

THE OTHER SIDE



A Quarterly Newsletter of CUPE Alberta

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MAY 2003

W. Bruce McLeod Takes Up the Challenge as New President of CUPE Alberta

Bill 27 - What's It Really About

CUPE Health Care Workers Face Big Changes and Big Opportunity



PLUS

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CUPE Alberta Committees at Work
Education Workers "Stories from the Front Line"**

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The Other Side

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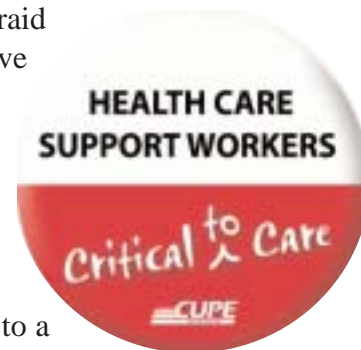
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CUPE 41 Beats Back AUPE Raiding Attempt ... Again

by Lana Morrell

The CUPE support staff at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) in Edmonton have had the misfortune of discovering first hand what it is like to have another union trying to raid their members. In the last year we have had to fend off two attempts from AUPE. The first started before our contract was open last spring. Misinformation and misrepresentation was used to try to get CUPE Local 41 members to think that the majority of people supported the idea of changing to a different union. Hard work by all the members, stewards, local executive, Reps and a number of organizers, helped to make sure they did not succeed.



Late January 2003 found an onslaught of AUPE organizers wandering around in staff change rooms, the tunnel network and into workplaces, telling our members lies like “they would get them a raise and CUPE would not”, “CUPE was a white person’s union only”, “they could guarantee them job security.” Targeting our Food Services and Housekeeping personal they insidiously wormed their way about the institution. Day after day and week after week, AUPE organizers were handing freebies to anyone and everyone, pens, lanyards, pamphlets and false claims about other facilities joining them. They continued to mislead the members about what they could offer them, and became a regular sight in our work place. Members were told that the petition held 30%, then 40% of names needed to file, and that they were just staying to get 45% to be safe.

But Local 41 mobilized again and had members where they set up their tables to refute the misleading information. We had members working hard and winning back those that had signed, members telling the truth and showing other members how they were being misled. This was a tough fight and never taken lightly. And in the end AUPE was unable to get the required signatures and Local 41 won the day.

As of February 19th Local 41 ratified a new collective agreement. Our challenge now is the fact that the employer has caused a division in the local by devaluing the work of some members of the bargaining unit, i.e. Food Services and Housekeeping personal. This is a province-wide tactic by employers and is setting new standards that will be hard to fight against at all negotiating tables. At the same time, we face off against AUPE in representation votes in the coming weeks. We are wise to their tactics and CUPE knows that there are no jobs less valuable in Health Care Support Staff Services groups, each member is essential, and each job is essential.

Calgary Municipal Worker Takes the Helm of CUPE Alberta

CUPE to take on Government Plan for Public Private Partnerships

Long time CUPE activist and municipal politician, W. Bruce McLeod was elected President of the CUPE Alberta Division at the annual convention March 22.

“We emerge from this convention solid in our resolve to defend public services against the assault from the provincial government. We take very seriously our role in building healthy and vibrant communities and fighting government plans to turn our schools, hospitals and roads over to the private sector is an important part of our jobs,” said McLeod upon being elected.

Bruce has been a member of the CUPE Alberta executive board for over ten years. He is a safety advisor for wastewater with the City of Calgary and executive member of the Alberta New Democrats. Prior to his election he was the CUPE General Vice-President for Southern Alberta.

Central among the new policies resulting from CUPE’s convention debate is an action plan to fight the Alberta Government’s plans for using public private partnerships (PPPs) to renew Alberta’s infrastructure. Shortly after the convention, the government signaled its plans to move forward with PPPs.

The Alberta Budget announcement on April 8 included a capital spending allotment totaling \$5.5 billion, which was welcomed by most budget commentators. However, the budget documents reveal that of the \$5.5 billion, next year and the year after a third of that spending will be dedicated to what the government is now calling “alternative financing” starting in 2004.

“That means public private partnerships,” said McLeod.

“We know that there is a large number of people who know the dangers public private partnerships present to quality public service in this province. From other unions, to community groups as well as school boards and municipalities. Our first job is to harness that energy and build a coalition to stop this dangerous trend,” he said.



Central to the government plan is the allocation for local authorities which is included in the amount of capital spending to go to alternative financing.

