



The Provincial

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Turning the page

Labour and Environment
join forces to promote
a Green Economy

Inside:

Hope in Shadows • OHS Survey • Labour Day Events

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The Provincial

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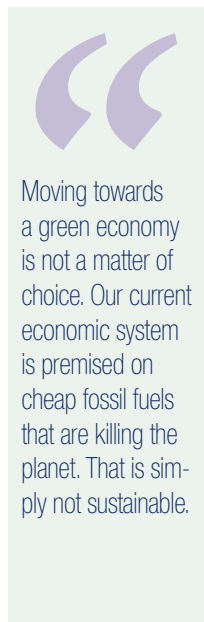
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Darryl Walker

Joining forces to fight climate change and create green jobs

It's time to retire the old cliché that a prosperous, job-creating economy and a clean environment are a trade-off. Last month, British Columbia's labour movement and leading environmental organizations came together in the belief that we can create green jobs as we build a green economy in this province.

About 25 organizations, including the BCGEU, participated in the "Jobs, Justice, Climate" conference. The conference also included such environmental leaders as the Pembina Institute, the Sierra Club B.C. and the David Suzuki Foundation, among others. The conference's discussions clearly indicated to me that environmentalists and labour can set past differences aside. Working people and environmentalists have a similar stake in the future of our planet and our economy.



The keynote speaker, David Foster, told us about his successful experience leading the BlueGreen Alliance, a US coalition of environmental groups and labour unions pushing for green jobs down south. He gave examples of the thousands of green jobs created by massive public investments of the Obama administration in clean energy policies and in retrofitting energy inefficient buildings.

Foster's comments made me realize that while some green jobs will be highly specialized and technical, the vast majority will be in existing occupations. The public sector will also have a key role to play.

Moving towards a green economy is not a matter of choice. Our current economic system is premised on cheap fossil fuels that are killing the planet. That is simply not sustainable. At the same time, it's very clear to me that green jobs can only be created with forward-looking economic policies and significant public investment in such areas as clean energy, building retrofitting, and public transit.

Despite substantial upfront costs, all the research suggests that the infrastructure investment can pay for itself through energy savings over the long term. Foster's address and the research presented at the conference prove this point.

Facing the challenge of climate change will most certainly require big changes in B.C.'s economy, including the public sector. We need vision and leadership to make the right choices for our planet and the future of our economy.

This blue/green conference got us out of the starting blocks. We started to define a shared vision, and began mapping the way to a green economy. Lots more needs to be done, but we're committed to pushing ahead.

We can still decide what we want the green economy to look like. Unions turned the working class jobs of the twentieth century into a middle class way of life. David Foster shared a similar vision with the green jobs of the future: Green jobs are future union jobs. Sounds good to me!



Legal Services Society members ratify collective agreement

The BCGEU is pleased to announce that the members working at the Legal Services Society (LSS) of British Columbia have voted to ratify the tentative agreement.

The agreement followed mediation talks after a strike vote by LSS members. The main bargaining issue focused on the need for increased job security protection language in the collective agreement, following several years of staff cuts and outsourcing of society member work.

District of Hudsons Hope employees ratify new agreement

BCGEU members employed by the District of Hudsons Hope have ratified a new collective agreement.

Their new three-year agreement expires on December 31, 2012. The new deal includes a wage increase of six percent over three years, improvement to compassionate care leave provisions and the ability to bank more overtime.

The BCGEU represents 15 members at the District who perform administrative work and outside work, including maintenance and other duties.

New agreement at St. James Daycare Society

A new three year agreement has been ratified by BCGEU members at the St. James Daycare Society in Vancouver.

The agreement includes a number of language changes on hours of work and payment of allowances, plus other highlights, including an increase in the vehicle allowance, an improved dental plan and wage increase of two percent in each of the three years.

The parties also addressed concerns over the use of a “regular substitute” worker. The employer made the decision to create and post a regular part-time position. There are six BCGEU members at the society.

Salvation Army employees in Campbell River and Port Hardy get first agreement

The first collective agreement for BCGEU members working at Ocean Crest Community Ministries includes wage increases ranging from 3% to 14%, retroactive to April 1, 2010. Workers will receive an additional 2% on April 1, 2011.

