PASSING THE TORCH

CUPE ENTERS NEW ERA WITH LEADERSHIP CHANGES ON NATIONAL, B.C. EXECUTIVE BOARDS
I want to work with each and every one of our 164 Locals and six district councils to provide any support they need to keep their communities strong.

New leadership faces familiar challenges

DEFEATING THE BC LIBERALS REMAINS OUR TOP PRIORITY

Happy New Year to you all, and welcome to the first edition of Public Employee for 2016.

I want to begin my first column as your new president with sincere thanks to all 85,000 CUPE members in British Columbia. As you know, Mark Hancock is now our national president, elected at national convention in Vancouver in November. My thanks to our entire executive board for placing their confidence in me to replace Brother Hancock as CUPE BC president.

SUPPORTING OUR LOCALS

The events of the past few months have been extremely busy, beginning with Paul Moist's surprise announcement that he would be retiring and closely followed by Brother Hancock's decision to seek the national presidency. I was very proud to support Mark's candidacy, and while we're sad to see him leave CUPE BC, our loss is really our entire union's gain. I know that Mark will be an excellent national president, and I look forward to working closely with him on the national executive board.

My number one priority as your president will be to support our locals and our members — and the communities in which we live and work — throughout the province. Along with our executive board I want to work with each and every one of our 164 locals and six district councils, providing any support they need to keep their communities strong.

CHRISTY CLARK’S SHAMEFUL LEGACY

As we move through the coming year, one of the issues I really want to focus on is child poverty in British Columbia. In a province as rich as ours, it is unacceptable to me — and, I know, to each of you — that one in five B.C. kids is growing up in poverty. Under the BC Liberal governments we’ve had to endure over the past 14 years, the situation continues to get worse, with no sign that Premier Christy Clark has any intention of working to improve things. There are so many reasons the Liberals don’t deserve another term in office, but to me their shameful record on this single issue is enough to vote them out.

I intend to hold the Premier and her government to account wherever their misguided policies affect our members and our communities. Christy Clark has become a one-trick pony in her obsession with LNG as the all-or-nothing panacea for the provincial economy. Meanwhile, her BC Liberals have gutted public services.

If there is an opportunity to work with the government to make positive change, we’ll do that. But our overarching goal for the next 17 months will be to elect a BC NDP government in May 2017. We know that an NDP government will restore funding to K-12 and post-secondary institutions, show far more respect for the collective bargaining process, and generally improve the labour relations climate in B.C.

In the meantime, I look forward to the work that’s ahead of us. Whether it’s responding to the provincial throne speech or attending the budget lockup and developing progressive policy alternatives, CUPE BC will be front and centre on the issues that matter to our members.

In closing, I hope that 2016 brings good health and prosperity for you and your loved ones. And congratulations to newly appointed Secretary-Treasurer Trevor Davies and General Vice-President Frank Lee.

I look forward to seeing many of you soon, whether at Convention in April or at a local or district council meeting.

FOLLOW PAUL ON TWITTER
@PaulFaoro
CUPE ACTION   MEMBERS ON THE FRONT LINE

WATER UTILITY TO BECOME CITY-RUN

WHITE ROCK | On October 30, the City of White Rock took over ownership and operation of its water utility from Edmonton-based EPCOR.

CUPE Local 402-01 had run a campaign to bring the water utility into city ownership. President Mike Guraliuk was pleased, saying: “It’s about controlling our resources and the quality of services that White Rock’s public workers provide.” Guraliuk said the change brings at least five water workers into the City’s CUPE workforce.

White Rock Mayor Wayne Baldwin said the decision gives the community the responsibility of owning and operating the water utility, and ensuring that water utility revenues stay within the community.

NEVER FORGET  CUPE members Karen Ranalletta, Sheryl Burns, Janice Meehan, and Kat Davidson (far right, with daughter) attended the fifth annual candlelight vigil to end violence against women, at Holland Park in Surrey on December 6. Held on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, the event marked the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Montreal massacre.

Curbside collection stays in-house

REVELSTOKE | Revelstoke City Council has opted to keep its curbside garbage collection in-house. The decision follows a comprehensive review of options that included bids from private companies.

The city agreed with the conclusions of an internal report, which determined that public curbside collection is the most affordable route. The report recommended keeping the current service, which is staffed by CUPE municipal workers.

The city’s report found that cost savings anticipated by contracting out garbage collection services were not realized through the RFP process. Staying with an in-house service with collection occurring over four eight-hour days offered the lowest cost option available.