McLeod points out that this means that the provincial government will be forcing school boards, health authorities and municipalities to use PPP schemes to meet their growing needs rather than get all the needed capital from the provincial government.

“CUPE has done a great deal of research on alternative financing schemes all across Canada. Yet the government refuses to look at the evidence. Not only do PPP’s end up costing the taxpayer more in the long run, our research has found that decisions including public access to schools, the location of new schools and hospitals as well as staffing and service levels are typically handed to the private sector with no public input,” said McLeod.

....continued on back page

Mark Your Calendar....

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| May 21 | “Challenging PPPs”
Calgary |
| May 24-25 | CUPE Alberta Division
Meeting
Edmonton |
| May 31-June 1 | Alberta Education Employees
Committee
Edmonton |
| June 6-8 | Solidarity Days
Edmonton |
| June 21-22 | Committee Meetings
Calgary |
| Sept 6-7 | CUPE Alberta Division Meeting
Calgary |

Then they came for me

- excerpt from Judy Darcy's speech at the CUPE Alberta All President's Meeting, April 23, 2003

First, they came for the communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.
Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Catholic.
Then they came for the socialists, and didn't speak up because I wasn't a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.
Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak up.

· Reverend Martin Niemoeller, a German Lutheran pastor, was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Dachau in 1938. He was freed by the allied forces in 1945.

Did You Know?

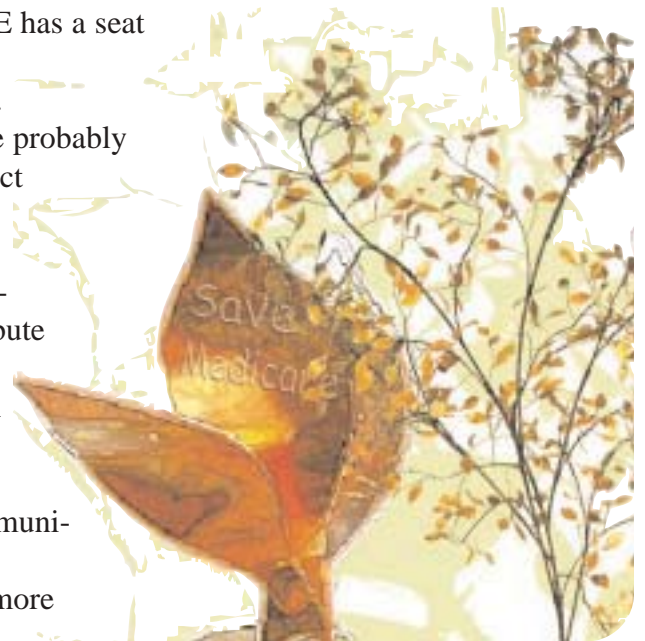
When you think of the Friends of Medicare, think CUPE. CUPE has a seat on the Friends of Medicare Board of Directors and is actively involved in all the Friends of Medicare projects and campaigns.

Right now we are doing something a little different. You have probably heard about it. It's the Medicare Tree, a province-wide art project that shows how much Albertans value the public health system.

Friends of Medicare is creating the Medicare Tree, a large metal tree with sculptured people around each trunk, as an artistic symbol of the value of public health care. People can contribute by inscribing their name or message on thin copper leaves. When all the leaves are attached the Alberta Medicare Tree will be displayed as public art.

CUPE members all across Alberta are acting as "Tree Coordinators", selling leaves in their workplaces and their communities.

To buy a leaf, become a CUPE Tree Coordinator or find out more contact Pam Beattie at (780) 484-7644.



Your opinion is important to us!

Please feel free to send us comments or stories.
Anything Goes - -- well, just about!

Forward your stories, letters and comments to
Pam Beattie at pbeattie@cupe.ca
or mail to:

CUPE Alberta Regional Office
10525 170 St, Suite 410
Edmonton, AB
T5P 4W2



CALM - March 2003

CUPE Members Take Action



Local 2111 marches on April 1 Foolish Legislation Day



Barb Ames, Local 38 at CUPE Go Public Forum



Rally Against Bill 27 March 21



Local 2111 marches on April 1, Foolish Legislation Day



Ian Crichton, Local 3550 at CUPE Go Public Forum



James Arthurs, Local 182 at CUPE Go Public Forum



Rally Against Bill 27, March 21



Local 1645 at the Glenbow Museum Launches the Alberta Heritage Campaign, March 4

CUPE Alberta



CUPE Alberta 53rd Annual Convention

CUPE members from across Alberta gathered in Edmonton for CUPE Alberta's 53rd annual convention, March 20 through March 22.

