Workers*

## CUPE 391 seeks public's help to save library bindery

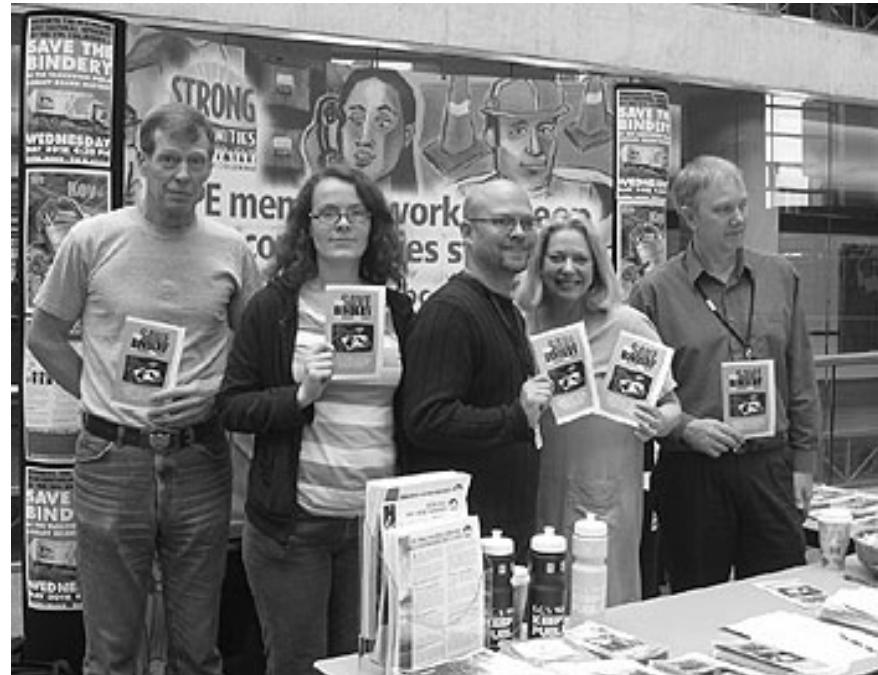
Source: cupe.bc.ca; May 22, 2007

VANCOUVER—The union representing workers at the Vancouver Public Library's main branch is calling on members of the public to contact VPL board members by phone and attend a crucial board meeting next week that will determine the fate of Canada's only public library bindery. "Without the bindery, the preservation of our library materials will suffer," says CUPE 391 president Alex Youngberg.

At the May 30 meeting, the VPL board will announce its decision of whether to close the bindery or leave it open to pre-treat and preserve the collection. Youngberg says the bindery is integral to collection development and maintenance. "Without the support of the bindery, Vancouver's status as a provincial library resource and depository will be undermined. Simply discarding books and ordering replacements does not build sustainability into the collection or support environmental directives from the City of Vancouver."

Youngberg said the library receives large volumes of materials from community organizations that wish to preserve a record of their local histories. The access these contributors currently enjoy with the bindery in place will be in jeopardy if it is closed, she added.

See 'Bindery' on page 2...



CUPE 391 members **Glen Creamer, Aliza Nevarie, Peter DeGroot, President Alex Youngberg** and **Ed Dickson** staff CUPE BC's Strong Communities booth at Central on Wednesday, May 23, 2007.

Over the next week, VPL workers are using the booth to raise awareness about the importance of the bindery, encourage library patrons to sign a petition to save it, and urge supporters to attend and speak at a May 30 VPL board meeting that will decide its fate.

Encourage your friends, family and library patrons to drop by the booth, learn about the importance of the bindery, and sign a petition in support of it staying in-house.

## ...'Bindery' continued

"If you're among those people who don't believe that the maintenance of the library's collection, or how it is developed, should be determined by commercial library suppliers, then please, let your voice be heard," said Youngberg.

To book a spot on the speaker's list and/or reserve a seat at next Wednesday's board meeting, concerned library patrons are asked to call (604) 331-4003 or (604) 331-4000.

The precise location of the meeting, which begins at 4:30 p.m., will be confirmed tomorrow. It will take place at or near the Central library branch at 350 West Georgia. (*Ed. Mtg. takes place on 7<sup>th</sup> floor of Central, in staff lounge*)

**Contact:** Alex Youngberg, CUPE 391 president: (604) 322-4879  
 Dan Gawthrop, CUPE Communications: (604) 999-6132  
[www.cupe.bc.ca](http://www.cupe.bc.ca)

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## Extended Health Plan – on line

