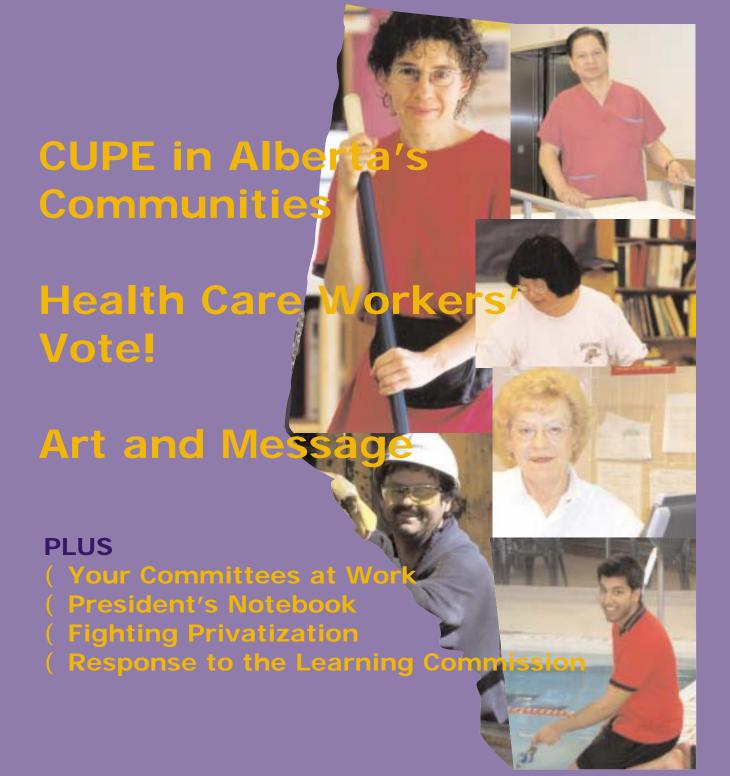
THE OTHER SIDE



A Quarterly Newsletter of CUPE Alberta www.cupealberta.ab.ca

November 2003



Inside The Other Side

President's Report ...3

Health Care Workers' Vote...4

Peggy Morton Retires...5

CUPE in Alberta's Communities Division News...6-7

Pension Committee...8

Art and Message...9

Anti-Privatization Committee...10

Youth Committee...10

Learning Commission and CUPE Alberta Education Employees...11

Alberta Municpal Employees Committee...12

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Keeping Utility Costs Down in Winter

Excerpts from The Green Guide to David Suzuki's Nature Challenge

Our homes reflect our environmental values and have significant environmental impact on our communities. Our personal decisions are multiplied by 11 million households in Canada, 365 days a year and the effect is enormous.

There are a number of ways to reduce energy consumption without sacrificing your comfort or budget this winter. At present, home heating in Canada accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the energy used. Bigger homes use more energy because there's more space to heat, cool and light. More windows account form more heat loss. What can we do to reduce our costs?

Start by checking your walls, doors and windows for drafts as up to 40 per cent of heat loss is from these areas. If practical, you can reduce energy consumption by considering these ideas:

- 1 Use drapes or blinds that completely cover your windows.
- 1 Use plants as an attractive way to insulate/shade your home.
- 1 Install a "set-back" thermostat and lower the temperature to 13 degrees Celsius at night.
- 1 Microwave ovens tend to be more efficient than conventional stoves/ovens.
- 1 Give your clothes dryer a break by using a drying rack in winter.
- 1 Only use your dishwasher, clothes washer and dryer when you have full loads.
- 1 Turn off appliances, lights, and electrical equipment, such as computers when not in use.
- 1 Unplug appliances with electronic displays if you do not use them often
- 1 Adjust the water heater to the hottest temperature you need.
- 1 Wash clothes in cooler water.
- 1 Don't buy or rent a home larger than you need. (Single detached homes use 27 per cent more energy than attached housing)
- 1 Choose energy efficient homes (R-2000 standards) and appliances (Energy Star Approved as refrigerators before 1993 use 40 per cent more energy)
- 1 Apply weather stripping and caulking (up to 25 per cent reductions)
- 1 Improve roof insulation (up to 15 per cent reduction)
- 1 Install storm windows/doors (up to 15 per cent reduction)
- 1 Install a new high-energy efficiency furnace (can reduce greenhouse gas emissions up to 40 per cent)

For more detailed information visit www.davidsuzuki.org.

