



The Provincial

December 2011

A Publication of the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

www.bcgeu.ca

Agreement No. 40010201

Volume 59, Number 5

Setting Priorities



Inside: 2012 Bargaining Conference • Corrections Report • CLBC Update

In this issue:

From the President	2
Democracy 101	3
Bargaining 2012.....	4-5
Human Rights Conference.....	6
Corrections Report.....	7
Community Living Crisis	9
Shop Public	10
Community	11-15
Stand-Alone Bargaining	14

The Provincial

The Provincial is published up to seven times a year by Solidarity Publications Ltd., Suite 206 — 4911 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3W3 E-mail: theprovincial@bcgeu.ca

Contributing Editors: Karen Tankard, Oliver Rohlf, Erin Sikora, Evan Stewart, Chris Bradshaw, Lynn Bueckert.
Design & Layout: Chris Bradshaw.

Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the publishers. We cannot guarantee the return of unsolicited editorial contributions.

Provincial Executive

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| President: | Darryl Walker |
| Treasurer: | Stephanie Smith |
| Vice-President: | Michael Clarke |
| Vice-President: | Paul Finch |
| Vice-President: | Brenda Brown |
| Vice-President: | Lorene Oikawa |
| Component 1: | Dean Purdy |
| Component 2: | Susanne Francoeur |
| Component 3: | James Cavalluzzo |
| | Patsy Harmston |
| Component 4: | Paul Komer |
| Component 5: | Craig MacKay |
| Component 6: | Doug Kinna |
| Component 7: | Stu Seifert |
| Component 8: | Carla Dempsey |
| | Louise Hood |
| Component 10: | Mike Nuyens |
| Component 12: | Sandi McLean |
| | Lori Joaquin |
| Component 17: | Dave MacDonald |
| Component 20: | Byron Goerz |



4911 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3W3
Phone: 604-291-9611
Fax: 604-291-6030
1-800-663-1674 (toll free)
www.bcgeu.ca

A component of the National Union of Public and General Employees. Affiliated with the B.C. Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Darryl Walker

Public sector workers have done their part. Now it's the government's turn.

At our triennial convention last June, I spoke about bargaining in 2012. I stated that while bargaining would be a challenge, we are strong, determined and resolute when it comes to getting fair deals for you.

We stand for fairness. It's one of the platforms on which the labour movement was founded. We believe in equality, justice and what's fair.

This is the mindset we'll be taking to the bargaining tables starting in January 2012. We'll be demanding a fair deal for every BCGEU member with a contract to settle in every sector in every region of B.C. That's my promise to you.



We face many challenges in the months ahead. Bargaining will be tough. But we're prepared for any action we have to take to get you improved contracts.

Roughly 85 percent of our membership will be bargaining in 2012. Most of you haven't had a raise in years.

Everyone who works for the government or a crown corporation has had to accept the net zero wage freeze for the last two years.

We want this to end. The wage freeze has cost us dearly. We've lost four-and-a-half percent of our income in the last two years when you take inflation into account. We're worse off financially now than several years ago.

We know the global financial situation is bleak. But that's not our fault. When we took two years of zeros in the last round of bargaining we were doing our part to help. We were being fair.

This time, we want fair collective agreements in return. The B.C. government must reach reasonable settlements with all of us.

Settlements that keep up with inflation and recognize the productivity improvements we've helped to achieve in our work places.

We face many challenges in the months ahead. Bargaining will be tough. But we're prepared for any action we have to take to get you improved contracts.

You've been pressured to work harder for no extra pay. You've been threatened with privatization or lost benefits. Now, we turn the tables and put the pressure on government and non-government employers. We've been fair. It's time for employers to reciprocate.

Public outrage delays undemocratic post secondary legislation

Amendments to College and Institute Act fail to make the grade



The Spark

On November 3, the B.C. Liberal government quietly introduced a ‘housekeeping’ bill into the legislature with little fanfare. The Bill includes a number of amendments to various advanced education statutes.

Buried in Bill 18, the Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, which was introduced without consultation or notice, are proposed amendments to the College and Institute Act. If passed, the Bill would revolutionize the structure of college and institute Boards of Governors by banning union activists from serving as elected board members.

The changes would make union activists involved in bargaining or dispute resolution processes ineligible to serve as elected staff representatives on college and institute boards. The legislation would also prohibit elected board members from serving as chair, and allows government-appointed board members to remove any elected board member with its 2/3 majority.

“These changes don’t make any sense,” says BCGEU president Darryl Walker. “The government is saying that regular union members can serve on college boards, but

that union activists are specifically prohibited. If passed, this legislation would remove our members’ constitutional right to freedom of association.

“The government can’t use the conflict argument as justification either,” says Walker. “Conflict of interest legislation already regulates public bodies, and union activists are no more in conflict than regular union members who may sit on these boards.”

The Flame

Within 48 hours of tabling the legislation, the three main public sector unions who serve the post-secondary sector – BCGEU, FPSE and CUPE – launched parallel campaigns, intent on putting pressure on the B.C. Liberal government to withdraw Bill 18 and remove the anti-democratic College and Institute Act amendments.

