

Off The Shelf

Newsletter of Vancouver and Gibsons Library Workers

CUPE BC calls for public hearings on 'secret' trade deal

January 29, 2007, from www.cupe.bc.ca

Sweeping powers of pact between B.C., Alberta require closer scrutiny, says CUPE

BURNABY – It's the most radical trade deal since the ill-fated Multilateral Agreement on Investments—and that's why British Columbians need a public hearing on the soon-to-be-enacted Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) between B.C. and Alberta, says the Canadian Union of Public Employees. "This deal is extremely powerful—it binds not only the province but all municipalities and school boards to its broad-sweeping provisions," said CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill.

"That's why there need to be public hearings on the TILMA before it comes into force." According to the Community Charter of British Columbia, municipalities are "an order of government" that have the "authority to determine the public interest of their communities." However, the TILMA—like Bill 30, a law passed by the BC Liberal government that removed the public's right to vote on proposed private power installations in their own communities—undermines that authority, says the union.

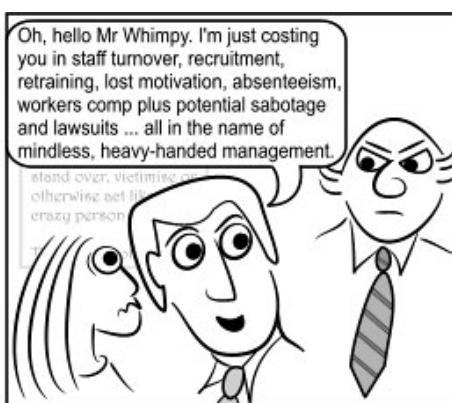
"With its trade panels and restrictions, it contains the most radical provisions of NAFTA and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (the MAI)," said O'Neill, adding that public protests stopped the MAI from being implemented.

O'Neill noted that consultation on the TILMA has thus far consisted only of chats with the business community to sell the deal.

"Despite what Gordon Campbell may think, there are other people in this province," said O'Neill. "Once the general public know what's in store for their communities as a result of this deal—that it will lead to a race to the bottom for professional and trades qualifications, as well as stripping municipalities of their decision-making ability—they're not going to like it."

The TILMA comes into effect on April 1.

Contact: Barry O'Neill, CUPE BC president: (604) 340-6768
Dan Gawthrop, CUPE Communications: (604) 999-6132



Members Voices

Movin' on (for a while)

by Peter DeGroot

So I've decided to take a year off. Yup, wanting a break from the day-to-day stuff of checking in books, union activism, and set meeting schedules. Instead, I think that I'll sleep in more often, take some courses, hang out with friends, travel the world AND still get a pay cheque every two weeks.

While this may seem like daydreaming on my part, it is in fact a reality. And this opportunity for paid time off is a reality for you as well. Every CUPE 391 member that I talk to is engaged in some other elevating activities. The library attracts writers, musicians, actors, students, dancers, athletes and artists. Each staff member that I talk to about their passions outside of the library, share that they would just like the time to be able to pursue their other goals in a meaningful way. "If only I had the time to do my Masters, or to write that novel, or to get that balanced tan ". This is where the beauty of CUPE 391's self funded leave programme comes in.

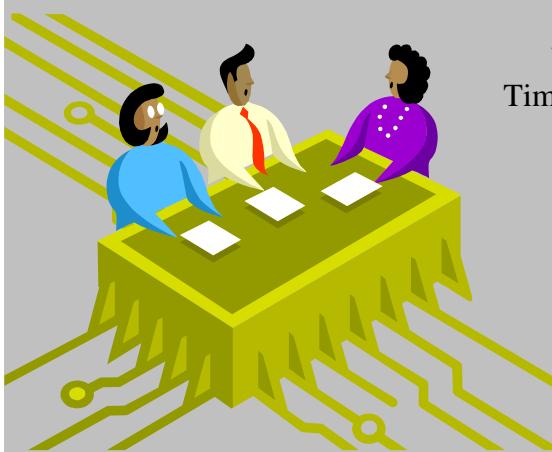
The self funded leave programme has been in place for several months now. The concept is quite simple. A percentage of your salary is deducted from your pay cheque every two weeks for several years. Then, when you take your time off, the money that has been put aside for you, is

paid back every two weeks. The union has set up 6 options for staff to take advantage of, allowing people to be off for either six months or one year. The amount deducted from your pay cheque varies between 11% and 33% depending on how much time off you want, and how soon you want it. (and yes, the percentage that comes off is the same for both net salary and gross salary. To see what your take home pay would be on self funded leave, just multiply your current take home pay by the deduction percentage.)

The plan is not for everyone. Prior to signing up, one should take a very hard look at their finances. While the financial institute administering our plan, Community Savings, does have provisions for people to opt out due to hardship, the goal of the programme is to be a benefit not a burden. The complete details of the plan are found at both the VPL Human Resources website, and the CUPE 391 website.