Workers made other gains, including seniority rights in position postings, vacation selection, and shift schedules.

Casual employees are also benefitting with a new orderly process for offering available work. There’s also a provision that will allow for external applicants to be hired to posted positions only in cases where no qualified candidate has been identified through the internal posting process.

The workers perform a diverse range of jobs including thrift store clerk, warehouse worker, residential worker, extreme weather shelter worker, administrator, and program coordinator.

New contract ratified at seniors’ care facility in Gibsons

BCGEU members at the Gibsons Garden Inn have voted to accept their new, two-year contract.

Ten members of the bargaining unit will get two percent wage increases over the length of the contract. Existing language is maintained.

The facility employs housekeeping staff, cooks, dietary aides and maintenance staff.

Renew Crew ratifies

Staff at the Renew Crew have ratified a new four-year agreement, which will expire on July 3, 2014.

The new agreement includes a wage increase of nine percent over four years and an increase in MSP coverage.

There is also clearer language for casuals on failure to be available for work.”

Western Pacific Marine employees ratify contracts

Employees at the Kootenay Lake Ferry Division and the Arrow Lakes Ferry Division have ratified their agreements. Both agreements expire March 31, 2012

College instructor bargaining to resume in October

College instructor bargaining paused over the summer and is expected to resume again in early October

College support staff bargaining stalled due to employer demands for concessions

Local issues were dealt with at the bargaining table in late August, but were adjourned since little progress was being made. Local issues bargaining is on hold to see if progress is made at the provincial common table.

Building a Green Econ

BCGEU members joined a diverse group of labour and environmental activists at a conference in Vancouver to discuss strategies for creating an environmentally sustainable economy built on good union jobs.

The conference, “Jobs, Justice, Climate: Building a Green Economy for B.C.,” brought together representatives from a wide range of unions and environmental groups to explore green job solutions to pressing economic problems and the current climate crisis.


“This was a chance to get everyone together in a room to talk about some of the most urgent and important challenges of our time,” said BCGEU President Darryl Walker, who attended the conference.

Topics included renewable energy options, public transit, retraining and apprenticeship, carbon pricing, rural transportation, green construction, local manufacturing, forestry, and food security. Conference participants were asked to explore ways to build a low-carbon economy while protecting workers, their families and their communities.

The conference opened on September 10 with a keynote address by David Foster, Executive Director of the BlueGreen Alliance, a national partnership between American unions and environmental organizations dedicated to expanding jobs in the green economy.

Over 200 conference partici-

pants and members of the public attended the keynote address to learn about green jobs and investments in the U.S., as well as the history of the country’s labour-environmental coalition. Many attendees stressed the importance of similar joint efforts here in Canada and British Columbia.



This was a chance to get everyone together in a room to talk about some of the most urgent and important challenges of our time.

government policies.

Participants worked to identify successes and failures in particular policy areas, and to reach consensus on key elements for creating high quality green jobs and an equitable, sustainable economy.

Ideas included re-localization of industries and services, green collective agreement provisions, fair and strategic tax and regulatory policy, and increased public investment in greenhouse gas

reduction and job creation.

Overall, the conference produced excitement and optimism among BCGEU attendees and other participants.

“This was a good first step for labour and environmental organizations to build and strengthen relationships,” said Lorene Oikawa, BCGEU vice president and chair of the Environment Committee. “We’ve got the ideas for solutions... I’m looking forward to next steps,” she said.

“The Green Jobs conference provided an excellent opportunity for debate and dialogue on some of the most pressing environmental issues impacting the economic future of our province,” said Paul Finch, BCGEU young worker committee member for the Administrative Services component.

“The organizers struck the right balance of knowledgeable experts of labour and environmental movement leaders, capable of educating and bringing forward new policy considerations. I was privileged to be a part of the event, and was pleased with the energy, efforts and direction of our leadership and attendees.”



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In the coming weeks, conference organizers will be reviewing workshop outcomes and participant feedback, to develop future joint initiatives.

Visit the BCGEU website (www.bcgeu.ca) and click on the 'Cool Communities' campaign link for more information on union environmental initiatives.