Highlights of the convention included a keynote address by Dr. David Swann, who spoke about the importance of speaking up for social justice and the political process in Alberta.

Key issues debated this year were the war in Iraq, Bill 27, the government legislation limiting collective agreement rights and the right to strike in health care, and the use of public private partnerships to

build new infrastructure in Alberta. In addition, the CUPE Alberta executive presented a new policy on improving public service delivery in Alberta which received unanimous approval by the convention delegates.

Judy Darcy, who recently announced her intention to step down as National President addressed Alberta delegates for the last time.

And, the convention concluded with the election of Bruce McLeod as the new division president. A new executive was elected to take us through the challenges ahead.

CUPE Alberta 2003-2004 Executive

President
1st General Vice President
2nd General Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary

Bruce MacLeod
Dave Loken
Brenda Dyck
Tom Dick
Richard Scarfe



After 15 years and 5 presidents, Richard Scarfe is still on the job. Thanks Richard for your dedication and commitment as the CUPE Alberta Division Secretary.

Area Vice Presidents

Medicine Hat	Rosemary Mangold
Lethbridge	Jack Simpson
Calgary	Dave Malden
Red Deer	Rick Malcolm
Edmonton	Renate Carmichael
Northeast	Rosemarie Foley
Fort McMurray	Lorna Tollman
Northwest	Sarah MacKay
Peace River	Darrell Walmsley
Visible Minority	Linda Joyce
Youth	Ryan Anderson

Alternate Area Vice Presidents

Medicine Hat	Marle Roberts
Lethbridge	Carol Boklaschuk
Calgary	Angela Clark
Red Deer	Chris Reynolds
Edmonton	Trudy Grebenstein
Northeast	Margaret Templeton
Fort McMurray	Maria Milisic
Northwest	Sandy Miller
Peace River	Margaret Wolfe

Trustees

3 year	Dennis Henderson
2 year	Victor Patton
1 year	Colleen Morrison

Division News

2003 Convention Highlights

When We Fight We Win



CUPE promise to Ralph Klein:

"If you come after on CUPE collective agreement in this province you come after us all. Because NO CUPE local is going to stand alone."

In her last speech as National President to the CUPE Alberta

convention, Judy Darcy reviewed years of struggles against Ralph Klein and challenged members to keep it up in the face of Bill 27.

"We have shown that we can fight back and win in one local union and community campaign after another," Judy told the convention. Her rousing speech had delegates breaking into thunderous applause at several points throughout the 40 minutes of inspiration, fond memories and affectionate farewells.

And, she pointed out one struggle after another where CUPE Alberta members were the weapon

that won the day and Ralph Klein was the target.

"I truly believe that the people of Alberta owe you an enormous debt of thanks," she said. "Alberta would be a very different place today if CUPE locals and CUPE Alberta and CUPE staff had not fought back."

Judy pointed out that with the threat in Bill 27 to rip up collective agreements, Klein's latest salvo threatens each and everyone of us. And she issued an important challenge to all delegates.

"I want to challenge each and every one of us to think really hard about what we are prepared to do about that."

And, she brought convention delegates to their feet when she issued the CUPE promise to Ralph Klein.

"If you come after on CUPE collective agreement in this province you come after us all. Because NO CUPE local is going to stand alone."

"And that can't be rhetoric, sisters and brothers, it has to be real."

Tom Dick Honoured for his Commitment to Equality

This year's recipient of the Equality Recognition Award was CUPE Alberta Treasurer and Local 37 member Tom Dick.

"Tom has demonstrated that one person can make a difference," said Equal Opportunities Chair Barb Ames.

"Tom continues to stand up against violence, chauvinism and discrimination. He routinely talks to members one-one-one, enlightening them, and encouraging them to support equality initiatives," said Yvonne Fast in presenting Tom with the award - a beautiful hand blown glass, Inukshuk sculpture.

Also honoured with a nomination was Local 3550 Vice-President Ian Crichton. Previous recipients of the Award are Brother Joey Sayer, Local 1169, Sister Trudy Casselton, Local 890, Sister Barb Ames, Local 38.



