



The Comp-Ten REPORT

JULY 2010

Story ideas and comments for the Comp-Ten Report can be submitted to: comp10report@bcgeu.ca

Five year extension?



NUYENS

BY MIKE NUYENS

The rumour mill is running on hyper-speed around B.C. The road maintenance contractors, Ministry of Highways, and others, are indicating that there could be an extension offered up to the current maintenance contracts – maybe five or three years. Most of the industry's contracts with the ministry are up to be tendered in and around 2013.

We met with industry representatives last year to discuss the possibility of working together to achieve a positive outcome for all parties. We have met with top level Ministry of Highways personnel, the Deputy Minister, Peter Milburn, and the Assistant Deputy Minister, Mike Proudfoot. We asked the ministry point blank – is the industry being offered an extension?

The ministry could not confirm this, however they seemed to be very interested in the possibility. We had a very good discussion with the ministry representatives around the subject of extensions as we talked about bargaining and some of the key areas to bring about a positive outcome for the province, industry and the union.

BCGEU continues outreach to key players in the industry, and we are having meaningful talks with them to coordinate working together on the possibility of extending the maintenance contracts.

The Components Executive would like to be informed of any and all communication happening around the province on this issue. Please contact your local chairperson immediately if you hear anything on the subject of extensions.

• *Nuyens is chair of Component 10*



From left: Kelly McDonald, Local 1006 chair, Mike Nuyens, Component 10 chair, Rory Smith, Local 1004, Mike Prystae, Local 1009, at NUPGE Convention in Vancouver, B.C.

NUPGE Convention 2010

BY RORY SMITH

I was able to attend the 2010 constitutional convention of the National Union of Public and General Employees from June 18th to June 20th. The material to cover was in a large binder and was a little overwhelming at first, but as the convention started on Friday morning the material was presented and discussed in a well organized manner.

The morning began with an address from James Clancy, the National President; he talked about many things that plague us as concerned citizens of Canada regarding the national debt. He talked about the government using taxpayers' money to bail out banks, investment companies and major corporations without creating regulations to prevent a repeat or to stop executive's large bonuses after the collapse of the financial markets.

Clancy also talked about some of the many issues taken on by the national union, and the commitment to continue lobbying and supporting those issues.

For further information, go to NUPGE's website at www.nupge.ca.

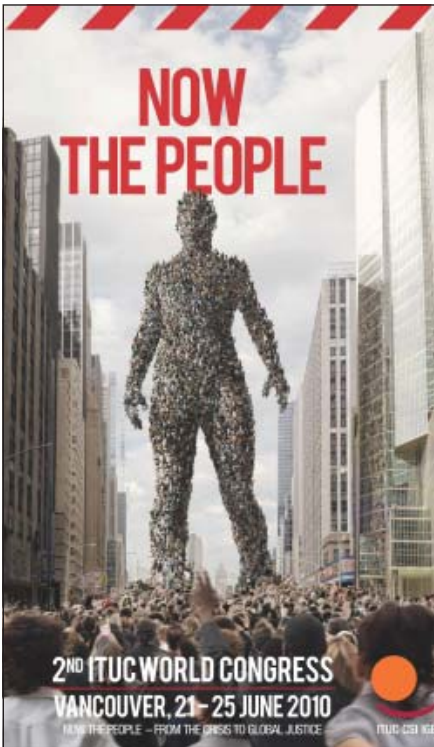
After lunch we had the opportunity to listen to John Lanchester. He talked about the current economic crisis and the affairs that have led to its collapse and, with a normally dry topic, he was able to bring humour and satire into the conversation.

Lanchester talked about his book, "I.O.U." The book details the history of the economic crisis and how many of our habits, choices of financial leaders, and the lack of regulation has brought us to this situation.

