

### Greetings from the Component 7 Chair

As the chair for Component, it's my honour to welcome you to the first issue of *Inside 7*, the newsletter for our Component. We chose the name to reflect the newsletter's mission: to bring you the news that only activists know from their first-hand experiences. It's my hope that this newsletter provides us an opportunity to get to know each other a bit better.

### A Bit About C7

Component 7 represents the Education, Scientific, Technical and Administrative workers of the union. Our members work in school districts, colleges, universities, institutes, private testing laboratories, offices, libraries, legal services, NDP constituency assistants and caucus workers, Student Unions, skill centres, and Native Court workers. We are a progressive component that takes great pride in advancing the union's position related to membership representation, progressive political policies and contract development – not only at the worksite, but also in the broader global community. I look forward to working with you.

Stu Seifert



Component 7 Executive Fall 2010

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## Component 7 prepares for the BCGEU 48<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Convention

### BCGEU Locals put forward numerous resolutions to convention

One of the most important events for the BCGEU is our Constitutional Convention. Held in Vancouver this year from June 15 to 18, the event brings together BCGEU members from all parts of the province, representing a variety of components and sectors.

A main priority at convention is to debate and pass resolutions in order to guide the BCGEU in the next three years. Resolutions are received from locals and passed by components prior to being debated at convention.

Richard Schaeffer, chair of the Component 7 Resolutions Committee, states: "This convention our component has stepped up with specific resolutions that affect our membership directly.

"We have touched on childcare, work life balance, legal services, financial aid reform for students, strike pay revisions, and apprenticeship training.

"We are prepared to speak to each of these issues, and to ensure that the membership in Component 7 has their issues put on the table and be heard."

Among the resolutions that C7 has proposed are in brief:

- Only Fair Trade coffee be served at GEU offices and functions;
- That the vice-presidents positions become full-time and paid;
- To increase strike pay;
- Provide greater assistance to activists in understanding and supporting Collective Agreements;
- Support improvement to the Industry Training Authority;
- Recruit additional young workers to become union committees;
- Restore funding to Colleges and Universities, and freeze tuition.

## NEW CERTIFICATIONS AND RATIFICATIONS

Welcome to Component 7:

- Kwantlen Student Association
- People's Law School
- Coast Tsimshian Academy

New contract ratifications:

- Vancouver Island University
- Sannich Indian School Board
- Coast Tsimshian Academy

## Meet Your Component 7 Executive

Stu Seifert, Chair;  
Vancouver Island University

Richard Schaeffer, Vice-Chair,  
BCIT

Cindy Miratab; Second-Vice,  
BCIT

Kathy Weaver, Treasurer;  
School District 59

Nancy Naylor, Secretary;  
BCIT

Cindy Battersby,  
Okanagan College

LaVerne Bernier, TNRD

Larry Dea, BCIT

Lana Fisher, TNRD

Greg Fjetland,  
Okanagan College

Steven Kitcher,  
Themis

Jean Maltesen,  
Vancouver Island University

Cam McRobb,  
Okanagan College

John Ross, NorthWest  
Community College

Ken Soroka,  
Selkirk College

Monica Wylie, Kwantlen  
Polytechnic University



## Reports from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Harrison Winter School

Comp 7 sent 12 activists to CLC  
Winter School this year.  
Here's what some of our attendees  
thought of their experiences.

### Parliamentary Procedure

I had the opportunity to attend Winter School and found it to be productive, informative and fun. It was a busy week. I made new friends and developed new skills to ensure I will be a strong activist. I was in the Parliamentary Procedures and Public Speaking course. I know immediately you think, yuck dry and boring, there is no debating that! But our instructor made the course interesting. His knowledge and expertise were invaluable for learning about motions, amendments, and laying it on the table! The Public Speaking portion allowed us to write speeches, evaluate our peers and debate. We all developed new skills and had fun.

*Cindy Battersby, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice, 707*

### Facing Management

As this was the first time I attended the winter school, I didn't know what to expect. I enjoyed the week and found it to be a positive experience. During the week I met people from many other different unions: CUPE, CAW, IAM, HEU, BCTF, USW, employed in a variety of jobs.

