

CUPE 2950  
**LOCAL NEWS**  
OCTOBER 2011

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON BARGAINING

By Nancy Forhan, President

I THINK SOMEONE needs to send Christy Clark's Liberals a dictionary. They seem to have trouble defining numerous words including: "fair", "equitable" and "bargaining".

I was watching a TV panel discussion yesterday exploring the probable course and conclusion of the current BC Teachers' job action.

Bob Plecas, (who served more than twenty years in the B.C. provincial government as a career civil servant so should know better) commented what a tough position the government is in because "under the current PSEC mandate" NO public servant in BC has received a wage increase — so it would be *impossible* for Christy's Liberals to give anything to the teachers. All heads around the table nodded in agreement. "It wouldn't be fair. After all — the mandate has to apply equitably".

Is there a support worker anywhere on campus that believes the mandate has been applied fairly or equitably?

We all know managers who have received wage increases this year. We all know administrators who have received wage increases this year. We all know faculty members who have received wage increases this year.

We all know the zero/zero mandate has been applied only to the support staff at UBC. Only to the unionized workers at UBC.

Your "bargaining" committee goes back to the table this month. There will be no "free collective bargaining" at our table. Christy Clark's Liberal government has set the mandate and the University administration is towing the line. It's a two-year agreement with not only no wage increase but no money is to be added to the collective agreement in any way, shape or form. Meaning the University has no authority to offer us anything that would cost them a penny, including an extra day off for our birthday.

As well as not a penny for increased wages or benefits, the employer has no ability to agree to any article that may be construed

*continued...*



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MEMBERSHIP MEETING:  
THURSDAY, OCT. 27  
12-2, IBLC #182  
LOCAL ELECTIONS  
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as a loss of “management rights”. This includes things like widening the criteria for the use of compassionate leave.

Despite the government mandate, CUPE 2950 remains committed to the process of “negotiations”. As Canadian workers, we deserve the right to “bargain freely with our employer”. The Canadian Constitution says so. But, yet again, the BC Liberals have ignored the law and stripped us of that right – and - perhaps even more telling — the University administration is not prepared to stand up for its employees.

So all this begs the question: What are we doing at the table?

We’ve met numerous times since May 2011. Both sides tabled their proposals. By the beginning of June, we’d canvassed all the major issues and signed off on uncontentious articles and letters.

The University claimed to be extremely disappointed that we suspended “bargaining” over the summer. We recently proposed a return date to the table of Oct.19. We remain committed to the *true* process of “free collective bargaining” but unless there is a major shift in either the government's “mandate” or the University’s attitude — that is not going to happen.

“WE ALL KNOW THE ZERO/ZERO MANDATE HAS BEEN APPLIED ONLY TO THE SUPPORT STAFF AT UBC. ONLY TO THE UNIONIZED WORKERS AT UBC.”

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*As of 2010, the average income of the richest 1% of BC households had reached a staggering \$820,000 (that’s in one year!). Provincial income tax cuts introduced since 2001 delivered, on average, a whopping \$41,000 to the top 1% of BC households. - CCPA*

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## THRONE SPEECH

A NEW STAT holiday, big changes to the Education system and maybe even a wage increase for public support staff...

Christy Clark’s Liberal government taunts workers across BC with ‘carrots’ that won’t come into effect until just months before the next provincial election. Have we learned nothing from 2005 ?

*“Government will facilitate a process for collective agreement improvements by working with ministries and employer groups to find savings through cooperative gains. The government will be asking public sector employers, unions and employees to join in this process.”*

[theyyee.ca/Blogs/TheHook/BC-Politics/2011/10/03/ThroneSpeech/](http://theyyee.ca/Blogs/TheHook/BC-Politics/2011/10/03/ThroneSpeech/)



## FINANCIAL UPDATE

By Cheryl Kinkaid, Treasurer

THE LAST STATEMENTS that I have are for June 2011. Local 2950's forecasted revenue is a little higher than the actuals while the expenses remain well below the budgeted amount. We are still running a small deficit, about \$1500, as of the end of June. We have expenses from one more convention coming up.