The BCGEU produced a campaign page on the union website (www.bcgeu.ca/withdraw_Bill_18), which includes copies of the current and proposed legislation, sample letters, as well as an online form to e-mail the Advanced Education Minister and NDP Opposition critic, telling the government to withdraw the legislation.

E-Bulletin and social media notices have been sent to BCGEU members, asking you to link to the website and send your comments to the government.

Next Steps

On November 24, Advanced Education Minister Naomi Yamamoto announced that Bill 18 would not continue to a vote in the current sitting, but would be delayed until the spring 2012 session of the legislature, giving the unions and general public some valuable time to coordinate the next steps in the campaign to defeat these amendments.

“Our members and the members of other affected unions deserve credit for putting pressure on the government to withdraw this anti-democratic legislation,” says Component 7 chair Stu Siefert. “Delaying the Bill is a good first step, but we need to keep up the pressure to have the offending sections of the legislation removed.”

BCGEU members who have not yet had the opportunity to e-mail the minister are asked to take a few minutes to visit the BCGEU campaign page and support our union activists’ constitutional rights by asking that these anti-democratic amendments be withdrawn.

“The government is saying that regular union members can serve on college boards, but that union activists are specifically prohibited.”



BCGEU members set bargaining priorities

*N*early 200 delegates to the BCGEU's two-day bargaining conference have identified key proposals for bargaining in 2012. Members named wage increases, job security and improved benefits as their main contract requests to take to sectoral bargaining tables next year.

BCGEU President Darryl Walker opened the conference with a call for 'fair deals for all'. As well, he promised to fight for wage increases.

Walker remarked there's no way of knowing how many jobs and revenue this backlog has cost British Columbians.

"Bargaining will be tough, but we're prepared to do whatever it takes to get a fair deal for all BCGEU members," Walker said.

Most of the conference was dedicated to thorough, small group discussions in bargaining unit caucuses representing the community social services, community health services, government master, health services, and post secondary support and instructor sectors.

Walker's speech also outlined the B.C. government's mismanagement of tax dollars. This 'fiscal failure,' he noted, has harmed some of the province's most vulnerable citizens.

Citing the funding crisis at Community Living BC, and the agency's inability to service its needy clients as an example, the BCGEU president questioned the government's social values and lack of compassion.

Participant Judy Fox-McGuire, a local 610 probation officer from Fort St John, engaged with members about bargaining for several months before the conference.

"People told me they want to be heard and that's the most important thing. Their opinions matter and that's why we're here at the conference. To make sure they're heard," she said.

Walker's address also illustrated the government's failure to leverage economic development in the province. A BCGEU-filed Freedom of Information request found roughly 7,000 permits for work permits in the 'dirt ministries' have not been processed due to budget and staff cuts.

Local 102 member and Nanaimo corrections officer, Mike Scott, said members he has spoken with have a keen interest in the bargaining process.

"They're extremely interested. The bargaining proposals come

*“*Bargaining will be tough, but we're prepared to do whatever it takes to get a fair deal for all BCGEU members*”*

from the members. With everything we bring forward, they want to know what's going on. They want to know that the union is listening to them," he said.

"It was an incredibly productive two days with the members," said BCGEU Treasurer Stephanie Smith. "What struck me was the common messaging from the proposals submitted from all sectors. There are real concerns about wages, job security, benefits, safe worksites, and job. We know where we need to push and focus our energy and strength."

The priorities identified at the bargaining conference will continue to be adapted, then finalized in time for the start of bargaining. The BCGEU and the B.C. government will exchange proposals in early January. Other sectors expect to commence bargaining before the end of February.

A video and info graphic outlining the BCGEU bargaining process is available for viewing on the BCGEU website (www.bcgeu.ca).



ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES (Top) Delegates gather to discuss priorities and strategy for the public service Master Bargaining negotiations. (Bottom) BCGEU Delegates from the Component 7 Post-Secondary Instructors' Bargaining Council.

BARGAINING COMMUNICATIONS

Keeping members informed on bargaining is a key part of the union's communications strategy. Key components include:



EMAIL BARGAINING NEWS

In addition to the regular weekly E-Bulletin, the union will send out targeted Bargaining News e-mails to members affected by sectoral and Master Bargaining negotiations.



VIDEO UPDATES

Check out the BCGEU web site to view 2012 video updates on bargaining with BCGEU president Darryl Walker, and be sure to view the 'Bargaining 101' video online. (www.bcgeu.ca)



BARGAINING WEB PAGE

The BCGEU will launch a new Bargaining 2012 section of the web site. Check the BCGEU home page for links to the various Sectoral and Master Bargaining update pages.

Conference elects Equity and Human Rights Committee

As part of the union's continuing commitment to focus on equity and human rights in the union and the workplace, the BCGEU held an Equity and Human Rights Conference in October. Over 80 BCGEU human rights activists gathered for the two-day conference, organized around the theme *Raising Our Voices – Building Our Power*. Almost all delegates identified with an equity group.