I spoke with people in different union levels including: shop stewards, chairs, activists involved in bargaining and grievances, and co-chairs on safety/environment committees. We talked about our workplace issues (problems and positive experiences).

The course was "new" as it had just been re-written. Our two instructors were also new to teaching the course and were very good. They gave out lots of information, but also made the course fun for us.

*Melanie Keller, activist*

### Basic Arbitration

I was fortunate to go to this course, and it was a great experience. There was a lot of homework in the evenings, but the result was well worth it. This is something that you can apply to everyday work life as a steward, from preparing for the most basic grievance up to the most advanced arbitration. It was an experience that every steward should experience. The best part of the course for me was preparing for and putting on an arbitration in front of a real arbitrator. The whole experience was just positive.

*Richard Schaeffer, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice, 703*

### Union Counselling

I wish to thank my component for allowing me to attend a course at the CLC Winter School this year. I found the course to be very insightful! The instructor, Merv Van Steinburg, was excellent and a wealth of knowledge! One of my comments to Merv about the course was how he directed the class in conversation. Another point that sticks with me is that each of us brings something different to the table and we should capitalize on this. Networking in our union and with other unions makes us strong!

*Monica Wylie, Chair, 704*

### Duty to Accommodate

It was truly an excellent experience and definitely improves my knowledge and capabilities as an activist. Susan O'Donnell is a fantastic facilitator and it was great to network with other groups and get a sense of where we fit in! The info I received now resides in a binder that I will use as a reference for the IBC group and continue to spread the info. Thanks again!!

*Cam McRobb  
IBC Council Chair*

## THE VIEW FROM VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

### Now that the strike is over, its back to the Bargaining Table

Strike by the Vancouver Island University Faculty Association (VIUFA) is now over and we are back at work. The BCGEU faculty members are working hard to salvage over four plus weeks of lost time by working extra hours and compressing their work week in attempt to save the semester for students.

VIU is somewhat unique in the post secondary system emerging from the old BC Vocational System and having been melded with Malaspina College by Provincial Government decree in the early seventies. We have several other certifications that are similar, with two unions representing faculty. In most cases the BCGEU represent faculty that came from the old vocational system with one exception being Northern Lights College where the BCGEU represents all of the faculty.

This has been a difficult year for bargaining under a 0 mandate. The provincial common table broke off bargaining in October 2010 with no resolution in sight, and locals returned to their local bargaining tables. For many years we have acknowledged that we don't negotiate directly with our employer, but indirectly with the provincial government through the Post Secondary Employers Association (PSEA). The PSEA is the employer's bargaining agent for the BC Post Secondary sector and they have final approval of any changes to our contract language.

At the same time, we are dealing with a VIU deficit between 3 and 8 percent, which seems to be a constant deficit over a number of years, due largely to government under-funding, and on-going budget cuts.

Unfortunately, this year's deficit is likely going to mean cuts to programs and lost jobs to union members at VIU. These were the same issues and main focus of the VIUFA strike (eg: layoffs and how to limit them). Whether they will be successful or not is hard to say, as they are now in mediation and only time will tell.

As the BCGEU Bargaining Chair I can report that our relationship with our employer is generally positive, and we were successful in achieving a local agreement in late March with some good language changes. Discussions regarding cuts to programs and jobs are ongoing at this time. Just think that in seven months we will be back at the bargaining table.

In Solidarity

**Stu Seifert**  
**Bargaining Chair**  
**Vancouver Island University**

## EDITORIAL

### Unions Matter, but we need to say why

The theme of this year's triennial conference is "Unions Matter." As union members, we've always known that. We see it on the job every day. As BCGEU members, we see the benefits derived from collective bargaining, including union representation, all the protections and benefits contained in our agreements. We see it any time a grievance is filed and when 'due process' is followed to have workplace issues addressed. We know the Union and Unions matter. We have protection under our collective agreement(s) as a result of being a union member, every single working day.