This book is a good read for everyone, and will help give more insight into the situation that we are all in.

over

The world lands in Vancouver



BY KELLY McDONALD

The second ITUC World Congress officially opened on June 22, 2010 in Vancouver, B.C. More than 1,400 delegates from around the world debated the future of the trade union movement under the theme “Now the People,” from the crisis to global justice. With a total of 311 affiliated organizations, representing a total membership of 175 million workers from 155 countries and territories, the ITUC is, after four years of existence, incontestably the global voice of labour in this period of economic and financial crisis.

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), which represents 3.2 million members, hosted the ITUC Congress. CLC President Ken Georgetti reminded delegates of B.C.’s “proud and militant history of trade unionism”. He proposed that those traditions of labour solidarity should serve to stop the CEOs and banks who “put greed before need” and caused the global recession, and who are now pressuring governments to undertake “mindless deficit reduction” instead of protecting jobs and public services.

As well, representatives and delegates from the BCGEU were in attendance to also make their points heard on the world stage. This huge convention proves that organized labour is still united, not only locally but globally.

• *McDonald belongs to BCGEU Local 1006*

NUPGE Convention 2010 (continued from page 1)

Friday wrapped up after many resolutions were passed and the call for nominations for the positions of national president and secretary-treasurer.

Saturday started with more resolutions and the opportunity to listen to guest speaker and author Raj Patel. Raj is the author of a new book, “0 – The Value of Nothing,” and he is an activist and academic with a great sense of humour. He talked about the value of the resources that we all need to survive, the madness of the financial markets, and how to find our way out of the economic crisis.

A life membership resolution was brought forward, and BCGEU’s past president, George Heyman, received it by unanimous vote. Life memberships were also granted to Greg Greco and Ethel Birkett-LaValley.

The afternoon brought the last call for nominations. James Clancy continues as national president by acclamation, and Larry Brown continues as secretary-treasurer, also by acclamation.

Saturday night’s entertainment was provided by Mary Walsh, known for her characters on “This Hour Has 22 Minutes.” Her quick hitting humour, satire, and reality used in interviewing political figures and executives, was incredible and kept everyone laughing.

Walsh has the ability to corner people and ask the embarrassing questions around human rights and agendas that may be less than honourable. She has created a DVD called “Poor No More ... There is a Way Out,” which talks directly to the relationship of executives and the people they employ.

On Sunday morning the resolutions continued with composite Resolution #5 – “Direct Government Services, Deregulation, and Privatization” – which was made up from three resolutions submitted across Canada, including BCGEU. This resolution passed with unanimous support of the convention.

After the resolution came a speech from an activist representing workers in Colombia. The speech was about their corrupt government, and how anyone who resists the direction or wishes of the government puts themselves at risk of being murdered. There was a plea to continue to lobby our government to stop proposed trade agreements with Colombia until the human rights issues are addressed and dealt with openly and honestly.

• *Smith is chair of Local 1004*



2010 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Quality of life and work balance

BY SANDY FELLERS

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) Women's Conference – Life/Work Balance: Quality of Women's Lives – took place April 12th to 13th. It brought together women activists from across Canada to discuss the issue of life/work balance and the stresses associated with managing life responsibilities, work responsibilities and involvement within their unions.

At the conference, NUPGE released the key findings of the survey it undertook in 2009 to examine the issue of life/work balance and its effects on women. The report provided a snapshot of what other Canadian research and statistics have also found: women are suffering extreme stress and, as a result, are suffering from health related issues as they juggle multiple roles, responsibilities and inequalities in an attempt to find balance. They are reporting health problems and injuries, missing work, losing sleep, missing important family events and having little time for exercise.

National union president James Clancy welcomed participants and framed the issue of "quality of life" within this economic recession. He emphasized the importance of fighting for public services to maintain the quality of life that Canadians share.

"Participants took advantage of the opportunity to engage, talk, debate and share with activists from coast-to-coast-to-coast – women who work diligently within their unions despite their life/work challenges," said Clancy.

"The results of the survey we conducted confirm that the issue of life/work conflict is an extremely important issue among the sisters in our union."