One of the primary purposes of the conference was to elect representatives to serve on the union's Equity and Human Rights Committee, as mandated by a resolution passed at the June 2011 BCGEU Triennial Convention. The resolution says that the committee will consist of two members from each designated equity group – aboriginal; workers of colour; gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender; and workers with disabilities – to be elected at an equity and human rights conference.

Members elected to the committee:

- **Co-Chairperson** – Lorene Oikawa, BCGEU Vice-President
- **Co-Chairperson** – Fernanda Sanchez Jaramillo
- **Aboriginal** – Gilly Alook and Cheryl Gilbert
- **Workers with Disabilities** – Matt Salli and Darryl Flasch
- **GLTB** – Sue Powell and Sussane Skidmore Hewlett
- **Workers of Colour** – Uget Johnson Kambonaba and Fernanda Sanchez

Day One of the conference focused on providing delegates with practical tools in their activist tool-belt, including workshops on Anti-Oppression, Duty to Accommodate, Media Strategy Planning, and Building Power to Change the World.

Day Two was about implementing what delegates learned on Day One, and included caucus group discussions including a session titled *Raising Our Voices Through Political Power* which included NDP MLAs



EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS: (l-r, back) Gilly Alook, Cheryl Gilbert, Matt Salli, Sussane Skidmore, Darryl Flasch, Fernanda Sanchez Jaramillo. (l-r, front) Sue Powell, Uget Johnson Kambonaba, Lorene Oikawa.

Raj Chouhan and Mable Elmore, Vancouver Councillor Ellen Woodsworth, and Washington State Representative Velma Valoria.

The conference also featured speakers who engaged delegates on issues including social justice and activism during speeches and workshop sessions. Conference speakers included:

- **Kent Wong**, Director of the Center for Labor Research and Education at the University of California, Los Angeles, gave a keynote speech to delegates on the first day.
- **Velma Valoria**, a labour activist who worked with the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP) in the 1970s and with Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition in the 1980s. Valoria also served 12 years as State Representative for South Seattle's 11th district.
- **Tom Kertes**, a facilitator with the Liberation Learning Project, who coordinated a successful Living Wage campaign in Baltimore, which succeeded in almost tripling the wages of stadium workers in the city.
- **Romi Chandra Herbert**, who at 17 helped establish the first Gay/Straight Alliance in BC at his high school in Maple Ridge, and has authored four resource manuals for GLBT youth.
- **Tina House**, a member of the Metis Nation; President and owner of House of Talent agency and journalist on the national news program on Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.

The conference wrapped up with members participating in a World Café/Open Space event, led by facilitator Chris Corrigan, to outline the new committee's mandate for the future.



NEWS CONFERENCE: (at table, l-r) Dean Purdy, Component 1 chair; Neil Boyd, report author.

Working conditions in BC prisons ‘depressing, frightening, appalling’

A report commissioned by the BCGEU and released in November presents a disturbing picture of British Columbia’s prisons and the conditions facing the men and women who work in them. The report was prepared by Simon Fraser University criminologist Neil Boyd.

Boyd’s report, *Correctional Officers in British Columbia 2011: Abnormal Working Conditions*, is based on an extensive survey of more than 200 correctional officers in B.C.

Among the report’s findings, during the past year:

- More than 90 per cent of correctional officers had been exposed to blood, and more than 75 per cent exposed to feces, spit and urine;
- Two thirds had received a credible threat of harm from an inmate;
- Almost 40 per cent had been hit by feces, urine, vomit or spit, and more than one in four had been physically assaulted

by an inmate;

- More than 80 per cent had responded to a serious injury to an inmate, and almost 20 per cent had witnessed the death of an inmate;
- More than 90 per cent indicated their jobs have become more difficult and stressful.

These numbers come at a time when prison populations include increased numbers of mentally disordered inmates and gang involved inmates, and with inmate-to-staff ratios as high as 60 to 1. Prior to 2002 inmate to staff ratios were typically 20 to 1.

Correctional officers in B.C. are significantly more likely to experience on-the-job violence than any other protective service worker in the province including police, security guards and firefighters. Even more troubling, the levels of violence appear to be increasing.

“Correctional officers have some of the most difficult and violent jobs in our province. The government must address in a meaningful

way what is going on inside these institutions,” says Darryl Walker, president of the BCGEU. “The current system is bad for the men and women who work there, bad for the inmates we should be rehabilitating and bad for our provincial justice system as a whole.”

The report makes several recommendations to reverse these trends including reducing the inmate to staff ratio to 20 to 1 and reviewing the model of direct supervision incarceration that is not working at the current staffing ratios. The report also calls on the government to address the working conditions inside B.C. prisons and improve workplace health and safety.

“This report exposes the violence and dangers our members face each and every day they report to work. It should be troubling for all British Columbians and a wake up call for our government to stop ignoring the deteriorating conditions inside our prisons,” says Component 1 Chair Dean Purdy. “We will press the government to enact these recommendations which would go a long way towards making our members safer on the job.”