The trustees' report is complete and a copy was included in the package for the September 29 General Membership Meeting. The recommendations have been reviewed and have either been resolved or are in the process of being resolved.

We've also received the audited Financial Statements for 2010 and they are on file in the office.

The review of our investment strategy is ongoing. We've received one proposal from the CUPE BC recommended investment company and I'm in the process of gathering the final pieces for a second proposal. Our current investment returns are not keeping up with inflation but of course need to remain in very conservative investments. I'm hoping to have this go to the membership for your approval by the end of the year.

The last announcement is that I will not be seeking re-election as Treasurer. I've enjoyed working in this role a great deal the last year and I've learned a lot. I'm taking courses again and I no longer have the same time available to give the position the attention it needs. I'll be remaining involved in the Local and am seeking election as a Sergeant-at-Arms.

Anyone who is interested in becoming the Treasurer may get in touch with me about what the job involves. There is also a blurb on the website about the job duties. Training is provided. There is a financial officers course provided by CUPE and I'll be available to spend some time during transition.

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### "CRAP"

NOVA SCOTIA FINANCE Minister Graham Steele didn't mince words when he declared the right-leaning **Fraser Institute** in BC produces 'crap'. Steele's comments were feedback to the Institute's report which ranked the Canadian premiers' fiscal management. The Institute had named BC Premier Gordon Campbell as #1.

# HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT

By Richard Hare, Health and Safety Committee Chair

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

UBC is participating in “Shakeout BC”, the largest earthquake drill in Canadian history on Thursday, October 20 at 10:20 am. The University would like all departments to join in practicing “Drop, Cover and Hold”. The following link will take you to information on the UBC website:

[riskmanagement.ubc.ca/ShakeoutBC\\_2011](http://riskmanagement.ubc.ca/ShakeoutBC_2011) and the ShakeoutBC website is at [www.shakeoutbc.ca/](http://www.shakeoutbc.ca/).

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS** is also the October topic on this year’s UBC Safety Calendar. In addition to earthquakes, emergencies that could occur on campus include fires, personal security, toxic substance release, or bomb threats. Staff should be aware of and understand the Building Emergency Response Plan and the plan should be updated annually. Annual fire drills should be conducted for each building. In the event of a large scale on-campus emergency, the University will implement its UBC Disaster Response plan and activate its’ Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to coordinate campus and community response as well as recovery activities. Emergency Planning information for UBC departments can be obtained by phoning 604.822.1237 or emailing [calvin.cheung@ubc.ca](mailto:calvin.cheung@ubc.ca).

## **THE NEXT OFFICE ERGO REPRESENTATIVE**

**TRAINING SESSION** will be held on Tuesday, October 25, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm in GSAB Room 234. If you have questions please email

[ergonomics@hr.ubc.ca](mailto:ergonomics@hr.ubc.ca) and you can [click here to register](#).

The Ergonomics program at UBC strives to have an Office Ergonomics Representative for each department. Training and material is provided for reps to promote, educate and ensure musculoskeletal health in their departments.

Office Ergo Reps are trained by the Ergonomics Coordinator in simple computer workstation set-up, signs and symptoms of injuries from poor ergonomic set-up and control strategies to reduce or prevent symptoms.

## **BENEFITS OF HAVING AN OFFICE ERGO REP FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT:**

- In-house ergonomics assistance for minor issues, office planning or ordering new equipment
- Increased knowledge of departmental resources and equipment
- Increased knowledge of specific task and environmental demands
- Faster, more efficient response to ergonomic issues

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN OFFICE ERGO REP:**

- Be a resource for ergonomics in your dept
- Educate your co-workers about risk factors and prevention strategies
- Assist your co-workers in the optimal set-up of their workstation
- Orient new employees and set-up their workstations ergonomically.