What's now becoming apparent to the larger public are the benefits of unions to society as a whole. Unions, like other community activism groups, are part of the glue that helps build healthy communities. Groups like churches, service clubs like the Rotary, environmental groups and many others are all agencies that give back to their communities. They build social capital, and that benefits everyone. It's part of what make Canada one of the most livable countries in the world.

Unions are one of the largest of these community activism groups. The BCGEU is active across British Columbia, hosting community events open to everyone. We support agencies like the United Way and other charity groups. We support workers in day cares and the right of every one to safe, affordable childcare.

The BCGEU supports efforts to reduce global warming and to promote food security. We were part of the push to successfully increase the minimum wage in British Columbia. We pressure the government to act on child poverty in B.C. and to restore funding to Legal Aid. The GEU like other unions across the province and across Canada is active on many fronts, promoting social equality and justice. We stand by the credo "What we want for ourselves, we want for everyone."

It's no secret that unions are under attack, by right-leaning governments and from corporations. And because the media is owned and operated by those same companies, we can't expect any help from that quarter. Quite the opposite.

We've seen the results of that news monopoly recently in Wisconsin where the state government passed draconian anti-union laws.

We need to be active in promoting unions. We need to demonstrate the value of unions not just to our members but to the community-at-large. What has happened south of the border is not pretty. Communities gutted by closing industries and plunging house prices turn on each other, seeking a scapegoat for their troubles. They wrong-headily blame unions.

So as activists we need to broadcast the message:

**Unions are not the problem; we're part of the solution.**

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UNDERWAY AT MANY CERTS.

Contract Negotiations proving to be challenging for many Committees.

Bargaining has begun in earnest at many of the worksites and bargaining units throughout Component 7, and we've noticed some common themes. In the face of employer cutbacks, budget reductions and government mandated zeros, bargaining committees are working long and hard for their members in an attempt to achieve improvements in wages, language and working conditions.

Component 7 has a broad and diverse group of members. It's one of the real strengths of not only our component but of the BCGEU as a whole.

## Inside 7

Feedback and contributions to [gefjetland@hotmail.com](mailto:gefjetland@hotmail.com)

## Component 7 Bargaining Units/Certifications And Collective Agreement Expiry Dates

BC Human Rights Coalition (expiry September 30, 2012)  
BC NDP Caucus (expiry June 30, 2012)  
BC NDP Constituency Assistants (expiry June 30, 2012)  
BCIT (Instructors) (expiry March 31, 2010)  
BCIT (Support) (expiry June 30, 2010)  
Camosun College (expiry March 31, 2010)  
Canwest Dairy Herd Improvement (expiry Sep. 30/13)  
Coast Tsimshian Academy of Lax Kw'alaams (expiry June 30, 2014)  
Douglas College (expiry June 30, 2010)  
Fort St. John Public Library Assoc. (expiry June 30, 2011)  
JM Project Management (expiry March 31, 2013)  
Justice Institute of British Columbia (expiry June 30, 2010)  
Justice Institute of BC Book Store (expiry March 31, 2013)  
Kitimaat Village Council Education Dep't  
(Haisla Community School) (expiry May 31, 2011)  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University College (expiry June 30/10)  
Legal Services Society (expiry March 31, 2012)  
Maxxam Analytics Inc. (expiry March 31, 2012)  
Native Courtworkers (expiry Mar. 31/11)  
Native Education College (NEC) (expiry June 30, 2011)  
Northern Lights College Faculty (expiry March 31, 2010)  
Northern Lights College Support (expiry June 30, 2010)  
Northwest Community College Instructors (expiry Mar. 31/12)  
Northwest Community College Support (expiry June 30/10)  
Okanagan College Instructors (expiry March 31, 2010)  
Okanagan College Support (expiry June 30, 2010)  
People's Law School: The Public Legal Education Society (new cert)  
Princeton & District Community Skills Centre (expiry Mar. 31, 2011)  
Saanich Indian School Board (LAU WEL NEW Tribal School)(exp. Sept. 2, 2012)  
School District #59 (expiry June 30, 2010)  
School District #81 (expiry June 30, 2010)  
Selkirk College (expiry March 31, 2010)  
Silliker JR Laboratories ULC (expiry September 30, 2010)  
Society for Education of Children, K. Gordon (expiry Aug. 31, 2012)  
Student Union of UBC Okanagan (expiry February 23, 2012)  
Themis Program Management and Consulting Ltd. (expiry March 31/11)  
Thompson-Nicola Library System (expiry December 31, 2012)  
University of BC-Okanagan (expiry June 30, 2010)  
Urban Native Indian Education Society (expiry June 30, 2011)  
Vanc. Island Regional Library (expiry December 31, 2011)  
Vancouver Island University (expiry March 31, 2012)  
York House School Society (expiry August 31, 2012)