MEMBER VOICES

"Coming from the privatized highways sector and being raised in a farming family, I came to the conference being somewhat apprehensive about its outcome. But after listening and learning about the potential of a green economy, I have a greater understanding about how we could create unionized green jobs in the future."

With his keynote presentation, David Foster really tied the entire conference together. He really showed how green jobs can help deal with climate change, and how we can have justice for all."

Mike Nuyens,
Component 10 chair

"It was gratifying that there was no time wasted on debating whether there is a problem. Everyone understood the urgency to roll out a new carbon-free economy, and the opportunity to create good green jobs should excite us all."

George Butcher,
1st vice-chair, Component 20

Jobs Justice Climate

Building a Green Economy for BC

A joint project of BC's Environmental and Labour Movements



AGENTS OF CHANGE —

(top) Keynote speaker David Foster, Exec. Dir. Blue Green Alliance. (middle, l-r) BCGEU environment officer Colleen Forshaw discusses issues with Component 10 chair Mike Nuyens. Steering Committee: (bottom, l-r) George Heyman, Sierra Club; Irene Lanzinger, BCTF; Lynn Bueckert, BCGEU; Matt Horne, Pembina Institute; Norman Gludovatz, Columbia Institute; Lisa Matthews, Organizing For Change; Bob Matters, USW; Charley Beresford, Columbia Institute; Darryl Walker, BCGEU; Jim Sinclair, BC Federation of Labour.



Photos: Joshua Berson

CLBC cuts will put vulnerable people at increased risk

Vulnerable British Columbians are facing personal upheaval thanks to service cuts at Community Living B.C. (CLBC). The B.C. government has told the provincial crown agency to find roughly \$22 million in “efficiencies” this year. As a result, CLBC is taking the axe to some of the residential group homes it funds for adults with developmental disabilities.

Consequently, some clients are being forced to move to less expensive housing ‘situations’. Some individuals are going to group homes that have agreed to double up on their client load. Others are being transferred to a home share program, where clients are housed in the private residence of a caregiver who may have little or no training and where there is little oversight.

“Home sharing may work for some, but it isn’t for everyone. We’re worried CLBC’s move will harm clients,” said BCGEU component 3 chair James Cavalluzzo. “We have a lot of unanswered questions. Who’s going to ensure the home share environment is safe and regulated? How will continuity and level of care be maintained for the client? We can’t get any answers.”

Cavalluzzo is also concerned some clients

will become isolated. He fears home sharing will deprive individuals of access to socialization, employment training, and leisure activity programs.

“We don’t understand why the B.C. Liberals would want to disrupt the lives of developmentally disabled people and their family members. What legitimate reason does this government have to demand cuts to community social services at a time when demand for services is increasing?” said Cavalluzzo.

He also said the caregivers have reason to worry. No one seems to know whether a care provider is entitled to statutory protections and benefits. These include employment insurance benefits and coverage under workers’ compensation, liability insurance coverage, and access to respite and relief supports.

This round of cuts to CLBC isn’t the first to hit the community social services sector since the Liberals took office. The Campbell government has slashed more than \$100-million in funding to community programs and services, and forced unionized caregivers to take significant concessions. And, the cuts keep coming.



JAMES CAVALLUZZO



A staff member works with a client at a Developmental Disabilities Association day program in Vancouver.

“CLBC is doing a lot of spin on behalf of Gordon Campbell and his government,” said Cavalluzzo. “These cuts are being sold to the public as a positive move that offer clients more choice and greater independence. But we know the truth. Cuts to CLBC are going to limit options, reduce critical services and put vulnerable people at risk.”

The BCGEU supports a range of residential options and individual choice for CLBC clients. The union wants to see the B.C. Liberal government and its agencies develop a multi-year plan to deliver service improvements to semi-independent and independent living programs.

“We’re hearing from CLBC-funded organizations from all over B.C. These groups are already bare-bones operations and they’re being pressured to make significant cuts. The number of group homes being affected is increasing every month. We’re going to do everything we can to try to stop CLBC in its tracks,” said Cavalluzzo.



What legitimate reason does this government have to demand cuts to community social services at a time when demand for services is increasing?