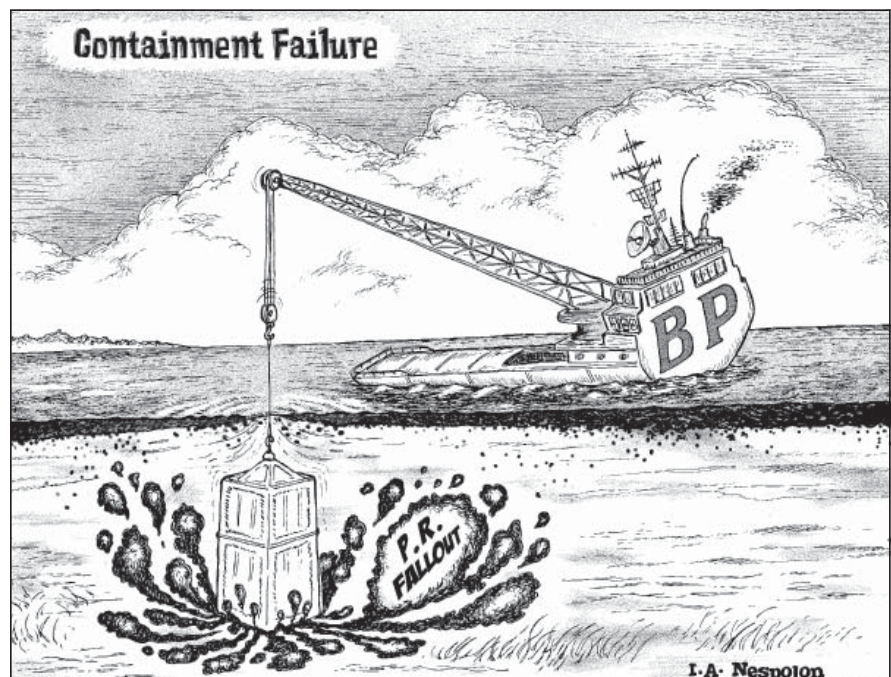
Keynote speakers at the conference included:

- Heather Mallick, columnist and author of "Pearls in Vinegar" and "Cake or Death"
- Nora Spinks, founder and president of Work-Life Harmony Enterprises
- Netsy Firestein, the founder and director of the Labor Project for Working Families in the U.S.

Many women try hard to find a balance between life and work. Unfortunately, in many cases, they are finding themselves burned out, cutting healthy activities from their life and ultimately making themselves sick in the process.

We need to make the time to take care of ourselves, while still helping take care of those around us. I found this fits with some of the male activists also. We need to find balance between life and work.

- Fellers is chair of Local 1010





From left: Dan Cross, Local 1002, Kelly McDonald, Local 1006, Don Danroth, Local 1011, and Fred Street, Local 1005.

Yard tour nets stewards and OHS representatives

BY DANIEL CROSS

During the week of April 12th to 16th, Component 10 members visited almost every yard in Areas 02 and 03.

This is the first time this has been done as a Component, and the response has been favourable.

Myself and a couple of other executive members had the opportunity to visit Pacific Regeneration Technology, another privatized branch of the government responsible for growing different tree species for forest companies and private contractors throughout the province.

It gave me the opportunity to meet my fellow workers and put a face to the names that I've had many conversations with over the phone. It has also opened up better lines of communication be-

tween myself and my fellow workers. I feel that it has given the members a clear message that BCGEU does care about them and, although they don't



Snowplows in the Emcon Cumberland Yard.

physically see direct representation on a regular basis, we are working for them and thinking about them.

Component 10 members that visited the yards brought up a few issues around things like how our pension plan is doing, what's been happening in Component 10 in other parts of the province, what dollar values are connected to the areas that they work in, and the bonuses that were handed out to the company groups throughout the province.

A little "swag" was also handed out.

The conversations between the component executive and members varied far-and-wide, but the common ground is the issues in every workplace – some issues the same, some very minor and yard-specific, and some able to be resolved with a simple phone call or by just pointing out sections of the collective agreement that may be useful when talking to the employer.