# DON'T BELIEVE A WORD THEY SAY

## — BUSINESS AGENT'S REPORT

By Frans Van de Ven

ACCORDING TO ALL the pundits, faithfully reported in the media, we are in a global economic crisis and unless we pull ourselves up by the bootstraps dire things will happen.

Well here's a Reader's Digest version of the 2008 financial meltdown which continues to plague us.

Investment bankers and other heavy duty speculators make risky investments in the form of high risk loans. Then they package those loans and sell them to other speculators. They are aided and abetted by rating agencies which endorse these further investments.

So long as everybody pays, the financial institutions make lots of money some of which they pass on to their shareholders. The nature of a high risk loan, however, is that the debtor is on shaky financial ground. That is what makes it high risk.

Eventually debtors begin to default. Defaults have a ripple effect and the whole ill-advised scheme begins to collapse like a stack of cards.

But aren't there rules and regulators that are supposed to guarantee the honesty and transparency of financial transactions? Yes, but they're inadequate. Most of the actions that led to the 2008 meltdown were lawful.

Any strengthening of the rules is fiercely opposed by those who profit by them and the legislators their money helps to elect. They argue that the economy should be left to a free market. Of course, in this context a free market is merely the sum total of their own actions. Private greed trumps social policy.

So the big money speculators go bankrupt? Wrong. The consensus is that they are "too big to fail" and government bails them out. In other words, the taxpayers, most of whom are not rich, assume the debts.

To pay the debts we have to make the economy grow. We have to find more money and one can only tax most citizens, who have little of it, so much.

It would be most logical to assume that the speculators who created the mess in the first place, most of whom are still rich, would *continued...*



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contribute proportionately to their wealth. Wrong. The consensus is that we have to leave their stash alone so they can invest it and thus avoid an economic downturn.

Instead, true to their DNA and fuelled by rock bottom corporate taxes, they continue speculating to maximize short term profits while warning the rest of us that we have to cut government deficits.

How can we do that without taxing the rich? Simple! We accept lower wages and reduced public services. After all it would be irresponsible to future generations to continue to live beyond our means.

In fact we are an extremely wealthy society with more than enough to go around if only we treated our abundant resources as a commonwealth instead of a piggy bank for the elite. What we owe our children is not a “level playing field” where the already privileged can climb the corporate ladder but a community where it is not a sign of weakness to care for our neighbours and expect the same from them. Let’s start by defending an infrastructure that allows for cooperation and sharing, more public services and jobs with decent wages and benefits. Let these things be the measure of a healthy economy, not the GDP or stock market, neither of which tracks the cost of growth.

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**THANKS FOR SUPPORTING** the campaign to raise BC's minimum wage.

When we celebrated that win — we cautioned that the new lower minimum wage for liquor servers was full of loopholes and open for abuse.

Now we've found out some IHOP locations are now calling their staff “liquor servers” in order to pay them less than the general minimum wage.

These workers serve pancakes not pina coladas.

We need to take action and show IHOP that the public doesn't support calling employees "liquor servers" so they can pay them less than the general minimum wage.

We've prepared a letter that you can send online to IHOP with a single click: [form.jotform.com/form/12375058218](http://form.jotform.com/form/12375058218).

Please click to send a letter to IHOP and urge them not to pay their employees the “liquor server” wage.

Jason Mann, B.C. Federation of Labour

## B.C.'S CHILD LABOUR LAWS ARE THE MOST NEGLECTFUL IN THE WORLD

Joel Bakan is a professor in the Faculty of Law at UBC and the author of *Childhood Under Siege: How Big Business Targets Children*.

VANCOUVER IS ONE of the most beautiful cities in the world. The city is a paradise of beaches and gardens, parks and yoga studios, a hub of green ideas, progressive politics and entertainment industry glitter. But there's a dark underside. Vancouver is in a province that has the most astonishingly neglectful child labour laws in North America, indeed in the world. Afghanistan and Haiti have more protective laws on their books. In British Columbia, a child can go to work at 12, in just about any job, hazardous or not (mines, taverns, bars and lounges are the only exceptions), and he or she can be required to work at any time of the day or night except during school hours.