Brought to you by the CUPE Alberta Environment Committee

Page 2

President's Notebook

The First Six Months

When I stepped up to the position of President from the General Vice President's position I knew that there would be a lot of challenges.



One of our biggest is a government that wants to destroy the health care system by selling it off to its friends or "reorganizing" it into the ground.

Bill 27 has put worker against worker for no more reason than the government's wish to have total control. Even though a number of years ago government trumpeted the view that "we should be getting out of the business of governance." How times have changed! In education, they have forced school boards to layoff custodians, teaching assistants and teachers under the guise of no money. Deregulation has us paying the highest gas and electricity rates in the country. Yet we live in the richest province in Canada. How can this government on one hand scream poverty and then on the other report to the residents of Alberta of a \$1.3 billion surplus? The projections for the coming year are for an even higher surplus.

Health care and education are the corner stones of any society. Without these the future of our children and grandchildren is at stake. That is why CUPE Alberta is putting so much effort into these campaigns. It may be for our sisters and brothers today but it is also for our future members tomorrow. This government and its leadership will not be satisfied until they have totally crushed the working people in Alberta. We must stand together. Our enemy is not each other but the dictatorship in the Alberta Legislature.

Together we can win. We have to win. The next generation of working people is depending on us.

In Solidarity
W. Bruce McLeod, President CUPE Alberta

Ask The Other Side

I've been a CUPE member for six months now. I have started going to my Local meetings and am hearing about CUPE National, the CUPE Alberta Division and CUPE District Council. What are all these different CUPES?

Dave

Dave, Welcome to CUPE. While it can be confusing, there is only one CUPE – the Canadian Union Of Public Employees. We are a national union with over half a million members across the country. Every CUPE local receives its charter from CUPE national and is therefore directly affiliated. Your staff representatives are employees of CUPE National.

In addition, each province has a provincial division recognized by the CUPE national constitution but each with its own constitution and by-laws. The provincial divisions are the political voice of CUPE in each province and affiliation is the decision of each local. Similarly, district councils are made up of CUPE locals who join together to address local issues.

While each level of organization in CUPE has its own constitution and/or by-laws, each is an organization made up of CUPE locals. In CUPE, locals have the power to set their own dues, establish their own by-laws and choose to affiliate to the provincial division and district councils.



ORGANIZING for HEALTH

"They haven't voted yet. What are they waiting for?" asks an anxious, yet enthusiastic CUPE organizer. "We don't know," says another. "But face to

face communication is the key."

The scene is the CUPE organizers' meeting, called every Thursday evening in May and June. CUPE member organizers are gathered around the

Edmonton Regional Office boardroom discussing campaign strategy, health care issues, and their experiences at workplace visits - visits that are both full of rewards and frustrations. On July 3, the issue was pulling the CUPE vote because the stakes are high.

Fast forward to September 11 and they are at it again in the Aspen Health Region (Region 7) and the David Thompson Health Region (Region 4) with run-off votes between CUPE and AUPE after the first vote did not produce a clear winner. With three unions on the first ballot, the one with the lowest percentage of support is dropped and voting takes place again.

After months of campaigning and frustrations with incorrect voters lists and missing ballots, CUPE

If management is trying to contract-out our jobs, CUPE provides the resources we need to fight back. The staff and executive are always there for advice and support. And we are strong at the bargaining table. John Bork, Senior Supervisor,



Inventory Control, Rockyview Hospital

activists are anxious for the results. And they are certainly anxious to move forward and bargain a new collective agreement. But, the results of all regions where voting took place will not be released until the voting is done in Regions 4 and 7.