CUPE 363 President Chris Selvig praised Council’s decision. “We’re proud of the quality work we do for the people of Revelstoke and feel this decision is ‘win-win-win’ for the citizens, the city and our members,” said Selvig.

LOCAL EXPANDS TO INCLUDE ANIMAL CENTRE

SURREY | Members of CUPE Local 402 in the City of Surrey are now providing services at the Surrey Animal Resource Centre following an agreement between the union and the city.

The centre provides animal care, information about owner responsibilities, dog off-leash areas, and the City of Surrey’s animal regulations. It also serves as a call centre for lost pets and animal complaints. Surrey agreed with CUPE 402, which had initially proposed the idea in bargaining, that staffing the centre with CUPE workers will optimize customer service and provide excellent animal care.

CUPE 402 President Jeannie Kilby said the local is pleased to have the work come to the city.

“The centre is located in a city-owned facility, so it just makes sense that it be staffed by CUPE workers,” she said. “We have the expertise and our members are dedicated, personable and caring — a perfect fit for an animal resource centre.”

Employee hiring began in December for the new city service.
CUPE 873 launches “Send a Paramedic” public campaign

During the fall, the Ambulance Paramedics of BC (CUPE 873) launched an awareness campaign in response to some B.C. municipalities that have been advocating for their fire department first responders to be sent on more medical events and provide medical care beyond their current training and capability.

“While the issue of paramedic response times is a very real concern, sending firefighters isn’t the solution,” said CUPE 873 President Bronwyn Barter.

“In British Columbia, the provincial government and the BC Ambulance Service have the sole responsibility to provide pre-hospital emergency medical response. They do so with highly trained paramedics, in transport-capable ambulances.”

The campaign’s main message is that every British Columbian, in a medical emergency, deserves not only a quick response but also an appropriate response by paramedics.

As the pre-hospital professionals, paramedics deliver emergency medicine every day in British Columbia. However, existing paramedic resources aren’t meeting the demand, and patients are suffering. The campaign encourages members of the public to send a letter in support of British Columbia’s paramedics.

More info: www.sendaparamedic.ca

“Canada has a shameful past. But we don’t need to carry this shame any further, as long as we commit to a relationship of mutual respect originally envisioned in the treaties.”

Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, on the dark national legacy of the residential school system.

“No peace agreement in this country will be complete unless social movements and the victims of armed conflict are also at the table.”

Berenice Celeita, chair of the Colombian human rights organization NOMADESC, noting that the 50-year war in her country has left more than 350,000 people dead while displacing more than 6 million.

“People all over the world quite literally have died fighting for the right to assemble and express their opinions, and the opportunity to address you is absolutely inspirational to me. I am a free man today because of people like you.”

Former Al Jazeera Cairo bureau chief and award-winning Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy thanks CUPE for its efforts in seeking his release from an Egyptian prison on bogus terrorism charges.

“You saw that this was good for your members and good for Canada and you stuck your neck out, and now more than a hundred organizations have since signed on, too. That’s leadership.”

Author Naomi Klein, calling for action on climate change, thanks CUPE for signing on to the Leap Manifesto.

“We will never let any court decision or law determine our future. We’ve come too far and fought too hard to turn back now. If our enemies want a fight, they’ll get one.”

AFSCME President Lee Saunders warns right wing politicians that the U.S. labour movement is fed up with attacks on workers’ rights.

“Uruguay has decided to withdraw from negotiations for the Trade in Services Agreement. Paraguay is following. The municipality of Zurich has adopted a resolution declaring Zurich TISA-free.”

Public Services International General Secretary Rosa Pavanelli notes that PSI affiliates’ coordinated efforts to oppose trade agreements have seen recent success.

For more on CUPE’s 2015 National Convention, see p. 10.
Steward campaign benefits local

VICTORIA | Thanks to a recent member outreach campaign, CUPE 951 has a new return to work and accommodation (RTWA) officer, several potential steward candidates, a mapped workplace, and more engaged members who can now put a face to their union and know who to call.

The Local launched the campaign in response to the declining number of stewards and RTWA officers at the University of Victoria campus. After discussing the issue at their weekly meeting, CUPE 951 developed a plan in which stewards were booked off for two afternoons so they could visit as many UVic worksites as possible.

“Members were very happy to meet us and be able to ask questions,” said Chief Steward Laurie Whyte.