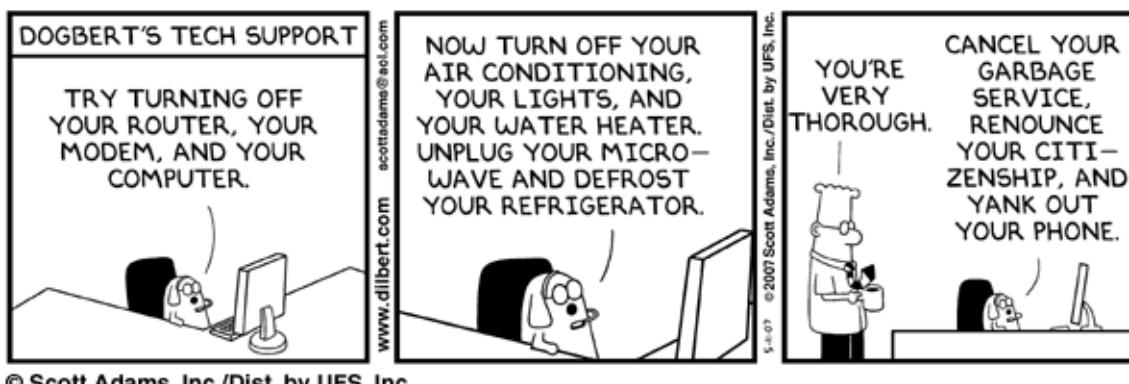
by Peter DeGroot

Despite years on the union executive, and being on the bargaining committee for two rounds of contract negotiations, I still cannot figure out my extended health benefits. I know that there is a little booklet that spells everything out, but I still get confused as to what, and for how much, can I claim.

Fortunately, the unionized staff at Pacific Blue Cross realize that I'm not alone in my confusion over extended benefits. So they have introduced a great feature that will be of assistance to 391 members. "CARESnet" is an on-line service that provides detailed information about what is covered in our Extended Health Plan. It also keeps a history of all claims that you have made. This comes in handy when you're considering getting your next pair of eyeglasses (now at \$300 every two years), or budgeting for your next trip to the dentist (still at 80% for basic services). As well, you can track the progress of claims that you have made, (is the cheque in the mail?) and apply for direct deposit (is the refund already in my bank account?).

To access CARESnet, simply visit the Pacific Bluecross website at [www.pac.bluecross.ca](http://www.pac.bluecross.ca), then click on the icon. There is a link on the CUPE 391 webpage. On your first visit, you will need to register. For this, have your Health Care card ready as it has your group plan number and your ID number. There are security measures in place which you will find during the registration process.

Take a look and be informed.



# A Tribute to Rebecca Robbins (1968-2007)



## Rebecca's Quilt Song

(for Rebecca Robbins 1968-2007)

Sister, we are stitching you a quilt  
trading and embroidering scraps of hope  
singing songs to reassure each other  
that God must have only momentarily  
taken his eye off the fragile sparrow  
that Karma has not gone missing in action  
but is just taking a brief vacation.  
Sister, we are stitching you a quilt.

Daughter, we are stitching you a quilt  
designed to wrap you in silken protection  
cocoon you from encroaching sickness  
caress you in cotton batting, cover you with love  
Daughter we are stitching you a quilt.

Mother, we are stitching you a quilt  
salvaging fabrics with past lives  
inserting needles along meridians of faith  
releasing solar energy from the heart  
reincarnating your story in ours  
Mother, we are stitching you a quilt.

Mary Duffy  
(VPL Librarian)

Rebecca Robbins was one of my closest friends. I count myself lucky among a long list of people Rebecca met and kept in touch with over the years. She and I met in 1994 while working at the old central branch library. In 1994 we lived as young single women, cycling from party to art opening, to music concert. Our relationship saw us through trips abroad, childbirth, real estate purchase, weddings, and many, many parties. Rebecca was a good partner and mother. She supported her family with her love, kind words, humour and affection. Len, Sol and Louis Paul are fortunate to

have had such a relationship with a person like Rebecca.

Rebecca was also a great artist. She supported herself through a second degree in Fine Arts at Emily Carr all the while working evenings and weekends at VPL. Her work appeared in shows across Canada, and in international ceramic magazines.

Rebecca never ceased to amaze by tirelessly hosting houseguests from around the world,

See Rebecca on page 4...

...Rebecca continued

while maintaining constant contact with her close friends. A circle of friends so wide was witnessed immediately as she was diagnosed with cancer.

To say that Rebecca handled the last months of her life well is a significant understatement. Anyone who has heard the infamous story of how Rebecca cycled home from work at Riley Park during labour of her first pregnancy will not be surprised to discover that Rebecca often made dates to see her friends on the very day she received chemotherapy. Rebecca spent the 2006 East Side Culture Crawl sitting in a large cosy chair, not in her home but, in her studio, with shoppers bustling around and many, many friends arriving with greetings, flowers and best wishes. That evening Rebecca gave her valuable time to anyone interested in her art. One enthusiastic buyer of Rebecca's work called, "See you next year". Rebecca didn't miss a beat, "See you next year" she called back, and turned to me and winked.