Correctional officers in B.C. are significantly more likely to experience on-the-job violence than any other protective service worker in the province including police, security guards and firefighters.

BCGEU members taking leadership roles in B.C. communities

Thirty-two BCGEU members, retired members, and associates ran in the 2011 Municipal Election. Fourteen members were elected and three members were acclaimed.

Kathy Weaver, Local 710, lost by four votes and her win or loss has not been confirmed officially. Peg Orcherton, Local 1201, and Sue Powell, Local 602, led the polls with their numbers.

“I want to congratulate all our members who ran for office,” said Darryl Walker, BCGEU president. “It takes a lot to put your name forward and do all the work necessary to run a campaign.”

“To those who were elected, we’re counting on you to continue to stand up and speak out on issues that matter to BCGEU members and to British Columbians.”

“Issues such as child care, social services and the state of highway repair, to name a few, need to stay on local governments’ agenda, and I know our members will give them the attention they deserve,” said Walker.

Attached is a list of elected candidates who were endorsed by Cross Component Committees:

Area 01

Peg Orcherton - Victoria School Trustee

Zeb King - Central Saanich Council

Dean Murdock - Saanich Council

Gary Steeves - Island Trust

Area 02

Diane Brennan - Nanaimo Council

Sue Powell - Parksville Council

George Maclagan - Campbell River School Trustee

Noah Routley - Nanaimo School Trustee

Leanne Salter - Nanaimo Regional District

Area 03

Chuck Puchmayr - New Westminster Council

Brad West - Port Coquitlam Council

Area 04

Preet Rai - Abbotsford School Trustee

Barry Neufeld Chilliwack Council

Area 05

Marlon Dosch - Logan Lake Mayor

Helen Kormendy - Ashcroft Council

Area 06

Scott Elliot - Quesnel Council

Area 07

Mohini Singh - Kelowna Council

Area 08

Joe Warshawsky - Cranbrook Council

Area 09

Robin Cherbo - Nelson Council

Janine Haughton - Salmo Council



Retirement security in the childcare sector

On October 25 last, BCGEU members working at four childcare centres in East Vancouver gained access to the B.C. Municipal Pension Plan. This is a notable first for the childcare sector, and an important precedent.

“After a lifetime of labour, all workers – including licensed Early Childhood Educators – should be able to retire and live in dignity,” says BCGEU President Darryl Walker.

The B.C. Municipal Pension Plan is solid and reliable – it’s the sixth largest defined benefit pension plan in Canada. It serves 267,000 active and retired workers from a variety of sectors, including health, municipalities, school districts and others.

In troubled economic times, a pension promise is invaluable. The B.C. Municipal Pension Plan can provide retirement income that is secure, predictable and indexed to inflation. Enrolment in the pension plan is effective August 2012, and the union will be encouraging members to join the plan and start saving for their retirement. “Everyone deserves retirement security. When our union helps deliver dignity, I stand proud,” says Walker about the deal.

The new collective agreement for workers at Grandview Terrace Childcare Society, Mount Pleasant Childcare Society, Lord Nelson Childcare Society and Eagles in the Sky Association also protects current wage levels and introduces improvements for casual workers. It expires on August 1, 2014.

The BCGEU is a leading childcare union, representing 1150 workers in 53 daycares in communities around British Columbia.

From Denial to Desperation: Government mishandling Community Living crisis

In recent weeks, the provincial government's response to the community living crisis has shifted from denial to desperation.

In November, the Board of Community Living BC (CLBC) – the government agency that arranges funding and services for adults with developmental disabilities across the province – publicly admitted that CLBC had “lost sight of its core values.”

The BCGEU, which has been actively involved in a community living campaign in collaboration with families, self-advocates, agencies and other advocates, has been saying as much for months.

The government's own actions are a clear admission of failure: Harry Bloy, the Minister for Social Development, was demoted and replaced by Stephanie Cadieux in September. Then CLBC's CEO was abruptly fired, as were a number of other senior executives.

Later, after a media frenzy, Cadieux announced that senior CLBC executives will no longer get bonus payments for reaching their targets of cutting services to the developmentally disabled. Meanwhile, the official opposition lambasted the government during Question Period for the failure to act on community living. And Premier Clark failed to respond.

For the longest time, CLBC executives were in complete denial. They insisted that there wasn't

any waiting list for services. It was only in September that statistics showing at least 2,300 people with developmental disabilities waiting for services were released.

Community living stakeholders believe the real number of people waitlisted is likely higher. The information became available only because CLBC had to comply with a freedom of information request filed by the BCGEU.

It's appalling that neither the government nor CLBC's Board seem to have the big picture vision or the concrete solutions to fix the systemic problems and lack of supports and services faced by adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

“Minister Cadieux said that adults with disabilities should be returned to the centre of decision-making, which is positive, but she also needs to make sure CLBC staff have sufficient resources to do their job,” says BCGEU president Darryl Walker.

“Underfunding at CLBC has been chronic. We have actionable recommendations to fix the crisis in community living in B.C.”