Human Resources helped by calling offices to let them know that CUPE 951 would be visiting. Stewards talked with members in their offices, asked them to put up a poster, and gave out a brochure about the responsibilities and support for stewards and RTWA officers, along with a CUPE 951 orientation brochure.

Everyone got a chance to win one of 11 university ONECards, to be used like a no-fee debit card at the university bookstore or food outlets. All materials were printed on campus.

“This was so successful, we may make it an annual event,” said CUPE 951 President Kara White.

‘ECONOMIC STABILITY’ IS A RELATIVE TERM IN B.C.

In November, the BC Liberal provincial government announced that public sector workers, including many CUPE members, will receive a very small pay raise this year as a result of the “economic stability dividend” included in the last round of bargaining.

“The increase is welcome but does very little to help workers keep pace with the cost of living,” then-CUPE BC Secretary-Treasurer Paul Faoro said. “We’re glad to see a modest wage increase beginning next year but that said, as a result of BC Liberal cuts and funding reductions, our members have been falling behind over the past decade.

“An increase of .45 percent, while welcome, doesn’t even begin to keep our members whole relative to the cost of living.”
METRO LOCALS PREPARE TO BARGAIN
CUPE municipal locals across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley are engaged in coordinated bargaining preparations. Locals have been meeting regularly to share information, identify key issues and discuss strategy.

With most agreements having expired on December 31, 2015, a total of 27 collective agreements covering more than 20,000 workers will be up for negotiation by March this year.

Metro bargaining information can be found at: www.metrobargaining.cupe.ca

ENVIRO ALL-STAR WINNERS ANNOUNCED
BURNABY | Winners of CUPE BC’s Environment All-Stars Contest were announced in November.

First place went to Aman Cheema of CUPE 402 in Surrey for creative ways to reduce household water consumption.

Second place winner Kathy Russell of CUPE 4177 spearheaded work with an environmental group at Nechako Valley Secondary.

Duncan Currie of CUPE 4774 in Creston won third prize for a garden rejuvenation project. Fourth place winner Ann Dodington of CUPE 391 (Vancouver libraries) submitted an Earth Day project reusing Keurig cups.

More information can be found at www.enviroallstars.ca

CORE REVIEW OFF TO A SLOW START
NANAIMO | The City of Nanaimo is the latest municipality to take on a core review of its city services. As is often the case, the process — which began in February 2015 with a council resolution — has taken longer than anticipated, even in the planning stages. As of press time, no final decision had been made on a consulting firm to oversee the review.

“CUPE’s experience has been that core reviews often take a lot of time and money and deliver nothing new for communities,” said Carol Reardon, CUPE’s local government liaison for B.C.

Reardon said that CUPE 401 in Nanaimo is monitoring the situation and will be engaging with the community as the process evolves.

POST-SEC BARGAINING NEARLY WRAPPED UP
By the holiday break, most of CUPE’s college and university locals had ratified collective agreements that follow the five-year provincial mandate.

Components 1 and 2 of CUPE 4163 at University of Victoria were in bargaining and working towards a deal as Public Employee went to press. Vancouver Community College was the only college sector local still in bargaining. CUPE 4627 was also engaged in a campaign — Save our VCC — to take the college off the provincial government’s chopping block.

AUBREY AND REG: THE NAMES BEHIND THE SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, CUPE BC’s Aubrey Burton and Reg Ford scholarships provide $500 to the children of CUPE members who are entering first year studies in a B.C. post-secondary program.

We’ve had a lot of questions about the origins of these scholarships, so we thank retired Secretary-Treasurer Colleen Jordan for sharing this story.

Aubrey Burton was a CUPE representative in the Kootenays during the 1960s. Before CUPE was officially formed, he became a staff rep.

Along with fellow rep Peter Drieger, Aubrey serviced B.C. CUPE locals outside of the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. Together, Drieger and Burton were credited with organizing many small communities into CUPE and negotiating first agreements that contained no contracting-out language.

Aubrey was killed in a car accident on the Upper Levels highway. He was working for CUPE at the time of his death.

Reg Ford was president of CUPE 402 for several years in the late 1970s and early 80s. Also a vice-president of CUPE BC, he was well known as a health and safety activist.

Tragically, he was killed in an accident at his home while trimming a tree in his yard. Reg was very active in the labour movement at the time of his passing.