The vote was ordered shortly after the government cut seventeen Regional Health Authorities down to nine with the introduction of Bill 27. Bill 27 required that for each of four occupational groups

employed by Alberta's health regions, there could only be one union.

CUPE immediately launched a vigorous campaign to ensure that the union representation votes resulted in an opportunity to build CUPE's strength in Alberta. "Because it matters," says Daniel Nobis, president of CUPE Local 2147 at the Sturgeon Hospital in St. Albert. "This campaign has been stressful and it's not always



fun. But, health care workers need a strong voice. Especially now," he said.

Bill 27 represented a huge challenge for health care workers. Not only was CUPE's membership at

"Health care workers need a strong voice. Especially now."

stake, the legislation contained within it the seeds to attack health care workers rights and pave the way for more Klein style privatization. A key regulation under Bill 27 is the one that gives the Chair of the Alberta Labour Relations Board new powers to determine the terms and conditions of collective agreements when the bargaining certificates are

declared and negotiations begin. A policy decision entirely consistent with government plans for more health care privatization.

Anna Myhra of CUPE Local 182 in Calgary agrees with Nobis. Anna worked day and night on the CUPE campaign. She compares her commitment to CUPE activism to the commitment parents have for their children. "You work hard so your children have the best. CUPE is the best and I want the best for my co-workers."

Anna's days were spent in hospital cafeterias around Calgary. Her evenings were on the phone. "It was amazing how many did not know this was happening. Mostly people thanked me for calling and putting in the work to let them know," she said. When she heard "thank-you" and "CUPE all the way" that made it all worthwhile. "Those were awe-some calls," says Anna.

Page 4

"We fight for health care all across Canada not just in Alberta. When we told people that, they agreed it means a lot."

Prior to its introduction, CUPE represented close to half of all of the organized general support service employees, the Alberta Union of Provincial



Employees (AUPE) represented the majority. Because CUPE represented over 80 per cent of the unionized support workers in Medicine Hat and Lethbridge, CUPE was declared the

bargaining agent in those two regions with no vote. That left seven highly contested, tough fights and a lot of hard work for CUPE members and staff. While other unions were on the ballot in some regions, for the most part it was CUPE versus AUPE.

Facing off against AUPE meant a gruelling campaign for the member organizers. AUPE has been



CUPE is there for the members, giving us the opportunity to take courses and learn about contract negotiations. I have taken courses and now am on the bargaining committee. What I like most of all is that everybody in the union

supports one another. Shay Sharawara, Housekeeper, Rockyview Hospital

suspended from NUPGE for raiding CUPE members in health care and there is a great deal of animosity between the two unions. "Often I felt like I was walking into a war zone," says Ron Cousins, a unit clerk at the Rockyview General Hospital in Calgary. "It was kind of like an emotional roller coaster and it's a lot easier to go to work every day than to go to the campaign." Cousins put in the tough grind because he believes that "When people are sitting at home ready to vote, they will look at the two unions and know that CUPE is the one."

The same was true for Darrell Walmsley in the North Western region of Alberta. "There were a lot of petty incidents so it was important to get the accurate information out to people," said Walmsley. "Contracting-out is a big scare. We told people about the CUPE wins against contracting-out and that was important to them. We fight for health care all across Canada not just in Alberta. When we told people that, they agreed it means a lot," he said.

When all is said and done, the representation vote was only half the battle. Amid all of chaos over which union, it is the future of Alberta's public health care system that is really at stake. For that, every Albertan will pay a high price. But, the first people being asked to pay the price are the people delivering high quality, accessible public health care.

Well not if CUPE members have anything to say about it.

Great CUPE Leader retires after 22 years

by John Malthouse

Sister Peggy Morton is one of those rare personalities that you meet as you journey along your path of life. The event could have been abrupt, consoling, lecturing, caring, exuberant, or agitated. Whatever the nature or texture of the event, Peggy leaves an indelible imprint on your soul. And, even though Peggy has stepped down as President of CUPE 2111 after 22 years and will retire from her job at the Misericordia Hospital in December, we know that continue to hear her voice and benefit from her leadership.