Sol, Len, Louis Paul and Rebecca

Rebecca's physical presence is missed by many people, but a strong, wide ranging spirit such as hers will always live on.

By Lindi Coyne

**Dear Friends and Family of  
Rebecca,**

We have received enough donations to cover the cost of a memorial bench in Trout Lake for Rebecca. I will send out another notice once I have a date for the unveiling of the bench.

Many thanks to everyone for making this all possible.

Leonard



NEWS RELEASE - May 29, 2007

Source: [www.cupe.bc.ca](http://www.cupe.bc.ca)

## Muzzling workers on bindery hurts worthy causes: CUPE

VANCOUVER—Vancouver Public Library (VPL) may be jeopardizing thousands of dollars in donations to the United Way by putting an end to all branch visits by non-branch library workers, says the president of the CUPE local currently fighting to save the Central branch's in-house bindery.

CUPE Local 391 president Alexandra Youngberg says her union was recently informed by VPL Human Resources director Brenda Proskon that VPL workers would henceforth be denied branch visits before, during or after work.

Youngberg says the directive was issued specifically to prevent CUPE members from promoting a public board meeting scheduled for tomorrow (May 30) at Central Library in order to save the bindery. Initially, library management was willing to grant 10-minute branch visits prior to opening time to promote the meeting. But further discussion led to a total ban.

If applied across the board, the CUPE 391 president argues, the directive could prevent the union from supporting community causes such as the United Way.

"This is really shameful—branch visits are a major part of the CUPE United Way drive," says Youngberg, adding that the Union has raised more than \$125,000 in the past five years for United Way activities.

"If we can't promote the board meeting through branch visits, does this not logically extend to the United Way campaign?"

Youngberg is calling on the library management team to reverse the policy, regardless of the outcome of tomorrow's bindery announcement.

## ***Stress: Strategies for change***

CUPE workplaces need to be reorganized to eliminate stress by:

- Giving workers real control (e.g., more autonomy, more participation in decision making and more opportunity for self-directed work).
- Workers should have the right to refuse overtime.
- Workloads must be decreased and sufficient staff levels must be set.
- Monotonous work should be eliminated.
- Physical work features should be redesigned to lower stress hazards (e.g., minimize noise, introduce natural lighting, and ensure proper ventilation is in place).
- Governments should increase public sector spending to counter staff shortages, overwork and other stressors.
- Employers should reduce sudden changes in the workplace (e.g., new technologies, abrupt work shift arrangements).
- Training to identify stress hazards should be instituted, preferably union-provided training.

Workers need control for their jobs to be fulfilling. Work must be a meaningful part of our lives. Acted on, many of these recommendations will provide greater worker control.

**A more democratic workplace is a safer and healthier workplace.**

<http://cupe.ca/healthandsafety/Stress>

# Environmental Awareness Committee

*Did you know...*

The EAC collects the following items, that VPL does not, to reuse or recycle:

- batteries (household)
- micro-fiche films,
- plastic cd and video cases (broken)
- plastic spools from cash register receipts,
- plastic wrappings (around newspaper or documents),
- styrofoam blocks (from new computers)
- tattletape,



Branches and other worksites can set aside a box to put the above items into, then send it down to Central (addressed to "Keith Edwards, EAC") when it gets full. Keith and the EAC would greatly appreciate help in transporting various recyclables to depots around Vancouver. Or you can start a campaign to put pressure on the library and the city to live up to its own environmental objectives.

*Contact:*

[keithedw@vpl.ca](mailto:keithedw@vpl.ca)

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## Become a Nature Challenge ambassador in your workplace

Chances are, you've wondered how to make your workplace more environmentally friendly, but unsure of where to start. Sign up for Nature Challenge at Work and help spread the word about sustainability. See how many steps you can take - then use our online tools to promote the Nature Challenge to your co-workers. You'll also receive a monthly e-newsletter to keep you informed and inspired.

*Sign up and share these actions with your co-workers!*

Source: [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Reduce home energy use by 10%
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Choose an energy-efficient home and appliances
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Don't use pesticides
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4. Eat meat-free meals one day a week
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Buy locally grown and produced food
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Choose a fuel efficient vehicle
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7. Walk, bike carpool or take transit
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Choose a home close to work or school
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9. Support alternative transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10. Learn more and share with others

*To sign your workplace up visit: [www.davidsuzuki.org/NatureChallenge/at\\_Work/default.asp](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/NatureChallenge/at_Work/default.asp)*

## Some reflections on the first ever CUPE BC Pink Triangle conference

### Anne Olsen:

The CUPE BC Pink Triangle conference was a fantastic event, and huge kudos go out to the individuals who worked really hard to organize it and make it happen, including our own amazing and wonderful Peter DeGroot - Thank You!