In 2015, three types of scholarships were awarded: College (Gabriel Trinidad, Local 728), University (Aidan Canil, Local 401), and Trades (Tanner Struss, Local 3500 and Michael Reiber, Locals 1858 and 873). The scholarships are awarded annually in September. The application deadline for this year will be announced in the Spring issue of Public Employee.
\textbf{LINKING LABOUR} \quad \textbf{ROBIN JONES, REGIONAL DIRECTOR}

\textit{“The sooner we can anticipate and address problem areas, the better prepared we will be when negotiations for a new contract begin.”}

\textbf{Bargaining is still our most important work}

\textbf{MUCH MORE THAN WAGES AND BENEFITS ARE AT STAKE NOW}

On behalf of the B.C. region staff, I would like to wish you all a happy and prosperous 2016. It is certainly getting off to a busy start: as the New Year begins, bargaining is about to commence or is already underway for some 20,000 of our members who are civic workers in Metro Vancouver and the surrounding region.

The collective agreements that come out of this round of bargaining could well set the standard for municipal contracts in other jurisdictions over the next couple of years, so it’s important that we come to the table fully prepared.

To that end, our Servicing, Research, Communications, Education and Legal departments have been working closely with those locals to get ready. Among other things, we have been conducting surveys to establish bargaining priorities, assessing training needs, reviewing communication plans, and analyzing local agreement and other provisions.

\textbf{FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED}

In the last couple of years, we have seen a number of lengthy strikes and lockouts that have taxed both the union’s resources and the personal finances of members who’ve had to endure these protracted disputes. After a long and bitter job action, the road back to a trusting and mutually respectful environment with the employer is never easy.

That’s why we always encourage local presidents to keep CUPE up to date on labour-management relations: the sooner we can anticipate and address problem areas, the better prepared we will be when negotiations for a new contract begin.

Collective bargaining is the most important work we do as a union, and not just for wages and benefits. Much of the time, the improvements we seek at the table are aimed at a range of working conditions and workplace rights — the overall environment that can prove the difference between a workplace that’s miserable and one that CUPE members can be proud to call their own. How successful we are in negotiating these improvements depends on several factors, not least of them the changing definition of work itself.

As the Focus article on page 11 makes clear, one of the biggest challenges all unions are facing in 2016 is the gradual shift away from full-time equivalent to temporary positions. For young people especially, it’s a scary world out there: three quarters of all new jobs are temporary, and only one quarter are full-time.

For the next generation, the notion of juggling two or three jobs to make ends meet has become an all-too-common reality. Recent material developed by CUPE Research addresses some of the issues around “precarious” work, which should be helpful at the table.

\textbf{TAKING NOTHING FOR GRANTED}

Needless to say, the only real gains we have ever made at the bargaining table have been the result of our own efforts. Nothing has ever been given to us. It is always our responsibility not only to protect the improvements we have already achieved but to understand the meaning of “no concessions” when negotiating for that next contract.

We are most likely to be successful in bargaining when we have done our homework within the union and in our communities. CUPE has resources to assist locals with this work. Whether it’s cost shared campaigns, using the expertise of CUPE specialists to put the right plans and systems in place to meet communications and research needs, or seeking assistance in working with elected officials, locals can access a wide range of CUPE services if they do some advance planning.

There is always a lot at stake when a large group of locals heads into bargaining, and 2016 will be no different. With good planning, open lines of communication and hard work, this can be a year where we make some real gains for members.
NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR CUPE BC

In accordance with the CUPE BC Constitution, the resignation of Mark Hancock from the position of president of CUPE BC triggered a series of interim appointments by the executive board.

At its December meeting, the Executive appointed Paul Faoro as president, Trevor Davies as secretary-treasurer and Frank Lee as general vice president. Sarah Bjorknas steps in as regional vice-president for Metro Vancouver, leaving the alternate position vacant.

All three of the interim appointments are effective until CUPE BC’s 2016 Convention in Victoria. Elections for those positions will be held at Convention for one-year terms, thus bringing their terms into the same timeframe as all other executive board positions.

Here’s a full list of the new Executive Board:

**President**
Paul Faoro

**Secretary-Treasurer**
Trevor Davies

**General Vice Presidents**
John Hall
Cindy McQueen
Karen Ranalletta
Frank Lee

**Regional Vice Presidents**
Jacqueline Hall
Regional Vice President
Fraser Valley Region

Ken Vaughan-Evans
Regional Vice President
Kootenays

Michael Lanier
Regional Vice President
Metro Vancouver Region

Sarah Bjorknas
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

**Passing the torch**

HANCOCK SUCCEEDS MOIST AS NATIONAL PRESIDENT, FAORO TAKES THE REINS IN B.C.