As a worker, Peggy has always been in the trenches with the rest of us. Her work experience reaches from packing houses to hospitals. As a leader of health care workers most of her working life, she has been at the center of the charge through picket lines, strikes, mass rallies, parades and many other protests.

As a tenacious defender of the working class she will never be held back in exercising her right of free expression in defending rights at the work place and in society. As a leader, she welcomes diversity and leads by example. Her compassion and wisdom continues to win and influence the hearts and minds of countless people.

Peggy leaves CUPE 2111 in the capable hands of new President Lorna Marks elected by the membership on Tuesday October 14.

CUPE Alberta



CUPE in Alberta's Communities

Dateline - September 13 - 14, Calgary Alberta CUPE Alberta Executive demonstrates its commitment to Alberta's community spirit through a series of financial decisions.

(\$3,000.00 to the City of Fort Saskatchewan for the new community centre for arts, community programs and recreation. The centre is truly a community project with residents, local businesses and community organizations all pitching in. When completed the centre will be staffed by CUPE Local 843. CUPE's contribution will build a "Chessboard" in the main foyer with sponsorship recognition poured into the concrete in the middle of the board. The Chessboard is an 8 by 8 foot board of coloured concrete with actual playing pieces for public use. CUPE Alberta Division is making the donation through the "I'm on Your Side" fund on behalf of Local 843.

(\$2,000 to our sisters and brothers at Local 1846 at the Canadian Blood services in Calgary who were on strike for two weeks this past summer.

(\$250.00 and 20 CUPE T-shirts for the Carifest Festival in Edmonton in August. Sister Linda

Joyce staffed a CUPE information table at the event spreading the word about CUPE in Alberta's communities

(CUPE Alberta will sponsor the Community Drug Alert magazine. Aimed at education and drug prevention the magazine is distributed throughout schools, community centres and public buildings in Alberta.

In other news ...

- (\$1000.00 to support the NDP Federal Youth Organizer position.
- (A donation of a Quarter Zip fleece to Local 3550 their October Retirement party.
- (A donation to the Calgary Humane Society in honor of Sister Joyce Betteridge and her 40 years of dedicated service within our Union movement.
- (The CUPE Alberta Executive Board approved sending Sister Renee LaFrance or alternate Brother Kirk Oates to the Canadian Labour Congress Prairie Organizing Institute 'Train the Trainers' course October 1-3, 2003 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan with expenses being picked up by CUPE Alberta.
- (CUPE Alberta is sponsoring a small Local under 100 members to attend the 2003 CUPE National Convention. Sister Margaret Wolfe from Local 3266 is being sent.



We'll Miss You!

CUPE Alberta wishes to thank Brenda Dyck for her always dependable and enthusiastic activism and leadership. Brenda was elected GVP for Southern Alberta at the Convention last March. In September, Brenda moved to Ontario to pursue new opportunities. The Division will certainly miss her dedication and hard work. All the best Brenda!

Division News

CUPE's Stamp on Community Activism

CUPE Alberta buys beef, lends a hand

As so many CUPE members know, our communities are suffering right along side the cattle industry because of the BSE crisis and borders closed to beef exports. So, in the spirit of community activism, this past July CUPE Alberta bought \$5,000 worth of Alberta beef to be distributed to seven community food banks across the province. The Division also issued a challenge to other unions and other CUPE locals across the country to do the same.

And, the food banks were very glad to have the donation that helped out hundreds of families across Alberta. But that is just one example of the many things CUPE members do in our communities to make a difference.

In addition to the work we do in our jobs every day, CUPE locals sponsor local charities and sports teams, take part in local festivals and parades proudly flying our CUPE banners. CUPE members from all over Alberta are important partners in the many activist networks of people working to preserve public services, fighting corporate globalization and standing up for working people.