I've taken to brown bagging more than before, and have cut down on my latte consumption, but find that I'm managing fine on the reduced salary. The goal of being in exotic lands for a year makes any penny pinching worthwhile. I promise to send a postcard while I'm away – September 2010 to August 2011 (hold my calls),

Upcoming Meetings:



Wednesday, March 6, 2007
Time and location to be announced

Annual General Meeting

Sunday, April 29, 2007
Alice MacKay Room

Central Library – 10:00 AM

News & Events

International Womens Day

March 8, 2007

Vancouver events: March 3, 4 & 5

On March 3, 2007 there will be march starting at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (302 Columbia St) @ Noon to rally at the Vancouver Public Library @ 12:30PM.

Pink Triangle Conference

Our provincial union held its first Pink Triangle Conference for its Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Trans-sexual, Intersex and Questioning members. The event was at the **Renaissance Hotel** in Vancouver on **February 16 and 17**. Our local was actively involved with the Conference – Ross Bliss was one of the featured musicians at the Friday night social, Peter DeGroot was one of the event facilitators, Tara Robertson was a registrar, and seven 391 members attended. Among the featured speakers were Member of Parliament Libby Davies, City Counselor Tim Stevenson and Human Rights Lawyer Anita Braha. Further details and video footage of the event can be found at the website www.cupe.bc.ca.

BC Pension Forum 2007

May 24, 2007

Vancouver

Building Union Pension Leadership in Canada!

The conference brings together union leaders, pension trustees, pension advisory committee members and pension activists with investments managers, public policy makers and leading international thinkers to discuss and debate crucial pension plan governance, funding and investment issues.

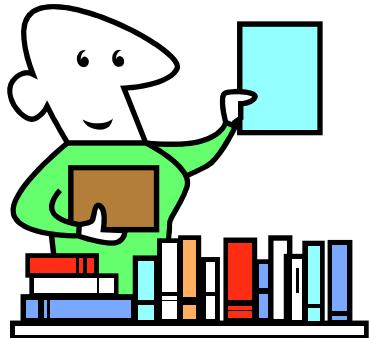
For up-to-date conference information visit
www.share.ca, email conference@share.ca or phone 604.408.2456

cope 491

International Women's Day Dance
6:30 PM - March 8, 2007
Fraserview Hall, 8420 Fraser St.
604-254-0703



Health



Description of how RSIs feel range from "a sense of discomfort" to "excruciating pain".

General symptoms of Repetitive Strain Injuries include:

- numbness
- tingling and burning sensations
- pain, dull ache
- dry, shiny palm
- clumsiness of the hands (loss of ability to grasp items, impaired thumb and finger dexterity)
- swelling around the wrist and hand
- wasting of the muscles at the base of the thumb
- aches and pains which may be strongest at night

- RSIs can be caused by overwork. Our bodies are simply not designed to work faster, more vigorously, endlessly or without rest. They break down, just like machines that are overworked. Rapid, repetitive motions with insufficient rest can cause RSIs. With overwork, the body is forced to work too much with not enough time to recover. This spiraling effect - coupled with stress, another contributor to RSIs – can cause injuries that might never heal without a long-term break from their causes.
- Because repetitive strain injuries have numerous causes affecting a variety of areas, eliminating them demands a comprehensive prevention programme. The cornerstone of such a programme must be to make the job fit the person rather than make the person fit the job.

For more information visit:

<http://www.cupe.ca/healthandsafety/BE4223>



Try the following solution for a non-toxic alternative for washing books.

All-Purpose Cleaner: Mix 1/2 cup vinegar and 1/4 cup baking soda (or 2 teaspoons borax) into 1/2 gallon (2 litres) water.

Other non-toxic formulas may be found at
http://eartheeasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm

Environmental Awareness Committee

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

By Keith Edwards

As you know, the library does recycle printed materials such as newspaper and other paper products, along with a limited supply of toners. Many books are re-directed for possible re-sale at our book sales. A separate 'scrap' section might be worth trying at a book sale for those reading materials that are dated or for some other reason slated for the garbage. Some of those materials are good just for the art or pictures and can be used for collage or craft projects.

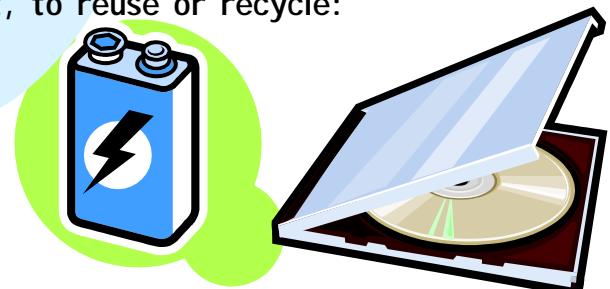
One sided pages of papers can be sent to bindery for p-slips. Just take out the paper clips (try saving the paper clips for reuse!) and staples prior for cutting down to size. It helps the staff if they can be stacked in same size piles. Remember that this same paper would be good for practice printing or non-official copies.