The recommendations emerge from a broad community dialogue launched in 2010 by all major community living partner groups, including families, self-advocates, service providers and unionized support staff.



The recommendations include:

1. Immediately stop CLBC's budget-driven cuts to services and supports, pending a full external review;
2. Commission a comprehensive external review of CLBC's mandate and operations;
3. Immediately infuse the community living sector with critical emergency and operational funding in the amount of \$70 million;
4. Immediately establish an independent advocate for adults with developmental disabilities;
5. Introduce provincial legislation setting out the inclusion rights and support entitlements of adults with developmental disabilities in B.C.;
6. Regulate home sharing.

The BCGEU also represents Community Living BC frontline staff, and the union has been hearing how job satisfaction has been eroded as a result of CLBC funding cuts and constant re-design of services to adults with disabilities. CLBC members also clearly understand the goals of the union's community living campaign, and are hopeful, survey results indicate, that the campaign will help improve things at CLBC over the longer term.



Underfunding at CLBC has been chronic. We have actionable recommendations to fix the crisis in community living in B.C.

'Shop Public' campaign promotes shopping at B.C.'s public liquor stores

Component 5 is running a highly successful Shop Public campaign aimed at informing British Columbians on the importance of shopping in government-run B.C. Liquor Stores, where BCGEU members work, rather than private stores.

The campaign is ramping up for the holiday season, when seasonal celebrations increase the volume of alcohol purchased across the province.

The Component 5 executive commissioned polling this fall to find out who shops public,

how often and why.

British Columbians shop at public B.C. Liquor Stores most of the time and they do so mostly because of price, selection and service.

In addition, a majority of British Columbians support public liquor stores because they provide good jobs in communities across the province, and because profits from public stores go back into funding public services.

Listen for Shop Public radio ads in your community and go to the union web site (www.bcgeu.ca) see the campaign advertising.

Shop Public

Shop at BC public Liquor Stores for better Prices, Service and Selection



Why Shop Public?

- ✓ It's less expensive: prices are up to 35% less than private stores
- ✓ Great selection of products
- ✓ Knowledgeable, trained staff at public stores can assist you with wine pairings and other helpful suggestions
- ✓ 100% of the profit from BC Liquor Stores goes into public services for all British Columbians, whereas profit from private stores goes back to private owners and corporations
- ✓ Public stores provide good family supporting jobs that benefit our community



Don't be fooled BC LIQUORSTORES

Many private stores' signage and colour schemes copy past and current B.C. Liquor Stores logos — which confuses consumers. The current B.C. Liquor Stores logo is shown above. Here are some examples of misleading signage:

1. Port Moody private liquor store.
2. Past version of BC Liquor Store sign.
3. Private liquor store in Burnaby, at the site of a closed public store.

BCGEU president on the road

BCGEU president Darryl Walker took to the road this fall to meet BCGEU members on the job. The visits give the president a unique opportunity to see the important work our members do, and to discuss the issues that matter most to them. The trips included visits to Victoria, Kamloops, Kelowna, Vernon and work sites in the Fraser Valley.



Oak Bay Lodge in Victoria – (l-r) Pres. Walker; Local 201 exec. members Bhajan Tathgar, Richard Ziemianski; Comp. 2 Chair Susanne Francoeur; staff rep. Jenny Ewing



Kamloops – Pres. Walker and staff from the Oriole House group home.



Kelowna – BCGEU president Darryl Walker with Dorchester Retirement Residence members Lisa Pearson and Lily Idler.



Kamloops – President Walker looks over the now abandoned Tranquille Provincial Home, a facility for disabled adults staffed for many years by BCGEU.



Kelowna – President Walker with GEU member and newly elected Kelowna Councillor Mohini Singh.



Surrey – President Walker; corrections officer and steward Andrea Cable; BCGEU staff rep. Mary Partridge; Local 104 chair, John Sylvester at Surrey Pretrial Centre.



Surrey – President Walker meets with members and stewards who work at Zion Park Manor care home in Surrey.

Building capacity for activism on early childhood education

“Educate, Agitate, and Activate.” These are the stated goals behind a leadership capacity-building project on Early Childhood Education developed by Stephanie Smith, Caroline Kent and Crystal Janes, through Early Childhood Education BC and with supporting funding from Vancity Community Foundation.

“Early Childhood Educators are ready to create the collective leadership we need to take a strong and confident message about our professional value and worth to the broader community,” says Smith, who is BCGEU Treasurer but also has 25 years experience as an early childhood educator.

“This project makes a difference by empowering Early Childhood Educators to advocate on their own behalf. We fight so hard for the children and families we support, but we do a terrible job when it comes to tooting our own horn,” says Smith. “By providing statistical information on the importance of quality early care and learning, we are telling ECEs, go out and let the community know how important you are and how the service you provide is so vital to the health of the community you live in,” Smith adds.

The three activists – who each have decades experience in Early Childhood Education - developed the workshops that include a standard presentation.