Business tends to favour permissive child labour laws (likely the reason B.C. said its new law would help make the province more "economically competitive"). Young people work for less pay than adults. They're easily cajoled to work long and irregular hours without overtime pay, and to accept pay deductions for

transportation, uniforms and equipment. They're more willing to take on tasks and less likely to ask questions about safety and training. They usually don't know their workplace rights and tend not to report abuses. And they don't unionize.

This (makes BC more) attractive for businesses seeking flexible and pliant workers, and for governments bent on serving those businesses' interests. In the past few years, 156 countries, including Afghanistan and Haiti, have signed an international treaty that bans the employment of children under 15 and requires signatories to raise that minimum age to 16 when conditions permit. Canada and the United States have refused to take part in this effort. As a result, both countries explicitly permit forms of child labour that are banned in much of the world.

*Reprinted in part from :  
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IN AN ATTEMPT to call attention to the financial sector's greed and inequities, the "Wall Street Occupation" heads into its third week and inspires Canadian taxpayers.



Check [rabble.ca/](http://rabble.ca/) or [thetyee.ca/](http://thetyee.ca/) for updates.

CANADA'S TOP 100 CEOS HAVE SEEN A 13% YEAR-OVER-YEAR JUMP IN AVERAGE PAY, RISING TO AN AVERAGE OF \$6-MILLION. IN CONTRAST, THE AVERAGE EARNINGS OF EMPLOYED CANADIANS HAS FALLEN TO \$38,500.

[WWW.NATIONALPOST.COM/NEWS/  
PROBLEM+EVERYONE/5433076/STORY.HTML](http://WWW.NATIONALPOST.COM/NEWS/PROBLEM+EVERYONE/5433076/STORY.HTML)

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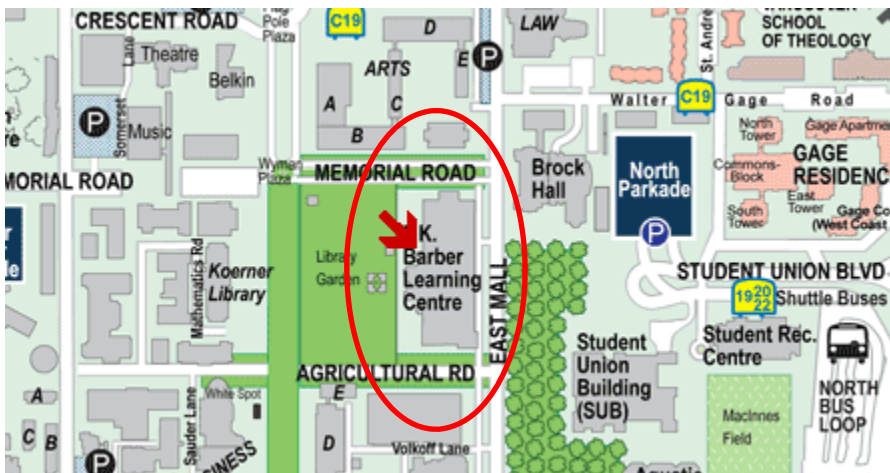
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## CUPE 2950 General Membership Meeting Thursday, October 27, 2011 noon—2:00 pm IBLC #182 (1961 East Mall)



- Karen Ranalletta, Shehnaz Motani, Susanne Lester, Kia Brus & Megan Coyle were nominated to attend the CUPE National Convention.
- There will be special presentations on the Staff Pension Plan and the United Way at the next GMM.
- Nominations will close in October for election of Local officers. The election will be held November 24.
- Nominated at last GMM: Nancy Forhan (President), Edita Michalek (1st VP, Grievance Chair), Susanne Lester (2nd VP, Contract Chair), Karen Ranalletta (Education Chair), Richard Hare (Health & Safety Chair), Eleanore Wellwood (Job Evaluation Chair), Jaimie Miller (Chief Steward), Cheryl Kinkaid & Joan Treleaven (Sergeant-at-Arms).

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