# Interested in Becoming a Shop Steward?

## THE SHOP STEWARD IS THE BCGEU ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE AT YOUR WORKSITE.

The steward's role is to enforce the collective agreement and protect your rights. A steward is elected by the members at your worksite. A steward does not just deal with grievances and complaints at the worksite.

- ✓ They are often the liaison between the worksite and the local and area;
- ✓ They sign up new members to the union at the worksite;
- ✓ Encourage you to attend Local meetings;
- ✓ Assist you in understanding your rights under the collective agreement;
- ✓ Talk to members about what is happening within the Local and the union as a whole such as bargaining, educational activities;
- ✓ Ensures the union bulletin board is kept up-to-date;
- ✓ Refers members to committees on special issues such as the Labour Management Committee or occupational health and safety;
- ✓ Listens to your concerns and issues; and
- ✓ Can advise or refer on issues related to WCB appeals, STIIP/LTD issues, Unemployment and Classification Appeals.

If you are at a worksite that doesn't have a BCGEU Shop Steward... and you answer "yes" to these questions, we encourage you to contact us:

- Do you think everyone should be treated fairly at the workplace?
- Do you have good listening and communication skills?
- Are you interested in helping your co-workers?

For more information on this opportunity, contact your bargaining unit chair.





# BCGEU Activists at Work



Part of being a union activist often includes attending meetings and educational sessions. It's rewarding work, on behalf of the members (YOU), and we also manage to have some fun along the way. See if you recognize any Component 7 activists in our photo gallery.





## All Aboard for the Library!

A library and a railroad may seem like an odd combination. Not so to the Community of Merritt, B.C. and the Thompson Nicola Regional District Merritt Library.

What a vibrant, exciting and lively place. I had the pleasure of stopping into the Merritt Library during our BCGEU M2M visits recently and to meet with our BCGEU members employed at the Merritt Branch. This is one of the 14 Libraries within the TNRD Library System, whose employees are members of the BCGEU Local 705.

Geraldine Baker and I had the pleasure of going on a 12 hour M2M visit and circle tour of TNRD Libraries from Kamloops to Merritt to Logan Lake to Ashcroft to Cache Creek to

Savona and then back to Kamloops.

Merritt Library was built on the site of the old rail station that once graced the city of Merritt. As you enter the Library itself you find it bright, lively, full of colour and activity, and of course patrons.

You will see railroad signs directing you to the Internet Lab, to the Internet Sign in Stations, Restrooms, and various areas of the Library.

There is even a Conductor (Branch Head Deborah Merrick) complete with a conductors hat giving direction and calling out "All Aboard" when the train is ready to leave the station. A small replica of the old rail line complete with various rail stations and replicas of various

communities that dotted the old rail line runs along the upper portion of the Library itself.

What a work of art: Miniature sawmills, bee hive burners, farms, railroad stations complete with people, animals, mountains, mines etc, all make up this once busy rail line.

Stations like Spences Bridge, Dot, Brookmere, Shulus, Canford, which the railroad once served long ago are not forgotten. This venture has been the result of the Community of Merritt, the TNRD Library System, Local Train Enthusiasts of Merritt, and the BCGEU Library Staff members, all coming "On Board".

LaVerne Bernier -  
Chair Local 705

## Walking the Talk

### C7 committed to promoting equality and education

Component 7 has always been strongly committed to the principles of equal opportunity, especially in education and work. At the February Component Executive meeting, Jaynie Clark, BCGEU Director, spoke about the Canadian Women's Foundation explaining the philosophy of the foundation which provides assistance to women who are "in need". A brief video clip about women in trades was viewed and discussion followed. Their website [canadianwomensfoundation.org](http://canadianwomensfoundation.org) if you wish to obtain additional information. Component 7 agreed to financially assist them in their continued efforts.