ACTIVIST PROFILES



TRUDI VERSTEEG

**Local 411, Prince George
Administrative Assistant for Northern Health**

Growing up, Trudi Versteeg and her family didn't have much contact with unions, but she's making up for it now.

"We moved to Alberta, which doesn't have many unions. So we didn't have much experience with unions," she said.

Versteeg first became active in the BCGEU as a shop steward about seven years ago. Recently, she was named chair of local 411. She said the most rewarding part of being an activist is helping her co-workers.

"Sometimes being a union steward is about being a sounding board for people," she said. "They're grateful to have someone they can go to, where everything they say is confidential. It's satisfying to have people place trust in me."

Versteeg, who's currently studying for an associate degree, also sits on the BCGEU provincial executive's education committee. Her goal is to encourage people to take advantage of the union's education programs.

"I really push for union education," she said.



MIKE PRYSTAE

**Local 1009, Castlegar
Highways worker, Emcon Services**

Mike Prystae jokes he became a union activist "by ambush", practically the same day he arrived on the job and joined the BCGEU 25 years ago.

"The day I showed up there were five guys on the bridge crew. They didn't have a steward at the time, so they asked me. I guess, with my personality, they thought I was the guy to do it. They voted me in," he said.

His work as a steward motivated Prystae to take a more active role in the union. Prystae has been a local chair for nearly a decade, a cross component chair for six years, an OHS committee member for nine years, and he's the current bargaining chair for local 1009.

It's a lot of work. But Prystae said positive feedback from members "makes it rewarding."

So does being a mentor to a new generation of BCGEU activists. "I have young workers who want to jump into this," he said. "We have some good people coming up."

Portraits of a Community

Calendar project shows human face of Vancouver's downtown eastside

When the 2011 edition of the popular Hope In Shadows calendar hits Vancouver streets in October, it will be the culmination of many months of hard work by dozens of committed downtown eastside residents and project organizers.

“Each June, people line up to get a re-usable camera,” said project director Paul Ryan. “They then have three days to take positive photos of the downtown eastside community and their friends. Then, they bring the camera back.”

This year, like every year since the project's inception in 2003, there wasn't any shortage of local people wanting to tell the story of their neighbourhood and friends through images.

“There weren't enough cameras to go around. We had to turn away a lot of people,” said Ryan.

Residents love the calendar project, Ryan said, because it offers them the chance to reflect their community in a manner that's rarely represented in the mainstream media.

“The media come down here whenever they want to get shots of a drug user. That's what people see on the evening news. We en-



Local residents and workers in Vancouver's downtown eastside view a selection of submitted photos and vote for their favourites, which will appear in the Hope In Shadows calendar.

courage people to take photos to show the rest of Vancouver how they see themselves,” he said.

This year, after the residents snapped their photos and returned the cameras in late June, project organizers held a series of photo exhibitions around the downtown eastside. The exhibitions happened throughout the summer and gave residents the chance to vote on the twelve images they wanted featured in the calendar.

Next year's edition of the Hope In Shadows calendar will be unveiled at the Carnegie Centre on October 5th. The photographers whose work has been selected for the calendar will also be honoured at the event. For the first time, the 2011 edition will feature both colour and black and white photography. Ryan expects 15,000 calendars will be sold by the end of December, at a cost of \$20 each.

As in the past, resident 'vendors', many of them homeless or low income, will play a key role in the sale of the calendars. Vendors will be able to earn a \$10 profit on each calendar they sell, money they can pocket or use to purchase more calendars to sell. Last year, street vendors sold more than 12,000 copies. This year's edition will also be available at select downtown Vancouver bookstores, but street vendors will handle the bulk of the sales.

For Ryan, one of the best parts of the Hope in Shadows project is its broad, inclusive community scope, which involves sponsors, including the BCGEU and the Pivot Legal Society, as well as the volunteer photographers, the residents featured in the calendar, and the vendors.

“They love the project. They're so proud. It builds people's confidence,” Ryan said.



Residents love the calendar project, Ryan said, because it offers them the chance to reflect their community in a manner that's rarely represented in the mainstream media.