“The workshops are based on issues faced by all educators in our field – wages, parent fees, recruitment and retention,” says BCGEU Local 303 member

Caroline Kent. “We also discuss B.C.’s and Canada’s contribution to children in their earliest years in comparison to other provinces and countries. People are surprised and angered to learn that Canada ranks dead last in its commitment to childcare – not only relative to larger industrialized countries, but also in comparison to countries such as Mexico or the Czech Republic.”

The workshops are building Early Childhood Educators leadership capacity, Smith, Kent and Janes say. “We are widening our network of childcare activists who now have the ability to educate, activate and motivate others around the province,” says Kent.

All three activists made presentations to ECE workshops around B.C. throughout 2010 and 2011.

“We have been asked to present our workshop to childcare groups in the Okanagan and Prince George. Although we are coming to the end of our funding, I hope to continue this work through the BCGEU Childcare campaign,” Kent says.



LEADERSHIP — BCGEU Treasurer Stephanie Smith (right) and Local 303 member Caroline Kent have developed an Early Childhood Education (ECE) module that is touring the province, giving presentations on building leadership capacity.

They will be developing facilitators’ manuals from the workshops that will be made available to other advocates to present within their own communities around the province. Members of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates are now using the presentation as well.

Kent says the workshops have been a valuable experience. “I have gained confidence in public speaking as I have had a chance to present the workshop and speak to its content several times.”

“I’ve learned that the qualities of leadership that ECEs possess, such as listening, validation, encouragement, sharing, making space and caring are incredibly transferable and useful in the larger world,” says Smith. “We need to trust our innate sense of what we know, to be proud of our professional field, and to fight to gain the recognition we deserve.”

ECE Leadership presentations can be arranged for union components and other interested groups. Arrangements can be made through BCGEU Communications at communications@bcgeu.ca

“
Early Childhood Educators are ready to create the collective leadership we need to take a strong and confident message about our professional value and worth to the broader community.”



Joint OH&S program one of 'most successful' in Canada

“
The OH&S program continues to grow and almost 2,000 joint committee members will have completed our courses in 2011. But our work is not done...”

More than 50 people took part in a two-day conference for Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) facilitators in early November. The conference was co-hosted by the BCGEU and the Public Service Agency (PSA).

The conference began with opening remarks from BCGEU president Darryl Walker, who spoke to the importance of the joint OH&S education programs and to the union's continued commitment and support for them.

“OH&S education is a key component of ensuring that joint committees are effective in preventing workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths,” says Walker. “It's great to see the success of the current program and the interest our members are showing in this training”

The conference was an opportunity for the PSA and the BCGEU to show their appreciation for the facilitators' important work.

The joint conference provided employer and union OH&S facilitators an opportunity to share best practices for facilitating and to provide feedback on the newly revised two-day joint committee

course and the Ergonomics for Assessors course.

The agenda included a summary of participant evaluations for the past two years. The facilitators then divided into task groups to brainstorm ways to improve the courses. Ideas included improving course handouts, creating videos of different worksites, providing a quick “how to” reference guide for committees, ensuring consistent criteria for recruiting facilitators and providing ongoing support.

The facilitators also provided feedback on the on-line OH&S committee resource modules developed by University of British Columbia researcher Dr. Annalee Yassi — sponsored by BCGEU and PSA and funded by WCB. The tools will be available soon, as a quick reference resource.

The joint OH&S education program started in 1994, is based on language in the Master Agreement, and is one of the most successful joint programs in the country. Program materials are jointly developed and facilitated and are offered in communities throughout the province. The BCGEU also offers the courses to joint committee members in the

non-government sector.

This year has been busy. A joint Train-the-Trainer session was held in May to recruit new facilitators. The parties also embarked on a comprehensive review of course materials. There have been major revisions to the two-day joint course offered to new committee members and as a refresher. Changes have also been made to the Ergonomic for Assessors course, which provides training for those interested in conducting workplace ergonomic assessments.

Work continues on revising the Prevention of Violence course, which gives committee members the skills needed to develop effective workplace violence prevention programs.

“The OH&S program continues to grow and almost 2,000 joint committee members will have completed our courses in 2011,” says Walker. “But our work is not done until we have fully functional, successful joint committees in all workplaces. To get there we must work harder to ensure that both employer and worker health and safety committee members are involved in training every year.”

Stand-Alone Bargaining



Dorchester Retirement bargaining continue

BCGEU members have been bargaining with Dorchester Retirement since May 2011. Priorities are wage increases, benefits, vacation and anti-bullying language.

This could be a tough round of bargaining due to recent section 54 notices and issues remaining from the last round of bargaining where members were on strike for approximately five weeks.

Trafalgar Out of School Care Society ratifies new collective agreement

BCGEU members at Trafalgar Out of School Care Society ratified a new, three-year collective agreement that includes 2 per cent raises in 2011, 2012 and 2013. The new deal also clarifies layoff options and the process for reducing hours.

Trafalgar Out of School Care Society (TOOSCS) is a non-profit, parent-run childcare centre providing inclusive care to 909 children registered in Trafalgar Elementary School in Vancouver. There are 10 BCGEU members at TOOSCS.