VANCOUVER | A new era began for CUPE on November 4, with delegates to the National convention electing Mark Hancock as the Union’s national president, replacing Paul Moist. Moist announced in October that he would not seek another term after 12 years at the helm of Canada’s largest union. National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury was re-elected to his third term.

Convention delegates celebrated Moist’s more than 30 years as a CUPE member, activist and leader. The tribute included a slide show featuring many highlights of his career and personal testimonials capped by an emotional tribute from his daughter, CUPE Manitoba President Kelly Moist. In his final speech as national president, Moist thanked delegates and all CUPE members for their support, dedication and activism.

Hancock, the sixth president in CUPE’s history — and the first from British Columbia — saluted Moist’s achievements, vision and character. He also thanked him for his many important contributions to CUPE, the labour movement in Canada and around the world, and for his commitment to the NDP. He said he would do his best to continue the growth and strengthening of CUPE cultivated by Moist.

ON THE COVER  Outgoing and incoming CUPE National Presidents Paul Moist and Mark Hancock flank two of their predecessors, Jeff Rose (1983-91) and Judy Darcy (1991-2003), on the stage at National convention on November 4.
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

Jose van Berkel
Trustee – Three Year

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

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, Fraser Valley Region

Quinton Tutin
Alternate Diversity Vice-President Representing Aboriginal Workers

Drew Parris
Alternate Diversity Vice-President Representing Workers of Colour

PROGRESSIVE VOICES With presidential candidates Fred Hahn and Mark Hancock standing behind her, CUPE National Diversity Vice-President Yolanda McClean addresses delegates.

LETTER FROM MARK HANCOCK

Dear friends,

It feels strange to be writing a “goodbye” letter for Public Employee when I am still very much working on your behalf. As you know, I was honoured to be elected as your national president on November 4. Though I will have been on that job for two months by the time you read this, I wanted to share a few words with every one of our 85,000 members in B.C.

Most importantly: thank you. Thank you for everything you do, every day, to make our communities, our province and our country better places to live and work. The vital public services you provide truly are the foundation of our communities, and you don’t get nearly enough recognition for your work.

Thanks as well for the support you’ve given me as a union leader — but more importantly, as a friend and brother — for my two decades serving this great union in B.C., the last ten and a half as an officer. Of course, our relationship is only changing — not ending — and as national president I will make every effort to support CUPE members in B.C., whether on the picket line or in the community. And I’ll continue to make B.C. my home.

I also want to thank Brother Paul Moist, our outgoing national president, for his 12 years of outstanding service and leadership. Paul has definitely left big shoes to fill, but I will do my best, for all of our more than 630,000 members across this great country.

In the meantime, I know that CUPE BC is in great hands. Our elected leadership and staff have always put our members first, and always will.

With respect, love, and solidarity,

Mark Hancock
CUPE National President

CONVENTION RITUALS
Paul Moist and his family acknowledge delegates following a tribute to his long career with CUPE (left); volunteers show empty ballot boxes to ensure a fair vote.
ADVANCING A PROGRESSIVE AGENDA

FROM A CLEANER PLANET TO BETTER JOBS, CUPE TAKES THE LEAD IN 2016

VANCOUVER | More than 2,000 CUPE members came together in B.C. for CUPE’s 27th biennial National Convention (November 2-6).

Apart from the retirement of National President Paul Moist and the election of Mark Hancock as his replacement, Convention 2015 was notable for the large rally held in support of the Leap Manifesto on climate change, for the number of moving addresses by guest speakers, and for delegates’ resolve to set a clear agenda for CUPE’s future.

Taking the Leap

During the Thursday rally, held outside the Vancouver Convention Centre in support of the Leap Manifesto (see www.leapmanifesto.org), guest speakers including Naomi Klein and Stephen Lewis called on Canada to act decisively in making the transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to a pollution-free economy.

Lewis urged CUPE to continue the work on climate justice, while Klein said we don’t have any time to waste. “We can’t just leave this to the politicians, and if they’re not going to lead, then we’re going to lead,” she said.

Several speakers noted that CUPE was the first union to sign the Leap Manifesto, highlighting the fact that the environmental and trade union movements are natural allies in the fight for social justice.

Speakers inspire delegates

International solidarity was an important theme throughout convention week, with guest speakers like Lee Saunders and Rosa Pavanelli reminding us that our issues are similar across the globe and we can play an important role in supporting each other across borders.