NOT IN MY CUPE

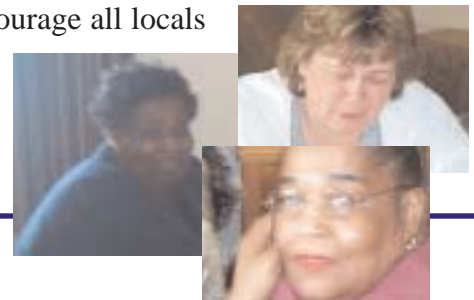
CUPE Alberta and its anti-racism committee is proud of the work that they have been able to accomplish in bringing awareness and support to the elimination of racism, not only within our membership but in our communities as well. Last year, CUPE Alberta held a conference on anti-racism that was well attended and enjoyed immensely by all delegates.

On Education Day just prior to the convention this year, we had a workshop on anti-racism facilitated by Harminder Magon. His background and experience brought creativity, spontaneity and a vast amount of knowledge into the workshop. Everybody that attended walked away with increased awareness on combating racism.

During convention we had a panel discussion and a wine and cheese afterwards. Both were well attended and it was a very novel way to deal with a very important subject.

Our goals for the future are simple, we want all Albertans to have awareness and help us eliminate racism in our workplaces and in our communities. To this end, we encourage all locals to support an anti-racism committee, let's not ignore the subject and if we witness an act of racism let's be very loud and very clear that such behaviour is not acceptable....

Not in my CUPE.



Stories from the Front Line

By Pam Beattie



All across Alberta, CUPE school board employees have been speaking up for public education and the people who are the backbone of our education system, school board support workers.

Alberta's Commission on

Learning completed a series of public consultation meetings in nine different communities in Alberta last fall and CUPE was there at every stop.

"We told our stories. Stories from the heart. Stories directly from the front line. And, our stories tell the tale of education under funding and its impact on our schools and our kids," said Margaret Templeton, chair of the CUPE Alberta Education Employees Committee. (AEEC). "And we are not done yet," she said.

AEEC plans to coordinate a follow-up campaign this coming September as the school year begins.

The CUPE education support workers have joined together in a coordinated effort led by AEEC to press the need for recognition of the important role they play in the education system. A point they say needed to be drawn to the attention of Alberta's Learning Commission.

"The Commission credits the strength of Alberta's

education system to students, teachers, administrators and trustees, completely ignoring the work of thousands of employees in the education system," said Greg Ingram, president of CUPE 829 in Medicine Hat. For his comments Ingram received a written apology from the Commission for the obvious oversight.

The message from CUPE members was heard loud and clear. Everything from the affect of under-staffing of teaching assistants has on children with special needs, to inadequate library resources and library hours to unsafe and unhealthy conditions of schools because there are simply not enough custodial and maintenance staff.

"In particular the Commission was interested in the issue we raised with respect to pensions," said Templeton. "School boards all across the province have been cutting the hours of part-time employees in order to keep them out of the pension plan. This is a direct result of provincial under-funding," she said.

To see all the presentations made by CUPE members visit www.cupealberta.ab.ca. and stay tuned for phase two as education workers continue to speak out.



Disabled Workers - Everybody's Issue

The Equal Opportunities

Committee submitted a resolution on the barriers faced by people with disabilities. Find out why this is an important issue for CUPE members by reading the story of our brother, Bob Tunnicliffe from Local 474.

The resolution calling on CUPE to hold and participate in more workshops on disabled workers' issues and to promote greater education and understanding was passed by convention on March 21.

I was born in 1951, with no left ear and 50 per cent hearing in my right ear. In 1959 my parents made a choice to try to improve my looks and hearing. A trip to an ear specialist told them they could try to make an ear. I was the first person in Western Canada to attempt to have an ear made. Between 1959 - 1963, I had 12 operations to try to make an ear and to make me look normal. My right ear's hearing was boosted, now giving me 60 per cent hearing.

As I grew up life was full of challenges. I was a slow learner and failed 2 grades in school, partly because I was in and out of the hospital. Life was hard. I couldn't play sports with other kids because of damage to my ear. I looked different from other kids and I didn't have a lot of friends. In my late teens I was being asked to choose a career. My first 2 choices (Military or the Police Force) were not to be had, as I had a disability. My parents said I had to have an education. I chose commercial cooking, but couldn't make a go of it because of my disabilities. So at 23 years old: What do I do now? I finally got a break in life and was hired as a custodian in 1974 with Edmonton Public Schools, a job I've had now for 28 years. Yes, life with disabilities has its challenges, but it has made me stronger. I support the work CUPE is doing on disability issues and I hope all CUPE locals will get involved. - Bob Tunnicliffe, EO Committee

CUPE GENERATION NEXT

Hello Everyone,

We're hoping that since convention everyone knows who we are and that no explanation is necessary. Yes it us and we have proved that we're here to stay.