UBC Okanagan ratifies local agreement

UBCO support staff, who are not involved in provincial common table bargaining, voted in favour of ratifying their tentative agreement on Nov. 9. Highlights of the agreement include:

- Improved classification procedure
- Streamlined layoff and recall language
- Improved shift selection language

- Increased employer's obligation to post job vacancies
- Increased seniority weighting in job postings
- Broader rights to take leave to attend to ill family member
- Added wedding of employee to special leave
- One time addition of three vacation days or cash payout for regulars – to be used by June 30, 2013; auxiliaries entitled to cash payout of three vacation days.

Aboriginal Services Collective Agreement ratified

New contract improves job security and fair work practices

BCGEU members working in Aboriginal community-based social services have approved their new collective agreement.

The agreement improves job security and fair work practices for Aboriginal services workers, such as bumping, job selection language and bullying. In addition, the government has approved a \$600,000 retraining grant for workers in the sector.

Other highlights of the agreement, which is effective December 5, 2011 and runs until March 31, 2012, include the creation of a new Aboriginal Alternate Dispute Resolution process for grievances covered by this collective agreement.



PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40010201
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
4911 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3W3
Email: theprovincial@bcgeu.ca

BCGEU shares expertise with Jordanian union women

The BCGEU's Holly Page, a staff representative in Research and Campaigns, was one of two Canadians selected and funded by the Canadian Labour Congress to train delegates in Jordan on behalf of the Labour International Development Program of the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU).

Page was a speaker at the CLC-Jordan Gender Project's workshop held in Amman, Jordan in late October 2011.

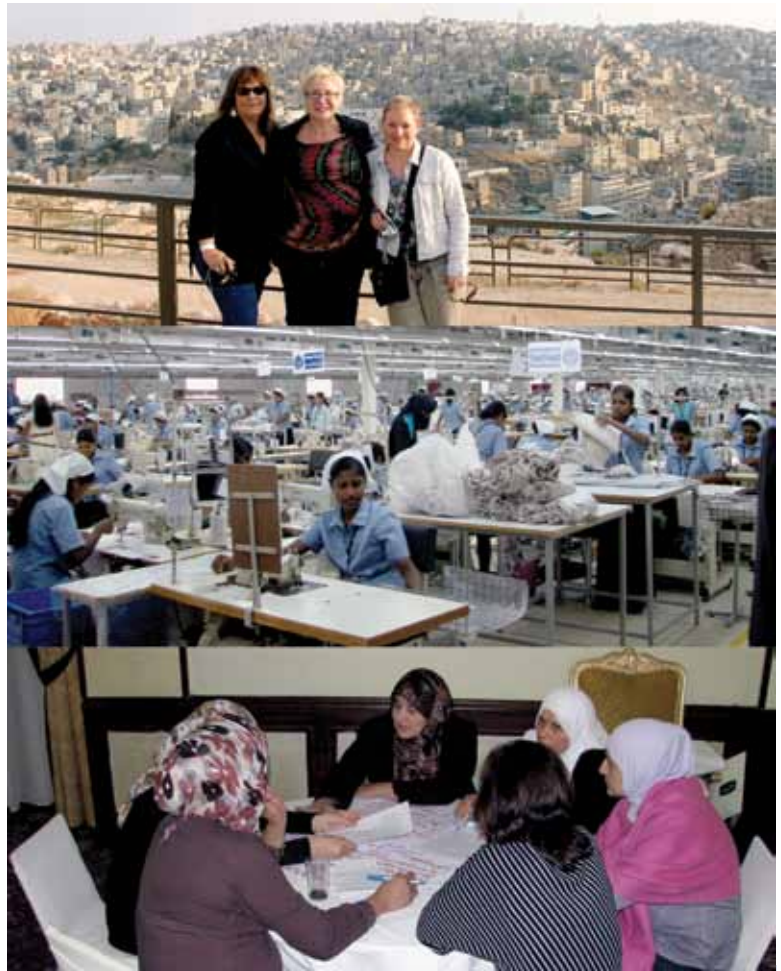
Page, along with Kim Yardy of the Canadian Auto Workers, were invited to share their Canadian expertise on trade union campaign organizing with the Jordanian and Palestinian women delegates.

The Amman workshop was the closing event in a year-long project, sponsored by various Canadian and Jordanian organizations. It featured education and training sessions on trade union organizing, collective bargaining and women in leadership.

About three dozen women participated in the workshop. They represented the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions and a variety of sectors including general services, private education, electrical, air transport, construction, textiles, mining, food industries, and health services. All the women were trade unionists with some organizing and campaign experience.

The three-day event featured seminars and wide-ranging discussions on issues of common interest to women. Page said they shared their experiences and analyzed their strengths and weaknesses as union organizers. The workshop concluded with the creation of an action plan aimed at adding more women to union ranks. Other sections of the plan included communications tactics and member outreach.