There were a few major issues discussed that are common in every yard that will take time to work out, but after discussion with our brothers and sisters they now know that they are being worked on, and not just sitting on the back burner. Since the yard visits, a few of these issues have been resolved, although we still have a long way to go.

A couple of immediate benefits to the visits were that a few members put their names forward to become new stewards and OHS reps for their yards (something that has been very lacking and in need of a complete makeover).

So, all-in-all, I would consider the visits a great success.

I would like to thank my fellow executive members for taking the time out of their busy schedule to come over to the Island and enjoy the beauty that it offers, and for talking to my members and showing them that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

• Cross belongs to Local 1002



ProTrans B.C. continues bargaining

Head-to-head meetings were held with management representatives of ProTrans in June, and will continue in July. Your committee is working hard on your behalf.

At the conclusion of the most recent bargaining session in late June we can report that the employer did come to the table ready to bargain, and that progress was made in negotiations.

The next two weeks are important, as significant discussion on remaining non-monetary proposals, including annual hours of work, layoff and recall and shift work clauses, will need to be completed.

Bargaining is scheduled to resume on July 5-9, and from July 12-15.

Negotiating a first collective agreement is often a lengthy process; the union appreciates the patience of the BCGEU membership at ProTrans.

PROTRANS BARGAINING COMMITTEE

- Kirsten Campbell
- Ryan Heggs
- Shant Khachadur
- Lana Vincent



Component 10 Executive members on Vancouver Island yard tour. From left: Fred Street (1005), Dan Cross (1002), Kelly McDonald (1006), Kevin Staneland (1008), Dan Danroth (1011), Mike Prystae (1009), Rory Smith (1004), Jim Manson (1008), Frank Carter (retired chair local 1002), Mike Nuyens (chair, 1007), Keith Jansons (1007), and Dave Cumming (1003).

Union holds Emcon to collective agreement over drug benefit limits

BCGEU is ensuring that Emcon sticks to the wording of the collective agreement applicable in northern and central Vancouver Island. The company recently agreed with the union's position that the collective agreement does not limit drug benefit compensation. Emcon Inc. is the highway contractor for central and northern Vancouver Island (BCGEU Service Areas 02 and 03).

Since January 1, 2009, the benefits paid by Emcon's CoRe Benefits Group was not paying the full amount of drug claims. Instead, CoRe was limiting reimbursement to the amounts foreseen in the B.C. Formulary Plan, which provides only for the cost of name brand drugs even when doctors have prescribed more expensive medication. The union argued that this change was not agreed to in the last round of bargaining.

The company has now agreed with the union, and the full cost of medications will be reimbursed.

The agreement is the result of a number of grievances filed by individual members and a policy grievance filed in October 2009 against the CoRe Benefits Group denial of some drug benefits. The grievances were set for arbitration, but the parties resolved the outstanding issues prior to the hearing.

Emcon Inc. employees who are members of Locals 1002 and 1003 will be receiving a letter explaining the settlement. They will be eligible for reimbursement for any deductions made due to any limits on their drug benefit compensation. All members are eligible, regardless of whether or not they filed a grievance.

If any members believe they are owed further drug compensation, they will have to resubmit receipts dated between October 6, 2009 and May 10, 2010 to CoRe Benefits Group. All individuals who filed a grievance will also be paid.

SAFETY REGULATIONS

It's the law in B.C.

BY MIKE PRYSTAE

Occupational Health and Safety plays a big role in our workplace. The *Workers' Compensation Act* brings together the duties of the employers, workers and others.

The regulations state the employer shall establish OHS policies and programs in accordance with the regulations, and make a copy of this Act and the regulations readily available for review by the employer's workers. At each workplace the employer must post, and keep posted, a notice advising where the copy is available for review. The employer must also consult and cooperate with the joint committees and worker health and safety reps for workplaces of the employer.