### Recommended Labour Web Sites

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

[www.bcfed.com](http://www.bcfed.com)

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

[thetyee.ca](http://thetyee.ca)

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

[www.facebook.com/wisafclcio](http://www.facebook.com/wisafclcio)

## SPOTLIGHT

*Every issue, Inside 7 will look at a C7 job in detail. This time we hear from Kim Tournat, one of the Constituency Assistants for NDP MLAs across the*



There is no typical day for a constituency assistant in an MLA office and it varies, depending on whether the office is in an urban or rural constituency. However, constituency assistants across the province share the role of community outreach and liaison; advocacy; providing information/clarification on legislation or government policies; representing their MLA when he/she is unable to attend a community event or meeting; and the smooth running of the constituency office, ensuring it is accessible to everyone and non-partisan.

A request for assistance can involve any one of the provincial ministries or crown agencies in British Columbia. Eligibility for income assistance; lengthy wait times for Persons with Disability applications; reconsiderations and tribunals are examples of case work from just one Ministry.

Also common are issues involving the Medical Service Program (premium assistance or dealing with arrears); homelessness and access to safe, secure affordable housing; landlord/ tenancy issues; and access to legal aid.

Urban offices tend to be interacting more with constituents who have a mental illness and/or who are homeless; however, these contacts also exist in rural offices. Rural offices are more likely to receive concerns regarding Independent Power Producers; mining and gravel pits; lack of adequate government services; forestry practices and logging in watersheds; maintenance contracts under the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (lack of snow removal/brush cutting/dust control on roads); and interface between new development and environmental values.

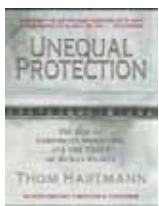
Over the past ten years there has been a noticeable increase with both the amount and complexity of case work being done from the constituency office and a decrease in resources available to people. This speaks to the negative impact this government's policies have had on both vulnerable people and the general population. Many people across British Columbia are feeling disconnected from government and that they are not being heard.

To contact your MLA or to find out what's going on in the Legislative Assembly go to [www.leg.bc.ca](http://www.leg.bc.ca)

## THE BOOKSHELF

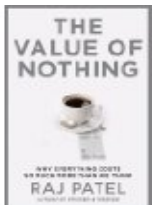
As the component for Education, Scientific, Technical and Administrative workers, we feel it important for members to remain current on the larger trends impacting our community and worksites. Every issue, Inside 7 will present reviews of some the new titles worth a closer look.

***Unequal Protection; The Rise of Corporate Dominance and the theft of Human Rights*** by Thom Hartmann



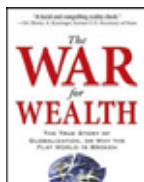
This very readable book details the rise of the corporation, and how politicians in previous centuries, primarily in the U.S., sought to limit their power. Corporate wealth and power were seen as a threat to democracy and the public good. The effort to curb corporate power has largely been lost and the result is easy to see. The book details the many unequal advantages that corporations have over working people in taxation, privacy, responsibility for crime and many other areas. Hartmann propose practical solutions to take back democracy from the corporate boardrooms.

***The Value of Nothing: Why everything costs so much more than we think*** by Raj Patel



Raj Patel was a hit this past summer in Vancouver at the conference for National Union of Public and General Employees for his speech on how we got into the current economic mess. His speech was based on his recent book *The Value of Nothing*, an amusing, informative read on the true cost of our current economic system, both in human and environmental terms. Recommended.

***The War for Wealth: The True Story of Globalization, or why the Flat World is broken*** by Gabor Steingart



With a recommendation by Henry Kissinger, you might be surprised to find that this book is actually a searing indictment of global capitalism today. He says. "A brutal and primitive form of capitalism, with its starvation wages and its lack of workers' rights and protections for the environment, is now in competition with a more sophisticated capitalism which seeks to protect both the environment and its workers." This