AFCSME President Saunders inspired delegates with a boisterous speech about the labour movement’s durability in the face of ongoing and relentless attacks against it.

Pavanelli, general secretary of Public Services International, told delegates that workers are under more pressure than ever to coordinate their efforts because “we are the only barrier to complete profit for the corporate sector and the limits they want to put on us.” Winning the war against neoliberal economics, she noted, would require a coherent, consistent global agenda for the labour movement.

Delegates also heard passionate speeches from Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff, former Al Jazeera Cairo bureau chief and award-winning Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy (who thanked CUPE for its efforts to secure his release from an Egyptian prison after 438 days on bogus terrorism charges), and Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair Justice Murray Sinclair.

Justice Sinclair’s address included an audio-visual presentation on the history of Canada’s Indian Residential Schools system and its devastating legacy for survivors, their families, Indigenous nations and Canada. It was the week’s most gut-wrenching and poignant guest speech.

Signing off on “Strategic Directions”

Delegates held an important debate surrounding the Union’s Strategic Directions action plan for the next two years.

The draft plan was placed before delegates at the beginning of Convention, and each day included debate on specific aspects of the plan. On the final day of proceedings, a revised document was presented that incorporated much of the debate from the previous days.

Strategic Directions 2015-2017 focuses on building workers’ power to improve our workplaces and communities, and to build a better country — and world.

According to the action plan, one of CUPE’s top priorities over the coming two years will be the issue of precarious work. Ensuring that we are able to win full rights and stable, well-paying jobs for precarious workers will help encourage new and young workers to become more active in CUPE.

Strategic Directions also commits CUPE to increasing its efforts to connect with and engage members, as well as continuing to focus on workplace health and safety.

Political action at all levels, fighting privatization, and advocacy of a low-carbon economy and good green jobs, will continue to be core components of CUPE’s efforts.
Working in the age of uncertainty

UNIONS TACKLE THE INCREASE IN PART-TIME, CASUAL EMPLOYMENT

For many workers and their families, the character of work continues to change for the worse. As inequality deepens, workers are conditioned to expect less and more of us live with chronic uncertainty as the ranks of precarious workers swell.

Conditions causing precarious work in Canada include four decades of economic globalization and the push to implement international trade agreements that increase employer power. Regular full-time jobs have been lost in manufacturing, services, private industry and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, corporations and employers are ramping up their assaults on working conditions, living standards, and unions. Governments are reducing commitments to workers, families and communities while abandoning their responsibility to safeguard workers’ rights.

Precarious employment on the rise

A recent comprehensive CUPE National survey shows that precarious members are concentrated in part-time, casual, on-call, or contract employment. Many equity-seeking groups are overrepresented in precarious or vulnerable classifications including women, young workers (below the age of 35), racialized members, non-citizens, and those speaking another language at home, as well as those reporting physical or mental conditions.

Twice as many women are likely to hold part-time permanent or casual jobs. Women are more likely to work less than 30 hours per week with no benefits and have a higher likelihood of having their work hours reduced.

Young workers represent 21 per cent of members. They likely work fewer than 30 hours per week and are less likely to have employment benefits, workplace pensions, or sick leave.

Power shifting and labour market flexibility

Workers who belong to the “precariat” are at the mercy of market forces and the economic power of employers more than they have been for generations. They work harder, for lower wages in more precarious and insecure jobs with less to fall back on when jobs disappear.

Gains of economic growth have gone to corporate profits and the wealth of those at the top. Increased labour market flexibility has shifted power to employers while reducing legislative standards and protections covering work.

Examples of how CUPE members are affected by precarious work include:

- K-12: Paid hours and annual remuneration for EAs are substandard. As a result, many have to look for supplementary employment.
- Municipal: An ever-increasing number of auxiliary workers inhabit CUPE municipal bargaining units and they often lack stable and predictable work hours, working conditions and income streams.
- Libraries: Increased use of technology and part-timers has reduced earnings and job security.
- Universities: An overuse of contingent academic workers, many of whom belong to CUPE. These folks routinely work years in term positions that can be routinely rolled over (or not), leading to chronic and ongoing employment uncertainty.
- Social services: Many younger workers or those with part-time hours have to work more than one job to make ends meet and feed their families.

The trend and nature of precarious work impacts everyone in civil society. Instead of following the neo-liberal agenda, we need a system that is geared to public good over private profit. We need to look at creative ways to identify with precarious workers and give them a true and authentic voice within our union structures. And we need to fight our employers to win the kinds of changes needed to break the cycle of growing precarity in our work and in our communities.