If the worker representatives on a joint committee are represented by one or more unions, then those representatives are to be selected by the unions according to procedures established.

There are many duties and functions of a joint committee, some of which are to identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers and advise on effective systems for responding to those situations, deal with complaints relating to health and safety, make recommendations for improvements of the OHS and on educational programs to promote the health and safety of workers in compliance with the regulations of the *Workers' Compensation Act*. These and other excerpts from the Act can be found on the WorkSafeBC website under Guidelines Part 3 Occupational Health and Safety Programs.

• *Prystae is the OHS committee chair for Component 10*



BCGEU pension plan update

BY KELLY McDONALD

Markets softened considerably in May and June 2010. However, given that markets have risen quite sharply in 12 of the last 15 months, the pull-back should not come as a surprise. The BCGEU Pension Plan was up over 20 percent during that period.

As of May 2010, our plan unit value was at 411.556, and the annualized average rate of return numbers for the BCGEU fund were as follows:

- one year 8.84
- three year -5.57
- five year 1.05
- 10 year 2.99
- 15 year 6.20
- 20 year 7.14

In the plan's December 2009 pension news, the bulletin described an investment proposal the trustees were considering for members who are age 60 and over. The trustees have, after considerable deliberation on its design, adopted a plan that will come into effect as of January 2011.

In effect, it will move member's

assets to a more conservative investment (on a progressive basis) during the period in which members participate in the plan after age 60.

Some of you will recall that the previous Immunization Fund had similar characteristics, but was implemented at an earlier age. The difference in this new arrangement is that it will apply to all members age 60 and over.

For those members that will be affected, correspondence will be directed to you individually over the coming months. The purpose of this plan change is to limit members' exposure to fluctuating market returns as their proximity to retirement age gets closer.

Temporary Workers: If your collective agreement is a participant in the plan, this is a reminder that you may qualify to enroll under certain conditions. For further information about this, contact your shop steward.

For more information about your plan, please refer to the relevant section of your pension booklet before contacting the union or the Plan Administrator.

• *McDonald is a BCGEU pension plan trustee*

Know your rights

As a union member you have the right to promote and build your union in the workplace. You also have the right to be kept informed on the employer's premises during non-work time, before or after your shift and during paid or unpaid breaks and lunch periods. This is the law.

You have the right to:

- READ UNION LITERATURE.
- YOU CAN ALSO SIGN PETITIONS and share information about your union's campaigns during non-working time.
- TALK TO CO-WORKERS ABOUT THE UNION at work as you would any other subject – help keep everyone informed about union activities.
- HAND OUT LEAFLETS BEFORE AND AFTER WORK. You can distribute materials outside or inside the workplace to connect with members. Even if the entrance is in a commercial area, you have a legal right to engage in this activity. The employer is prohibited from interfering with these lawful union activities.
- PARTICIPATE IN DESK DROPS AT MEMBERS' WORKSTATIONS. You are absolutely allowed to distribute

publications that reflect the union's perspective on workplace issues, as long as the information is accurate and non-defamatory. This is a great way to invite members to information sessions, provide updates on union business and recruit new volunteers.

- POST INFORMATION ON UNION BULLETIN BOARDS. Contracts generally allow you to use workplace bulletin boards for union purposes. Make these boards communication central for the union by keeping them up to date. Remember to include contact information for local representatives.
- WEAR THE UNION MESSAGE. You can get other members and the public on side by wearing buttons, lanyards, stickers, t-shirts and other items that communicate the union's message. Even if you wear a uniform, there are options.