Help make your workplace safer

Become a union representative on your Health and Safety Committee and make a difference

Are you concerned about the health and safety of your workplace? Are you interested in becoming a safety leader and advocate? Occupational health and safety (OH&S) is a great way for union members to get involved and to contribute in a meaningful way. Workers have a right to a safe workplace.

As a BCGEU safety committee member you will assert that right on behalf of your co-workers by ensuring that your employer is following health and safety laws and regulations. You can raise the profile of health and safety and make a real difference, improving the quality of the working environment for yourself and your co-workers.

Now is the ideal time to become a BCGEU representative on the joint health and safety committee or a worker representative. This fall the BCGEU is appointing new union committee representatives and re-appointing current representatives to health and safety committees in every BCGEU worksite.

OH&S committees are the law in BC.



Workers compensation legislation and BCGEU collective agreements ensure you have a right to participate in workplace health and safety. A joint OH&S committee is required in all workplaces with more than 20 workers and in smaller workplaces a worker representative is required.

The law gives you certain rights: to be consulted on health and safety issues, to make recommendations to eliminate or minimize workplace hazards, to contact the Workers Compensation Board, to participate in employer paid OH&S education annually, to participate in workplace inspections and incident investigations and to do this work on paid time.

OH&S education is the key to becoming a successful committee representative. The BCGEU provides safety committee representatives with excellent educational opportunities led by experienced union facilitators. New committee members have the right to take the two day basic OH&S course within the first six months. You can follow up with courses on ergonomics, prevention of workplace violence and incident investigations.

Elaine Daffurn, is a new member of the joint OH&S committee at Emcon and recently attended the 2 day OH&S course. She was appointed to the committee by the union and is working to improve the relationship with her employer when

dealing with safety issues. Elaine says “I would like workers to know that when they raise a health and safety concern that it will be taken seriously, and changes will be made.” Elaine is working with her employer and co-workers to develop working alone procedures.

Gregg Fletcher, an experienced union OH&S facilitator, believes that all committee members can benefit from the OH&S educational sessions. He says that many committee members have no idea of committee roles and responsibilities. “Participants tell me that after taking the course they look forward to being on the committee so that they can help others and make their workplace safer,” Fletcher says. “Many tell me that this was the best course they have ever attended.”

If you are interested in becoming a BCGEU OH&S committee representative, contact your Local chair or local area office staff representative. Current OH&S reps and interested members should also fill out an online form at www.bdcgeu.ca/ohs. If approved, you will receive a letter of appointment from the union. After appointment please register to take the 2 day OH&S course.

Registering for OH&S Courses

Government Members:

To register for OH&S courses:
www.bcpublicservice.ca/courses

Non-Government Members:

To register for OH&S courses:
Contact your local area office.



As a BCGEU safety committee member you will assert that right on behalf of your co-workers by ensuring that your employer is following health and safety laws



ELAINE DAFFURN



GREG FLETCHER

PovNet:

Fighting poverty with knowledge



The Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC) once wrote that, “In a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of.”

One wonders what Confucius would think about British Columbia – a province with seemingly unlimited wealth, yet claiming the highest child poverty rate in Canada for the past 6 years. Roughly one in five B.C. children lives in poverty today.

In this environment, a number of groups formed to advocate for those living in poverty.

One group looked around at Canada’s advocacy network and noted a thirst for education resources to help improve citizens’ quality of life. PovNet (www.povnet.org) was formed in 1997 with a mission – to build an online anti-poverty community.

PovNet is an online resource for social advocates and marginalized peoples. The organization provides a communication network for individuals and community groups involved in anti-poverty work.

PovNetU (<http://povnetu.povnet.org>) is an online education resource for anti-poverty advocates and union reps, and is supported by the BCGEU and other

labour and community groups. PovnetU courses are a cost-effective way for advocates to improve their skills and knowledge base, and work at their own pace. Online discussion forums allow participants to collaborate on shared issues.

“Online training has been part of PovNet’s mandate from the beginning,” says PovNet Executive Coordinator Penny Goldsmith. “It’s very much about making technology work for activists.”

Recent advancements in open source software have made online learning and information sharing much simpler and affordable.

Social advocates now have access to a broad range of online educational resources and group forums to tap into the collective knowledge of advocates across the country.