Assorted elastics are in Shipping and assorted used envelopes can be obtained from Supplies.

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 EAC would greatly appreciate any help you can give him, including transporting various recyclables to depots around Vancouver.

In central, the blue bins that are in the divisions encourage staff to not throw away their recyclable and refundable plastics, tins and glass containers. Please take note of the plastic containers that don't have a number inside of a triangle, as these are not considered good for the collection nor are products with the # 6.

Any non-refundables go to the city recycling blue box containers, while refundables are cashed in and put towards environmentally sound practices and promotions for staff. Watch for Bike Month activities in June and others throughout the year.

"Carbon dioxide is not a pollutant."

*Stephen Harper, Hansard,
October 11, 2002*

Contact: keithedw@vpl.ca

Ship recyclables to: "CEN: Keith Edwards, EAC"



Ceramic art piece by **Rebecca Robbins**

It is with great sadness that long time CUPE 391 member **Rebecca Robbins** passed away on Sunday, February 4th, 2007. A tribute to Rebecca will appear in the next issue of Off The Shelf.

Babies' Cottage

Where do we come from?
What are we?
Where are we going?
Don't ask.

The mountains across the harbour
were a chain of offshore islands
before their long slow crash
into British Columbia.

The ground we walk on, hard-packed clay and gravel,
was carried down the mountains
by glaciers and rivers now vanished.
The hospice around the corner

once housed family court;
before that it was Babies' Cottage, an orphanage.
Someone sits by a lamp in the fog-shrouded lounge.
Above the fog, we are told, the sun is shining.

John Donlan
November 23, 2005

"Babies' Cottage" is a recent poem from VPL Librarian John Donlan's fourth collection of poems, "Spirit Engine", which will be published by Brick Books in 2008.

Farewell to the Library

By Stephen Porsche

People who argue until I get dizzy,
Computers that break down just when it gets busy,

These are a few of my favourite things:

Cards that are missing and lost or forgotten,
And books that are marked up and spilled on and rotten,

“Where’s my card at,
Where did it roam?
It might be lost, or
It might be at home.”

Renewed books that go from one card to another,
From sister to brother and father to mother,

“Please renew this,
it’s overdue.
I’ve had it ten times,
But I’m still not through.”

Days it’s so slow that it’s almost like dozing,
Then frantically busy the hour before closing,

“You’re not closing?
You must be fooling!
I need ten books,
And it’s for my schooling!”

Line-ups that go on for ever and ever,
And people who argue and think they’re so clever,

“I’m sure I returned it
It wasn’t out long,
I’m always on time, and
your computer is wrong!”

Alarm clocks that go off before I’m through sleeping,
When I don’t feel a bit like a work-schedule keeping,

“I was dreaming---
I just got started---
but my dream and I
were too soon parted!”

Lunch times that fly by before I get ready
To go back to work when I’m feeling unsteady,

“It can’t be over,
I’m still resting,
And more than that,
I’m still digesting!”

Book bins that fill up ‘til they’re overflowing,
And overdue fines that keep growing and growing,

“it’s much too hectic,
I’ve had enough,
I’ll stay home and
Do other stuff.”

Parents whose J-cards are for their own using,
And cell phones whose ring-tones I don’t find amusing,

People who phone up and tell a tall story,
And whine and complain and never say “sorry,”

These are few of my favourite things.

I’d like to take this opportunity to announce Stephen Porcshe’s retirement from VPL, and thank him on behalf of all CUPE 391 members who have greatly enjoyed reading his many humorous cartoons in this publication over the years. Let’s all wish Stephen many more happy years to come.
Stephen’s last day of work is February 21, 2007





FED UP
WITH BIG PRIVATE
COMPANIES TELLING OUR
EMPLOYERS THAT THEY CAN DO IT
BETTER, CHEAPER, FASTER
THAN WE CAN?

TIRED
OF MOPPING UP
AFTER CONSULTANTS' AND PRIVATE
CONTRACTORS' MISTAKES?

Bring it on home!

CUPE BC's Anti-Contracting Out Committee wants to hear your stories and can help your local fight back and bring our work back home.

In 2007, CUPE BC will fund selected pilot projects, targeting work that has been contracted out and should be brought back in house.

CUPE Communications, Education and Research support is available to locals who want to fight contracting out or start a contracting in campaign.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CUPE'S WORK TO FIGHT CONTRACTING OUT AND PRIVATIZATION, GO TO [WWW.BRINGOURWORKHOME.CA](http://www.bringourworkhome.ca)

CUPE
UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

**STRONG COMMUNITIES
Smart Projects**

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 *Off the Shelf* may be sent confidentially to Lorne MacDonald (Editor) at freelorne@gmail.com, lornemac@vpl.ca, or to Carnegie Reading Room.

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