As part of the ongoing CUPE Alberta campaign, the Division has established a CUPE in Alberta's Communities Working Group. This group composed of Dave Loken and Linda Joyce will work with CUPE communications representative Pam Beattie to identify the work CUPE locals do now as well as more opportunities for effective community activism. If you are interested in joining the group or have information to pass along to the committee about you local's activities, contact Pam Beattie at (780) 484-7644 or at pbeattie@cupe.ca.

In Brief

Dave Malden, president of Local 709 has been elected General Vice-President for Southern Alberta, replacing Brenda Dyck. For information about Dave and other CUPE Alberta Division executive members visit www.cupealberta.ab.ca, where the biographies of all Division Executive Members can be found.

Jennifer Longmuir, a student at the University of Calgary has been awarded the CUPE Alberta scholarship for her essay "Why Unions?: The Benefits of Unions that Most People Do Not Know About. Jennifer's essay is available at www.cupealberta.ab.ca.

CUPE Alberta President Bruce McLeod appeared before the Federal Government Standing Committee on Health. The Committee was in Edmonton as part of its cross Canada hearings to study prescription drugs. Bruce's presentation is available at www.cupealberta.ab.ca.



Remember...

Occupational Health and Safety. Your life depends on it.

An Important Message from the Ad Hoc Committee on Pensions and Benefits

Are you interested in your retirement pension? If not you should be! We are looking for local union pension resource people to work with the support of CUPE Alberta Pension and benefits Committee to ensure all CUPE members have the best possible retirement income available.

This means:

- (Working to improve access to the Local Authorities Pension Plan for eligible members.
- (Bargaining other pensions for CUPE members not eligible to participate in LAPP.
- (Building the best networks to share information and education on pension issues.

Local Union pension resource people will have access to regular information and education on pension issues. As a pension resource person you can work within your Local to share information and identify priority issues for CUPE members. You can also play an important role in the CUPE Pension



Committee's communication network.

In October, the Pension and Benefits Committee will contacting CUPE Locals to ask for pension contacts in the Local who could support our efforts at the Local level. If you are interested in becoming more active on pension issues. Please contact your CUPE Local Executive. For more information please see the CUPE Alberta website www.cupealberta.ab.ca.

Your opinion is important to us!

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

Forward you 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

Mark Your Calendar....

October 27-31

CUPE National Convention

Quebec City

November 8-9

Standing Committees

Calgary

November 15-16

Division Executive Meeting

Edmonton

November 22-23

AHCU Annual Meeting

Edmonton

November 28-29

Alberta NDP Convention

Calgary

December 1

World Aids Day

December 3

International Day for

Disabled Persons

December 6

National Day of

Remembrance

January 17-18

Alberta Education

Employees Committee

Edmonton

January 24-25

Standing Committees

Edmonton

January 30-February 1

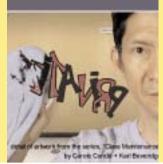
Division Executive Meeting

Calgary

February 21-22

AMEC Meeting

Calgary



Art and Message

by Pam Beattie

What is art anyway? Many of us are taught from early childhood that art is all about individual expression. Fine art, the stuff in galleries, is excellence in craft, it is genius, and those who appreciate it are the ones with the gift to create it. Or, they are the ones with the education to "get it". That view is constantly reaffirmed by what is usually on display in our public galleries and the high prices in the private galleries.

Consider "Voice of Fire", a red stripe down the middle of a blue canvass, purchased by the National Gallery in 1989. The acquisition sparked some outrage because of its million-dollar price tag, paid for by the Canadian taxpayer. A price that people said just did not match its simplistic design. By explaining that really we, the people, don't understand art, the politicians and the culture bureaucrats attempted to calm the national uproar. And what do you see when you think of the artist at work? A lonely Vincent Van Gogh painting in a French asylum or Jackson Pollock madly splashing gobs of paint on a huge canvas in a Connecticut barn? But, art is really not this distant and not this far out of reach.