TIME TO STAND UP A Precariat Charter: From Denizens to Citizens (Bloomsbury, 2014), by Guy Standing, says we need a new Magna Carta to stop the dissolution of social systems, attacks on unions and dismantling of education. A basic income for all citizens is one of Standing’s solutions for emancipating the precariat and strengthening people’s ability to say no to neoliberalism.

Read the full article online at cupe.bc.ca/precarious
‘Literacy for Life’ now thriving, thanks to local-sponsored gala

ALL NINE BRANCHES HAVE BENEFITED FROM $80,000 RAISED AT SUMMER EVENT

SURREY | A literacy campaign that helped more than 150,000 library users in 2014-15 received a big boost from a CUPE-organized fundraiser held here last summer.

Literacy for Life supports early literacy, workplace literacy, diversity and multicultural programming, and read-ability services at all nine branches of Surrey Libraries. On July 11, the program received an $80,000 infusion at the campaign’s inaugural gala held at Surrey City Centre Plaza — including separate $10,000 donations from diversity consultant Jas Cheema and former Surrey Libraries Chief Librarian Beth Barlow.

Denise Parks, chairperson of CUPE 402-02 (Surrey Library Workers), said her union local is proud to support library initiatives like Literacy for Life.

“The community support has been tremendous,” said Parks. “The funds raised at the gala have made a big difference for children and adults in our community who need help with basic literacy.”

A COMMUNITY FEST OF FUN AND GIVING

KELOWNA | CUPE Local 338 was proud to sponsor the second annual Strong Communities Family Festival in Kelowna last September. Local President Lee Mossman said members were happy to give back to the community and show that CUPE cares about the places we live, work and play in. He acknowledged the support from a CUPE National cost shared campaign in helping the Local support the festival.

The event was packed and featured a free family festival with tai chi, a barbeque, popcorn and snow cones. For the kids there were bouncy castles, face painting, balloon animals and arts and crafts. Every child also received a goody bag!

With the weather cooperating, people had fun and a chance to give back. Donations were accepted for the local food banks and a large food donation was given to the Kelowna Gospel Mission as well. Mossman singled out members and other event volunteers for special thanks in helping make the festival such a great success.

PROGRESSIVE BEAT

CUPE BC Okanagan Regional Vice-President Jolene Lamoureux and CUPE 338 President Lee Mossman groove to the tunes of Kelowna’s DJ Shado (aka Spencer Jones) at the “Strong Communities” celebration.

LOCAL FUNDS SWIM

As part of a National cost-shared campaign, CUPE 358 will be sponsoring a free Family Day (February 8, 2016) swim at the Cowichan Aquatic Centre from noon until 4 p.m. CUPE 358 President Ron Salvati says his local looks forward to this opportunity to give back to the community.
Pumpkin Patch delights Burnaby kids

CUPE LOCAL A BIG BOOSTER OF ANNUAL TWO-DAY EVENT

BURNABY | CUPE 23 member Chris Revitt and his family have turned their enjoyment of pumpkins into a neighbourhood event for children who may be physically or financially unable to visit a real pumpkin patch.

CUPE 23 (Burnaby civic workers) stepped up last fall to provide sponsorship and expand the event to include Douglas Road Elementary as well as South Slope Elementary & BC School for the Deaf.

“We work and live in the community so we like to reach out and be active in it,” says CUPE 23 Outside Chair Bruce Campbell.

A lot goes into the two-day event. Pumpkins, bales of hay and decorations are picked up. Popcorn is popped and hot chocolate is brewed to serve 700 students. Parents, CUPE 23 members and the community get up early to place more than 350 pumpkins on fields at both schools.

“You only have to watch the kids and parents,” said Revitt. “When you look at the faces of the kids, they’re so excited to pick a pumpkin.” In 2015, pre-school classes were also invited.

Students get to enjoy hot chocolate and popcorn while they tour the field and select a pumpkin. Teachers then help students paint or carve pumpkins or even make pumpkin seeds.

Revitt says it’s rewarding because the community gets involved – everyone who stops by is invited to come in and participate.

“This is an awesome event,” says Kim Pearson, a CUPE 23 member who runs the hot meal program at the school. “It’s very multi-cultural here and this is a great way for everyone to learn about new traditions.”

HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPION RETIRES

CUPE has lost a great champion for human rights with the retirement this year of Conni Kilfoil, the union’s first Equality Representative in British Columbia.