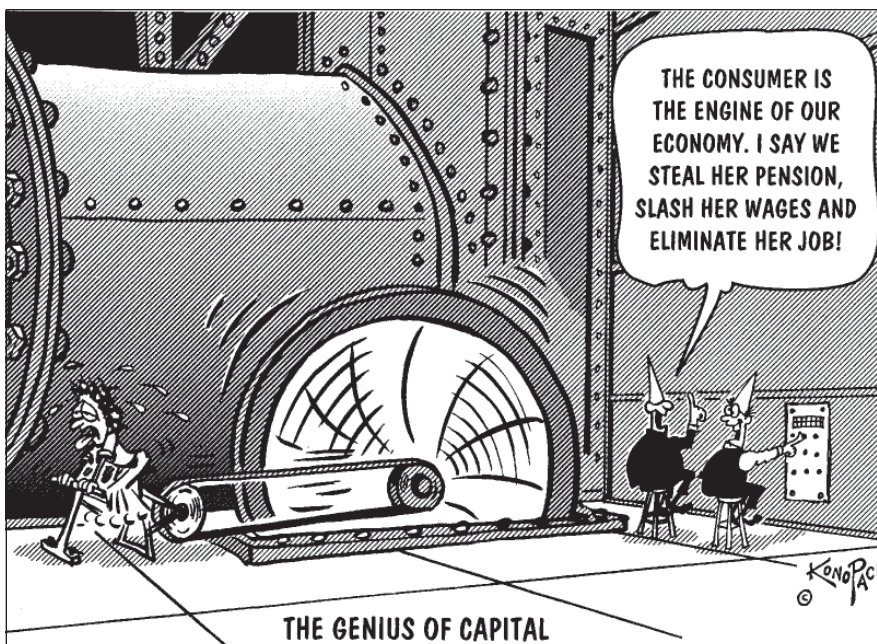
If management is interfering with your rights or you are being discouraged from participating in the union in any way, contact your union representative – you should file a grievance.

Unfortunately the work now, grievance later rule applies, so if the boss tells you to stop handing out literature you should stop and grieve. Otherwise you could face discipline for insubordination.

You have the right to inform and be informed. Unions have the obligation and right to keep members informed and to engage members in union activity.

Have questions about your rights? Need some support? Contact your union representative.

- Excerpt from CALM



NEED MORE INFORMATION?

To learn more about the different types of grievances and how to resolve issues in the workplace, check out BCGEU's website at www.bcgeu.ca and click on "Problems at Work?" under the Members section.

COMPONENT 10

New young worker representative



WALGRAM

Jeff Walgram is a young worker from Cobra Electric (South Coast) and works out of Port Kells, near Langley, B.C. He is part of Local 1004 of the BCGEU.

Cobra Electric serves the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure in the maintenance of their electrical infrastructure in the Lower Mainland. They do the maintenance on everything electrical, including lane control systems,

specialized lighting, dynamic message sign systems, CCTV and web cameras, ferry dock electrical systems, weigh scale lighting, traffic counter station installation and maintenance

Walgram started with Cobra Electric in 2005 as an electrician apprentice, and earned his journeyman's papers in 2008. He enjoys his work with Cobra and is looking forward to seeing what the BCGEU and Component 10 is all about.

Bud Stanchuck

Bud Stanchuck started work the first year of privatization, 1988, with Bel Maintenance.

He began as an auxiliary with Emcon, and became full-time in 1997.

Plans for retirement include doing some travelling with his wife, Mary-Rose, spending time at their cottage in Deer Park, and enjoying their new granddaughter, Sophia.



Bud Stanchuck and his wife, Mary-Rose, enjoying retirement.

Al Cleary

Al Cleary worked at Emcon from 1989 to 1992, and again from August 2000 to 2010.

Cleary has been riding, building, customizing and restoring motorcycles and cars for over 30 years. In January he opened up his own motorcycle shop – Stroker Cyle and Steel Works – in Grand Forks, and plans on spending his “retirement” involved in welding, fabrication and steel sales.



Al Cleary in his recently opened bike shop.

Alice Barrie

Alice Barrie recently retired from the Beaverdale in Local 1009.

Barrie was a strong activist who was front and center when strike action was taken in her area during bargaining in 2007.

The Local and Component wish her a good and happy retirement.



Alice Barrie, walking the highway during strike action in 2007.