All of these images and messages miss a whole tradition of a different form of brilliance, brilliance born of collective expression. That kind of stuff we don't often see in our public galleries. That is why September 26 was an historic day when the



Edmonton Art Gallery opened the exhibit "Class

Maintenance" by Carol Condé and Karl Beveridge.
"Class Maintenance" is a collection of photographic art illustrating the work of custodial workers in Edmonton Public Schools - members of Local 474.
And, through the illustration of school custodians at work, their work - their commitment to public education and to students is celebrated.

What about a workshop attended by members of your local? Is that a more fitting image of the artists at work? "Class Maintenance" was created through a series of workshops in which members of Local 474 and the artists developed the message they wanted to portray. The beauty of this art lies in the expression of collective resistance to privatization and the importance of custodial workers to our schools and to our students. It is about the real lives of workers and it was created by workers.

For the labour movement art is a powerful tool and is steeped in tradition. We are all familiar with our activist posters, public monuments to injured workers, banners honouring unions, and union logos and pins.

...continued on page 12



How About a Little Theatre?

Staff at the Glenbow Museum have take the museum outside to demonstrate the importance of public access to museum collections.

"We believe these collections belong to everyone and the provincial government has a responsibility to makes sure the collections are maintained and accessible to the public," says CUPE 1645 president Karin Richardson.

As a result of shrinking govern

ment support, museum hours and educational programming have been cut, but user fees are up.

Since their campaign began last March, over 2,000 postcards addressed to the Premier urging an increase in funding have been distributed.

And, their most effective method of distribution is definitely street theatre with local members dressed in museum costumes.

QUICK FACTS

The Anti-Privatization and Political Action Committee is pleased to announce "Quick Facts"- a regular column on the issues and facts surrounding P3's, privatization and political action.

Keeping informed on these issues are vital to securing public service jobs. Privatization aids the wealthy (big business and profiteers) at the expense of middle class workers and families. It does not embrace the interests and values of mainstream Alberta families.

The most fundamental argument of private contractors is "that money will be saved by privatizing this service." In most cases they make sure that they "lowball" the bid initially to ensure the suc-

cessful acquisition of the contract. However, after the contract is secured the price begins to escalate leading to cost higher than if the service had remained inhouse.

The truth is private contractors must either pay less for the same services (using unqualified, poorly paid personal and/or inferior materials); reduce the levels of service (fewer hours, less staff and/or equipment

with little or no quality control); or slowly but surely increase their charges.

APPAC welcomes your submissions of privatization and political issues in your area.

Send an e-mail to Darcy Lanovaz at darcy@lanovaz.org.



It's been a nice relaxing summer and now its time to get back to work. To start us off on the right track we welcome the newest member of our group, Chris Taschuk, Local 4575 from Smokey Lake. We would also like to get an early start for Convention 2004. We're going to be there and it's going to be a blast. In preparation



we are conducting a survey of all locals. In the June mail-out, the Young Workers Group included a survey to be handed out to all the members to get facts and opinions on all locals in the Alberta Division. So far the response has been dismally low. We know we can do better than that. Most of the time you have lots to say – so say it to us. But if you don't feel comfortable filling out the survey or you just can't find one anywhere please feel free to contact Ryan Anderson at randerson@nucleus.com. We would really appreciate all the help we can get as the survey benefits you the members and gives the group direction. Keep an eye out for us in the coming months – we'll be around somewhere.

In Solidarity,

Young Workers Group Alberta Division

overnment Watcl

CUPE Congratulates the Learning Commission

But, More Works Needs to be Done to Ensure Every Child Succeeds

The Alberta Education Employees Committee was quick to congratulate the Learning Commission for its bold recommendations to significantly increase funding for public education. But the Commission report did not go far enough.

"With three significant funding recommendations; special needs, operations and maintenance and additional staffing to address class size, they only got it 2/3 right," said Margaret Templeton, chair of the CUPE Alberta Education Employees Committee.