Sister Kilfoil’s departure after 28 years in the labour movement — all but four with CUPE — marks the end of a prolific career. Whether as an advocate for employment equity and anti-racism awareness or as aunion educator, Conni has been a pioneering influence in CUPE’s fight for equality.

As staff advisor to CUPE BC’s Committee Against Racism and Discrimination, she taught and developed courses on Duty to Accommodate, Human Rights, Bullying and Harassment, and Tools for Social Justice that have been taught nationwide and used by other unions, as well as by a Nicaraguan women’s organization. Conni also drew from an extensive track record on aboriginal rights, both as a professional anthropologist and as a lawyer, in her work for CUPE BC’s Aboriginal Working Group and CUPE National’s Aboriginal Council.

In 2013, the Canadian Labour Congress honoured her with its Carol McGregor Disability Rights Award, in recognition of her lifetime of dedication to the advancement of disability rights.

Sister Kilfoil will be missed by members and staff alike, and we wish her all the best for her retirement.
I would like to thank the Executive Board for their support, and I look forward to this amazing opportunity to work with you all to make our great union even stronger.

Countdown to 2017

IT’S TIME TO RAMP UP CAMPAIGN TO DEFEAT THE CLARK LIBERALS

Welcome to my first column as your secretary-treasurer, and Happy New Year to you all!

I’d like to begin by thanking my colleagues on the CUPE BC Executive Board for placing their trust in me to serve as interim secretary-treasurer, replacing my friend Paul Faoro as he steps up to replace Mark Hancock, who of course is our new national president.

There’s no question that this position comes with a significant learning curve, but I want you all to know that I’m up for the challenge and looking forward to it.

My main focus will be to continue the strong stewardship of CUPE BC’s finances that’s been established over our history, most recently by Paul, by Mark before him and, for many years before him, by Colleen Jordan. It’s only with a strong financial footing that we can take on the serious challenges and issues before us.

First and foremost — though the next provincial election won’t be until May 2017 — is ensuring that we replace the regressive BC Liberal government in Victoria with a principled and progressive BC NDP government under Premier John Horgan.

We will be ramping up our political action program well in advance to ensure that CUPE members can help make the difference in the election’s outcome. Don’t forget: if the Liberals are re-elected in 2017, it will mean they will have governed this province for a full 20 years by the time the next election comes around. It’s well past time for a change in Victoria, so I hope you will join with us to elect a progressive alternative to the BC Liberals.

As you read this, we will be in the early stages of two provincial by-elections in the Lower Mainland. If you live in or near the constituencies of Vancouver Mt. Pleasant or Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, I hope you’ll volunteer even a bit of your time to help elect the NDP candidate in the riding. In Vancouver — Mt. Pleasant, we have an amazing candidate in Melanie Mark — who, if elected, would be the first woman of First Nations ancestry ever elected to the B.C. Legislature. In Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, we have Jodie Wickens. Both these women deserve your vote if you live there, and your volunteer time if you don’t. We can send a strong message to Christy Clark: your days as premier are numbered.

This year I’m also looking forward to continuing two important initiatives that are already underway — a new website that will be launched in time for Convention, and a new data management system. Both these initiatives will allow us to communicate and engage more effectively with our members. I’m also excited to let you know that this year we’ll have a Convention app available so we can begin to reduce our carbon footprint. At future conventions, delegates will be able to opt out of taking a printed kit, as all documents will be available on the app. Much more information will be available soon.

Again, I would like to thank the Executive Board for their support, and I look forward to this amazing opportunity to work with you all to make our great union even stronger.

FOR A BETTER PROVINCE Trevor Davies, seen at CUPE’s National Convention in November, says that CUPE BC will pull out all the stops to see the NDP’s John Horgan become the next B.C. premier.
Once again, CUPE’s week-long school is being held in the heart of B.C.’s Interior.

Coast Kamloops Conference and Convention Centre

May 29 - June 3

Book now to expand your horizons and sharpen your activist tools.

Remember, scholarship are available.
Check with your rep or visit cupe.bc.ca

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS MAY 13

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

CUPE Education representative Greg Burkitt at 604-291-1940 or send him an e-mail at gburkitt@cupe.ca

POWERFUL LEARNING, AT ITS BEST!

THIS YEAR’S WORKSHOPS

- Introduction to Human Rights
- Conflict Resolution
- Parliamentary Procedure/Public Speaking
- Steward Learning Series Modules (8)
- OH & S Modules NEW

CUPE SPRING WEEK-LONG SCHOOL