Did you hear that at convention the delegates passed our resolution? We now have Ryan Anderson as the Youth Vice President of CUPE Alberta Division. He also happens to be our committee chairperson. Way to go Ryan!

This was the Young Workers Group first convention as an official body and as far as we're concerned the convention was a big success.

During our committee report we unveiled our new slogan, that was submitted by Brother John Zannettin from CUPE 38. Hopefully by looking at the design you will be able to tell that we are different from the rest and that we "Think Outside the Box".



Convention 2003 was an empowering experience for the Young Workers group as a whole and we would like to thank all of you for making that happen.

At convention we put forth six general resolutions. All of which were passed and one constitutional resolution which was also passed.

Now we are looking at using our new seat on the CUPE Alberta Division Executive to bring forth the issues of Alberta's young workers and put them on the frontline. We have a long way to go, but we have made it this far and you have shown us that we are capable of going the rest of the way.

In Solidarity, The Young Workers Group



YES CUPE!

CUPE Activists from all Sectors Come Together to Support Alberta's Health Care Workers

On April 23rd, CUPE members from all across Alberta and representing education, municipal, emergency medical services and the health care sectors met in Nisku to pull together and defend their sisters and brothers in health care.

"This is how CUPE works," said CUPE 37 President Dan Donohue. Representing municipal workers with the City of Calgary, Donohue rose at the meeting to announce his Local's support and contribution. Joining him with pledges of support were CUPE 30, Edmonton Civic Workers and CUPE 38, Calgary inside workers.

CUPE is launching a vigorous campaign to ensure that the union representation votes in Alberta's regional health authorities result in an opportunity to build CUPE's strength in the province. Bill 27, passed by the Alberta Government on April 1st, forces a voting process on CUPE health care workers in which they will be asked to choose their union. CUPE is expected to face off against AUPE in most regions each representing approximately half of the general support workers in Alberta's health care system.

"It is not just the future of our union at stake," said CUPE Alberta president Bruce McLeod. "It is the

future of public services because a strong CUPE in Alberta is what will keep public services strong," he said.

"CUPE has led the fights in this province against government cuts, privatization and contracting-out. And, I am ready to fight again. Our jobs, our services and our future are at stake," said

CUPE 40 president Drake Hammell. Hammell represents school board workers in Calgary.

"The money is there to back you up," said CUPE National President Judy Darcy. Both Darcy and National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux joined the meeting to pledge the support of CUPE National with both financial and staff resources for

the representation vote campaign. Their presence demonstrated the strength and importance of being part of a strong national union.

"We have fought these battles across the country and we win because we are the union that stands up for public health care, and for our members' jobs and the services they provide. That is our overwhelming strength and our advantage," said Darcy.

One after another, members rose to speak about the value of CUPE representation. "CUPE is the union that stands behind health care workers," said former AUPE member Marilyn Vik from Stony Plain. "AUPE is the union that stands behind the government," she said. Darrell Walmsley of Local 1808 in Fairview spoke to the importance of CUPE's autonomy. "While we make all the decisions in our Locals, we also have the strength of a powerful union standing behind us all the way which has been proven here today," he said.

"This was an important meeting from which to build our campaign," said McLeod at the conclusion. "Most importantly today was a clear demonstration of the commitment of our members in every sector to work together. That is what CUPE is all about," he said.



Bill 27 What's It All About?

On March 11 the Government of Alberta introduced Bill 27, the *Labour Relations (Regional Health Authorities Restructuring) Amendment Act, 2003*. All of the unions, all of the media and all of the CEOs of the nine Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) were invited to the Legislature, to be “briefed” on changes to the Alberta Labour Code in this Act. But, the title of Bill 27 should really be “An Act to Enact Regulations”. In other words, this legislation really contained no legislation.

The real meaning of the changes to the Labour Code will be found in the Regulations, which according to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment were not yet written when the union briefing took place. So for all the media build up and all the pomp and ceremony over Bill 27's announcement the Minister could not answer any questions regarding how, when and what changes will take place affecting the bargaining rights of thousands of employees in the Alberta health care system. To his credit, the Minister could answer the question why. Why are these changes being imposed? The answer is very simple, the Regional Health Authorities asked for them.