I have to admit to being a bit surprised that this was the first ever CUPE BC Pink Triangle conference. However, even though it was a long time coming, there was a lot of commitment in the room to make this an annual event and I for one will be supporting that and hope to help make it happen.

I can also admit to feeling a bit smug. Compared to a lot of other locals in this province we have some really great language in our CUPE 391 documents and agreements that support and protect lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals in our local. One of the great ways CUPE 391 delegates can benefit from this conference is to help others achieve the same. And as for CUPE 391, we do need to get some better language around protection for transitioning and transgendered people in our local. So there is still work to be done!

The conference also included some fantastic speakers. Erica Wilson was a particularly moving speaker, talking about her experiences as an intersexed person who began life as a man and now identifies as a woman. She brought humour, a little bit of anger, and a whole lot of courage to inspire us all.

### Tara Robertson:

The main highlight of the CUPE BC Pink Triangle conference for me was connecting with people from CUPE 391 and talking about rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex, queer and questioning workers. It was amazing to have the chance to really discuss our lived experiences, our jobs, and our ideas for making our workplace a more inclusive place that is respectful of all kinds of diversity, including sexuality and gender identity. I am so proud to work with intelligent and courageous activists. While conferences are organized by many people, Peter DeGroot deserves to be recognized for his hard work in pulling this conference off. Well done!

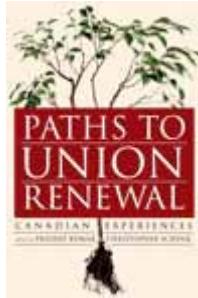
CUPE 391 is a leader in the union movement in fighting for protections in the collective agreement for workers who are gay, lesbian and bisexual. I hope we continue to lead the way by working for protections of all gender variant people, including trans people who are male-to-female, female-to-male, genderqueer (do not identify as either male or female) and intersex people. We can do this by fighting for more inclusive language in the collective agreement, as well as working to get support in extended benefits packages for trans people who choose to, or need to pursue electrolysis, hormone therapy or surgery. This is something I hope the Bargaining Committee will fight for in this round of negotiations.

I'm so excited to know the people I'm working with have such progressive values and are also committed to making the library a stronger, more equitable place.

Thanks to everyone who made submissions to this issue of *Off The Shelf*, and apologies to those whose submissions didn't make it into this issue. Submissions to future issues of the newsletter may be sent confidentially to Lorne MacDonald (Editor) at [freelorne@gmail.com](mailto:freelorne@gmail.com), lornemac@vpl.ca, or to Carnegie Reading Room.

## Books:

**Title: Paths to Union Renewal : Canadian Experiences**  
**Authors: Pradeep Kumar & Christopher Schenk**  
**ISBN: 1-55193-058-7 | Pages: 336**  
**Price: \$24.95**



This new book focuses on the efforts and progress of union revitalization and organizing, and documents the renewal initiatives undertaken by unions in Canada. Unions, separately or in coalition with other unions or social groups, have begun to re-examine the basis of their organization and activity in the face of a harsher economic and political climate. Signs of union renewal include increased rank-and-file participation in the life of the union, increased democratic decision-making, evidence of new horizontal union structures, the development of a worker-centred societal vision, and a new emphasis on organizing both internally and externally.

*Paths to Union Renewal* addresses a subject of considerable political and social importance about which there have been a number of debates. A key impetus for this re-examination has originated in the United States where the decades-long union decline has engendered new ideas adopted by a number of unions and the national central labour body the AFL-CIO. This in turn has led to debates on renewal strategies in Western Europe and Anglo-Saxon countries from Britain to Australia.

Despite this, little detailed research of the processes, structures, and implications of union renewal has been undertaken across Canada. *Paths to Union Renewal* fills this gap by critically examining union renewal in a variety of unions, providing a basis for informed discussion and debate on the role and place of trade unions in contemporary society.

Visit the following website to purchase:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/Reports/2006/01/PathsToUnionRenewal/index.cfm?pa=3BB76202>

### CUPE 391 Executive:

**President:** Alex Youngberg  
**Vice President:** Ed Dickson (2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
**Vice President:** Laura Safarian (1<sup>st</sup> year)  
**Secretary Treasurer:** Steven Turner  
**Recording Secretary:** Mike DePaoli

### Members At Large:

Peter DeGroot  
Aili Meutzner  
Aliza Nevarie  
Inder Pannu

### Trustees:

Peggy Watkins  
Gerard Batty

### CUPE 391 Contact Information

Alex Youngberg: [president@cupe391.ca](mailto:president@cupe391.ca)  
Entire Executive: [executive@cupe391.ca](mailto:executive@cupe391.ca)

CUPE 391  
545 West 10th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC  
V5Z 1K9

Tel: 604-322-4879  
Fax: 604-879-3034

[www.cupe391.ca](http://www.cupe391.ca)

**1 three year position as a trustee to be filled at next General Meeting**