"Class size only addresses one-side of the staffing issue we have in our schools," said Templeton. "There is a dire shortage of support staff and that means less access to libraries, administrative support and a whole host of services that make the education system complete," she said.

"The Commission analyzed funding shortfalls from 1995 to now in order to calculate the need. Therefore, they do not address shortages that have been building in the system since the first round of drastic cuts to education in 1994. We clearly have more work to do to support our students," she added.

CUPE education employees are preparing a province-wide campaign to raise awareness on the educational significance of support employees in schools. AEEC plans to conduct a survey among its members to assess the impact to students of under-funding support services.

"We demonstrated through our submissions that students with special needs are poorly served and they heard us," said Trudy Grebenstein president of CUPE 3550. CUPE 3550 represents over 2000 support staff in Edmonton Public Schools including the teaching assistants who work with student with special needs.

"We are particularly pleased with the recommendations for more flexibility for school board revenue. If the provincial government listens, that will put an end to parents having to fund raise to meet the needs of their children's education," she added.

"Through the employees right on the front line, we plan to take a close look at what is

happening in each one of our schools and report the findings to Boards across the province and to the provincial government, " said Templeton.

CUPE 474 president, Doug Luellman agrees. "We need to make sure that the provincial government follows through. So, we will have some precise information on the state in our schools to help them as they prepare the next budget," said Luellman. CUPE 474 represents over 600 custodial staff at Edmonton Public Schools. "The Commission recognized the need to increase funding for operations and maintenance to repair our crumbling schools and ensure students have appropriate learning environments," he said. "Now we need to make sure the Klein government recognizes it as



well."

AMEC - Come See What We're About

About three-quarters of all CUPE municipal locals are affiliated to the Alberta Municipal Employees Committee (AMEC) but for AMEC executive, the number could be higher. Thirty-five municipal employee activists were at the last AMEC meeting in Edmonton. Together they decided to invite all municipal locals to the next meeting to see what they are missing - expenses paid by AMEC.

And, it will be well worth it. Sharing common concerns, ideas and general information is invaluable to CUPE municipal locals. For example, at the AMEC meeting on September 27, delegates found that many locals share a problem with how members are treated by human resource managers.

Contracting-out seems to be on the rise again. And, all are finding that full-time positions are increasingly being eroded with accelerated use of part-time and volunteers. What should we do about it? Well, we can't tackle these issues alone. So, the AMEC delegates discussed the agenda for the municipal sectoral meeting at national convention. Proposals include: community recycling initiatives that ensure recycling stays in municipal waste departments, amalgamations and union jurisdictions, the recognition of qualifications and job skills, and the sustainability of tax supported unionized municipal wages.

Getting to the root of these problems means research and education. Solving them means working together.

On day two of the AMEC meeting, Doug Wellis from Local 37 was re-elected as the Chair and Rick Malcom from Local 417 was re-elected as Co-chair. Graham Adams from Local 709 was re-elected as Recording Secretary. Mark Langlois from Local 37 was elected as the new Treasurer. Presentations were made to outgoing Treasurer, Bruce McLeod, and to recently retired Ken Balkwill for their long time, dedicated activism with AMEC and for all working people in Alberta.

The next AMEC meeting is scheduled for 21-22 February in Calgary at the Local 37 Union Centre.





Art and Message

...continued from page 9

For Local 474 activism through both visual and performing arts has been a longstanding commitment. From the creation and production of a play about privatization, to giant puppets used in Klondike Days and May Day parades and participation with other CUPE locals in the Kid's Fringe to the current exhibit of "Class Maintenance", the Local has used community art projects to carry its message to the public. With "Class Maintenance" CUPE's message will get even more exposure. Not only will the exhibit be on display at the Edmonton Art Gallery through to November 30, the images will also be on display on Edmonton City buses and at the Churchill Square LRT station.

What better way to challenge commercialism, privatization and individualism, the corporate messages we are bombarded with on a daily basis.