The Regulations include streamlining labour representation establishing a process for turning 400 bargaining certificates into 36. And in each RHA dozens of collective agreements will have to be turned into one. That means for many employees, rates of pay, benefits, seniority rights and job security will change.

A key regulation is the one that will give the Chair of the Alberta Labour Relations Board new powers to determine the terms and conditions of collective agreements. Compare this with the fact that the government advertisements appearing in daily newspapers across the province on March 12, says the RHAs asked for the Labour Code changes in order to implement the reforms to health care delivery recommended by the Mazankowski Report. We have to ask which reforms are these? Privatization and commercialization? De-listing services? Healthy Living? The government has not made any announcements about the Mazankowski reform beyond raising premiums last year. But we do know that Mazankowski recommended the appointment of someone with the power to remove barriers to reform. Barriers such as the terms and conditions of labour agreements. Now here we are one year later. Could it be this someone is the Chair of the Alberta Labour Relations Board?

The real issue underneath all of this fanfare about streamlining bargaining and cutting administrative time and money are the rights of health care workers. Severance, successor rights, job security rights, benefits and pensions. Rights that ensure these jobs are family supporting jobs, good for the economy of Alberta. These same rights stand in the way of health care privatization. Amid all of the coming chaos over which union and which collective agreement, it is the future of our public health care system that is at stake. Because when you put it all together it sure looks like more health care privatization is on the way. For that, every Albertan will pay a high price. But, the first people to pay the price will be the people working in RHAs today delivering high quality, accessible public health care.



The green, green grass of home at what cost?

The Public Employee/CUPE B.C./CALM

Coughing, a burning throat, dizziness, depression, skin rashes, diarrhea, vomiting and headaches. If you were a grounds worker, you might put it off to bad flu, but it could be something worse.

Quebec dermatologist and environmental activist Dr. June Irwin wonders, "How many cases of flu-like symptoms are blamed on an unknown virus when in fact there has been a spraying of insecticides or herbicides?"

We want weedless lawns and pest-free playgrounds. But why? A park or yard that has its share of ladybugs, wasps, bees, beetles, and birds is alive. Dandelions, clover, and chamomile add texture and character.

We need to take a closer look at the cost to our health. Childhood leukemia, asthma, brain cancers have all been linked to pesticides. Workers and chil-

dren are particularly vulnerable when playgrounds or parks are sprayed with toxins that can make us sick.

Workers and their doctors are recognizing when the causes of illnesses may be pesticide exposure, and they are fighting for compensation, and to protect themselves.

As workers and as part of the community, we need to:

- (find out where and when pesticides are used the community.
- (learn about the side-effects of chemicals in pesticides that school or parks workers use.
- (find alternatives to pesticides for our homes and gardens.

W. Bruce McLeod

...continued from page 3

"Private interests do not correspond to public needs. We have a huge capital deficit in this province and we should be ensuring that our schools, health care facilities and municipal roads are built in the public interests and remain publicly controlled and operated," he adds.

CUPE Alberta plans to host a both a "technical briefing" on the methods for research and analysis of PPP schemes as they emerge, as well as a public meeting with panellist presentations. Both events will take place on May 21, 7:00 p.m. at Fort Calgary in Calgary.

"At the present time, we are still finalizing the plans and panellist participation. Details of the event will be sent to all CUPE Locals, AFL affiliates and advertised widely through our activist networks," said McLeod.

To prepare for the huge job ahead in battling PPP's, McLeod also brings his experience as a Councillor for the Village of Acme, currently working to secure a new water supply for the village.

Easy trivia quiz

1. How long was the Hundred Years War?
2. What country makes Panama hats?
3. From what animal do we get catgut (for violin strings)?
4. When do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel hair brush made of?
6. What animal are the Canary Islands named after?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What colour is the purple finch?
9. Where do Chinese gooseberries come from?
10. How long did the Thirty Years War last?

Answers:

1. 116 years, from 1337 to 1453
2. Ecuador
3. Sheep and horses
4. November, the Russian calendar is 13 days behind
5. Squirrel fur
6. Dogs-it comes from the Latin name *Isularia Canaria*, which means Island of the Dogs
7. Albert-when George VI came to the throne, he respected the wish of his grandmother Queen Victoria that no future king should be called Albert
8. Bright red
9. New Zealand
10. 30 years, from 1618 to 1648