Organizing in Jordan is a daunting task. The country's labour code, a 41 page document, prohibits government and public service workers from joining a union. Unions even face a huge hurdle in workplaces that are allowed to unionize. Every workplace is considered an open shop and belonging to a union isn't a condition of employment, like in certified shops in Canada. In Jordan, organizers have to meet with employees individually and persuade each one to join the union.



BUILDING CAPACITY — (Top, l-r) BCGEU staff rep. Holly Page, Kim Yardy, and Jocelyn Duboise (CLC); immigrant garment workers at work on the production line; women work on campaign action plan at workshop.

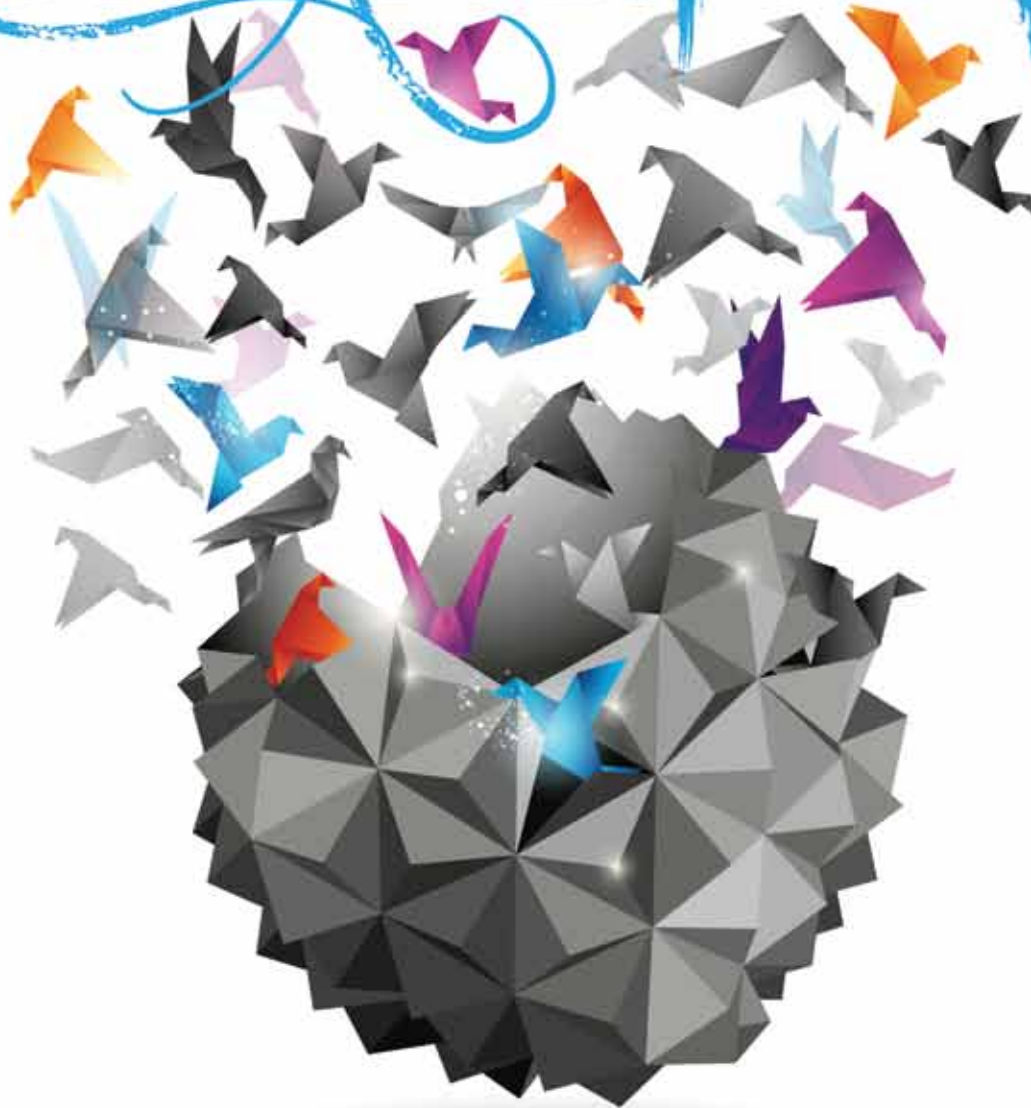
Following the workshop, Page and Yardy visited worksites in Amman and the offices of the Textile Workers' and Factory Workers' unions. One tour took them to a factory where approximately 250 migrants are employed. The textile union is leading the defence of migrant workers.

Jordan has nearly 50,000 migrant workers from Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Indonesia. Job security is precarious and the wages are poor. Other workplace issues are non-payment of wages, overtime, sexual harassment, violence and workplace safety.

Page also met food services union members at pastry, noodle and soft drink factories in Jordan. She looks forward to continuing her new relationship with the sisters she met in Jordan.

"Prior to my visit, I'd made assumptions about middle eastern women based on news reports from the region. All the women I met in Jordan were strong trade unionists like myself. They've fought hard to raise awareness about their issues. My visit to Jordan has given me a greater respect for women in the Middle East," said Page.

HUMAN RIGHTS



are EVERYONE'S business

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - Dec. 10, 2011