Currently, PovNetU offers online courses in basic advocacy,

social assistance, employment insurance, residential tenancy, seniors’ residential care, business letter writing and persons-with-disability appeals.

PovNetU also offers moderated online discussion forums for advocates in related policy areas.

“The courses are about 4-5 weeks long and are set up to serve both kitchen table advocates and non-profit groups that advocate for their clients,” says Goldsmith. “All our resources are available online, in a password-protected web format.”

For more information on PovNet.org and PovnetU, contact Penny Goldsmith at info@povnet.org.

Online training has been part of PovNet’s mandate from the beginning. It’s very much about making technology work for activists.





Equity Network offers campaign workshops at BCGEU Labour Institute

Workers of colour, Aboriginal workers, workers with disabilities and Gay, Lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered (GLBT) workers have a home in the BCGEU.

“It is important that our union embrace workers from all different backgrounds,” says BCGEU president Darryl Walker.

“This openness makes us a better union and better able to represent all of our members. We are committed to advancing equity and human rights.”

BCGEU members who identify with any of these groups can become members of the union’s Equity Network.

Members join the network by filling out a confidential form that is either e-mailed or faxed to the equity and human rights officer. The forms are available on the BCGEU website or at education workshops.

Almost daily, members are receiving articles, community event listings, and up-to-date events from the union that may be of interest to the equity group they belong to, or all human rights and equity topics.

The network also gives members

the opportunity to communicate with other members of their network with matters of interest.

“I am very excited about how the equity network brings these members together,” said Walker. “It allows members to share their experiences and help build our union.”

Sussanne Skidmore, an equity network member in Prince George, agrees.

“I think it is great that the BCGEU is a leader in this area of activism. I believe that supporting equity union members will make our

union stronger and I am proud to be a BCGEU member knowing that we take equity issues seriously.”

“I am very excited about the work being done in this area and encourage any members in the equity groups to sign up,” said Walker.

On **November 19-21** equity network members from around the province can attend the union’s Labour Institute at

Capilano University where they will take part in an intensive workshop on how to organize and run campaigns on equity issues in their workplace and their community.

Workshop subjects will include

planning a campaign, dealing with the media and how to use social networking to get the message out.

“We’ve had an overwhelming response and I anticipate a very exciting session,” said Holly Page, the union’s equity and human rights officer.



STAY CONNECTED! Sign up for the BCGEU e-bulletin

The weekly BCGEU e-bulletin is a great way to stay informed and keep up-to-date on what your union is doing. Each week, the e-bulletin is emailed to all BCGEU members who have submitted e-mail addresses. The e-bulletin includes BCGEU press releases from the past week, bargaining bulletins, notices and upcoming events.

If you wish to sign up, visit www.bcgau.ca and click on “Change of Address.” You have the choice of updating all your contact information, or simply update your e-mail.

Follow BCGEU on Twitter and Facebook. Or, register on the web site and then click “Get Web Updates” on the right hand side of the page, to get e-mail notices when new content is posted.

“I think it is great that the BCGEU is a leader in this area of activism. I believe that supporting equity union members will make our union stronger.”

November is Labour Film Month

Catch a free screening near you!

Imagine a festival screening films about workers and the conditions under which they live, work, fight and succeed. That is the Canadian Labour International Film Festival in a nutshell – also known as CLiFF. Next month, you could catch or organize a film or documentary screening in your community. Events will take place in Vancouver, Burnaby, Victoria, Prince George, Richmond, and Nanaimo, among others – and be part of a growing worker-friendly media movement! The bonus: all screenings are absolutely free!

“I love films. I’m very passionate about sharing stories. Films are a great medium to tell workers’ stories,” says BCGEU vice president Lorene Oikawa, who serves as the BC Coordinator of the festival. As activists on labour issues, social justice and human rights, unions should be on the lookout for films that carry our values and messages effectively, Oikawa believes.

“I believe we need to up the ante a little,” she says, “people are busy and can’t get to the usual meetings. Films can be such a creative medium to get a message across, or to spread the word about a good cause.”

The films screened during the festival are submitted from around the world, and go through a committee selection process. For the first edition of the festival last year, dozens of films from around the world were put forward for consideration. In the end, 28 films – some feature length documentaries, but also some short, snappy

three-minute YouTube-style videos – were selected for the event. The festival featured 15 Canadian movies, but also 6 from the United States, 2 from Israel that focused on the plight of Palestinian workers, and 1 each from China, Mexico, Pakistan, Australia and Britain.

The festival hub in Toronto gave a best-in-festival award to an Australian film named “Tanaka-san will not do Calisthenics.” Filmed in Japan, the film told the story of Tanaka-san who was let go from his job at the Oki Electric Manufacturing Company over 25 years ago when he refused to conform to the morning exercise routines imposed on workers. The documentary portrayed what unfolds after Tanaka-san protests at his old office every day – 25 years running! Expect a similar, international, eclectic flavour to the film selections this year.

What is also unique to the labour film festival is that screenings are spread nation-wide. Labour films were projected in over 50 communities one weekend last November, including in Prince George, Nanaimo, Courtenay, Cowichan, Victoria and Burnaby. Typical film screening venues are union halls, municipal venues, meeting rooms, and even private residences. BCGEU is a festival sponsor, and will be offering



BCGEU and community members enjoy popcorn at the Inaugural CLiFF screening.

screening venues again this year, including on **Tuesday, November 9 at BCGEU headquarters in Burnaby**. CLiFF is making it very easy to hold a film festival in your community: Lorene can arrange for volunteers to receive a “festival in a box” – a number of pre-selected films on a dvd with accompanying notes about each film. It’s basically plug and play – only the popcorn is missing!

“In British Columbia, people are very receptive to film festivals,” says Oikawa, “we are looking forward to a great 2010 Labour Film Festival, and we hope to see lots of film buff activists at the screenings!”



For more information and for the latest film screening information, please visit:

<http://labourfilms.ca/bc/>

Contact Lorene Oikawa, the CLiFF BC Coordinator at **604-291-9611** or e-mail: bc@labourfilms.ca



BCGEU creates a new health care component

Exciting news for BCGEU health care members:

BCGEU Provincial Executive has endorsed a recommendation from Component 4 – Health Services, to create a new component which will encompass the 10,000 BCGEU members who work under the Health Services and Support Community Subsector agreement.

The Health Services Component has grown significantly over the past few years and has become the largest component in the BCGEU, representing 17,000 members – approximately 25 per cent of all BCGEU members. The current Health Services Component represents members in four broad sectors – Community Health, Facilities, Health Science Professionals and Independent Health.

“Because of the complexity of the issues in health care, the size of the component and the number of collective agreements, it was time for a new component,” says Brenda Brown, Chair of the Health Services Component 4.

“This will allow for greater representation and greater member involvement through the creation of new locals and more focused servicing for health care members,” says Brown, who will continue to serve as Component 4 chair.

President Walker says “the creation of a new component in health recognizes the fact that we are becoming a leader in health care. Workers are choosing the BCGEU as their voice to represent them

in health care and the numbers show it.”

With the creation of a new component, members will have greater representation at the local level, and a second seat at the Provincial Executive for members in the Community Health Services Subsector.

“The new component will have a focused approach for all members under the Community Health Subsector agreement which covers mental health workers, clerical workers, and those who work in home support,” says Carla Dempsey, current first vice chair of Component 4 and Acting Chair of the new Community Health Services Component.”

In June, the leadership of Component 4 – Health Services tasked the Table Officers to review the feasibility of a new component for the Community Health Subsector and to draft a transition plan.

“As the plan was unveiled, it gained much support from local executive members,” says Louise Hood, Local 403 Chair and Component 4 Treasurer. “The increase in representation both at the local and provincial level, makes this a great plan.”

Earlier this month, The Health Services Component 4 Executive overwhelmingly voted in favour of creating a new component.

“We are looking forward to put-



BCGEU's Component 4 Executive at a recent component meeting.

ting the plan in motion over the coming months and are excited to meet with members and assist with a smooth transition,” says Brown.

“The increase in resources from the BCGEU with focused support by staff will really make a difference at the local level for members”, says David Streb, Coordinator of Negotiations and staff assigned to the Health Services Component 4.

The almost 7,000 members in the new Health Services Component 4 will be able to provide a more focused approach to members’ priorities within the Facilities and Health Science sectors.

The move also allows the component to provide an increased focus on the growing Independent Health sector which continues to grow as the BCGEU becomes the union of choice for health care workers across the province.



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LABOUR DAY 2010



BCGEU wins 8 Labour Media Awards

The BCGEU's 'Provincial' magazine was fortunate to receive 8 labour media awards in 2009 – from the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM) and the International Labour Communications Association (ILCA):

AUGUST 2009



- 'Excellence in Writing' (CALM)
- 'Best Illustration' (1st - ILCA)

OCTOBER 2009



- 'Best Photograph' (3rd - ILCA)

OCTOBER 2009



- 'Best Photograph' (CALM)
- 'Best Photo Essay' (1st - ILCA)

APRIL 2009



- 'Best Cartoon' (1st - ILCA)

APRIL 2009



- 'Best Informational Graphic' (2nd - ILCA)

OCTOBER 2009



- 'Best Cover or Front Page' (3rd - ILCA)

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The Conversation Continues on BCGEU TV

It was dreamed up as a way to bring public service bargaining updates to BCGEU members temporarily during negotiations last spring. But many months later, In Conversation on BCGEU TV lives on.

“We didn’t have a plan to continue the series beyond the end of master bargaining. No one told us to stop, so we just keep booking new guests,” laughed In Conversation host and BCGEU communications officer Brian Gardiner.

The interview series, featuring BCGEU president Darryl Walker and Gardiner, can be found on the home page of the BCGEU website. It can also be accessed on the BCGEU’s YouTube page (www.youtube.com/BCGEUonline). Thousands of views have been recorded since the series began.

“We’ve always delivered information in a text format. In Conversation allows us to bring important issues to the attention of our members in a visual fashion,” said Walker. “We’re pleased with the positive feedback we’ve been getting about the interviews.”

“We’re always looking for ways to expand our social media presence in a way that engages our members. In Conversation



Brian Gardiner (left) joins pres. Darryl Walker for In Conversation videos.

gives us original content to post and promote,” said Gardiner.

Adding guests is the one of several changes made since the series’ inception.

“We brought in First Nations’ advocate Gladys Radek to talk about National Aboriginal Day in June. We interviewed Joe Marino, a union leader from England,” said Gardiner. “We’ve also sat down with some of our component chairs to hear about specific issues affecting BCGEU members.”

Keep checking the BCGEU website for new segments of In Conversation on BCGEU TV.

Maxxam/Cantest employees vote to keep BCGEU agreement

Following a re-organizing drive to support a LRB-ordered vote, nearly 300 employees of the recently merged Maxxam Analytics/Cantest laboratories are again represented by the BCGEU.

In 2009, Maxxam Analytics, a BCGEU certification since 1974, acquired the Cantest laboratory operations. Following the merger, Cantest employees expressed an interest in becoming part of the Maxxam collective agreement.

The employer then filed an application to the Labour Relations Board to have the Maxxam certification cancelled and their collect-

ive agreement declared void.

Rather than negotiate with their workers as a unionized group, Maxxam preferred to deal with its employees one-on-one.

The employer did not support a vote to allow their workers to decide on union certification. The BCGEU argued strongly that both Maxxam and Cantest employees should have the right to vote on being included in the Maxxam collective agreement.

The Labour Relations Board agreed with the BCGEU and ordered a vote in June, which saw both Cantest and Maxxam

employees vote strongly to adopt the current BCGEU collective agreement.

For nearly four decades, Maxxam Analytics and the BCGEU have had a positive working relationship. The BCGEU is actively working to rebuild the relationship, and represent the needs of all members in the merged company.

The BCGEU congratulates the Maxxam employees for a hard-fought victory, and welcomes all Maxxam/Cantest employees as active members of the B.C. Government and Service Employees’ Union.



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October is

Women's Herstory Month

"The women who have achieved success in the various fields of labour have won the victory for us, but unless we all follow up and press onward the advantage will be lost. Yesterday's successes will not do for today!"

Nellie McClung (1873-1951)
Canadian suffragist and author

