



THE UNITED LEADER



May 2009

Dennis Mol Elected President of CUPE Alberta

By Lou Arab, CUPE Alberta



The recent CUPE Alberta convention elected a number of new officers, including President Dennis Mol and Recording Secretary Aneen Albus (inset).

Newly elected president Dennis Mol took time to answer questions from Newsletter chair Mike Scott.

MS: What are some of the major issues facing CUPE Alberta today and how are you going to work to change those issues?

DM: One of the major issues that we face today is as a result of the decisions made by the Alberta Government to ignore workers' right to choose their Union. Presently we are facing this with our sisters and brothers in EMS and our health services. This issue is before the Labour Board May 19th. If the decision is not favorable to the rights of our members we will proceed with the court challenge.

MS: What are some of the challenges facing you as the newly elected President of CUPE Alberta?

DM: Meeting with all the locals in the province and changing the perception about the Division to those locals that are not affiliated.

Another challenge is raising the profile of CUPE AB and workers' issues in the province.

MS: Political Action is important for unions, especially in this province.

Are you going to try to strengthen CUPE Alberta's presence at political rallies?

DM: This is very important for CUPE AB to strengthen its presence at political rallies and at all levels of the political process. This cannot be done by the Division alone, we need an effort supported by all locals in the province. Together we can make a difference.

MS: Are you going to encourage locals to put forward strong candidates in future (civic, provincial, federal) elections?

DM: Recruiting CUPE candidates is an important goal, but there is more to election success than having strong candidates. We need to provide funds and bodies to work in election campaigns. Without a combination of all three elements our success is limited. We will need to work collectively to give worker a stronger voice.

MS: Do you have any suggestion for locals on how to be more visible in the community?

DM: Locals have to think outside of the box, get more involved in their communities, partner with other unions, organizations and charities. Volunteer where ever you see a need

like children, schools, seniors, or persons with disabilities. Where ever there is a need there is an opportunity for CUPE to continue to build strong communities.

MS: Do you have any ideas you would like to pass along for CUPE in the community day?

DM: Being part of the community is not limited to a few activities, reading to children in our libraries and schools, helping our seniors with tasks around their homes and yards, assisting elders in assisted living facilities, community projects, various charity drives, work with youth organizations, homelessness.

These activities, although important on Communities Day should not be limited to one day, try to keep these initiatives going all year long.

I'd like to see locals take part in activities that highlight the work our members do to build strong communities every day as part of their jobs. As public employees, we build communities all the time by making sure our schools, recreation centers, long term care facilities and other public services are delivered effectively. Promoting that work will help us fight privatization and help us at the negotiating table.

EDMONTON – CUPE Alberta convention delegates have elected Dennis Mol as President.

Mol is the current President of CUPE 30, (Edmonton outside workers). He takes over from D'Arcy Lanovaz, who stepped down from the position to be closer to his family. Mol defeated Trudy Grebenstein, President of CUPE 3550 (Edmonton Public School support workers).

Mol is a long time CUPE member and former Equipment Operator with the Parks Department of the City of Edmonton. He is married with a 12-year-old daughter.

Mol pledges to continue the recent growth of CUPE in the province, to continue the fight for public services and to focus on building strong communities.

"I'm going to work hard standing up for our members," said Mol. "CUPE Alberta will continue to campaign aggressively for public services, public workers, and the communities we work so hard to protect."

Other executive members elected at the convention include:

Recording Secretary:
Aneen Albus (CUPE 4731)

General VP South:
Carol Boklaschuk (CUPE 408)

Fort McMurray Alternate VP:
Ken Goodyear (CUPE 1505)

Northwest Alternate VP:
Dee Kibler (CUPE 1661)

Northeast Alternate VP:
Ruth Shymka (CUPE 2550)

Edmonton Alternate VP:
Lola Barrett (CUPE 41)

Red Deer Alternate VP:
Jocelyn Davidson (CUPE 417)

Calgary Alternate VP:
Kevin Galley (CUPE 37)

Lethbridge Alternate VP:
Loren Johnson (CUPE 408)

Young Worker VP:
Scott Cush (CUPE 37)

D'Arcy says goodbye – outgoing President thanks delegates, takes final shots at Conservatives

By Lou Arab, CUPE Alberta



EDMONTON – Departing CUPE Alberta President D'Arcy Lanovaz took a moment of his final convention address to thank everyone who serves CUPE in some capacity.

“We are a strong union because of all the people who do this in their spare time,” said Lanovaz. “The people who give up their weekends, their evenings, coffee breaks, and lunch hours, you are the people who make CUPE strong. I thank you.”

As he turned the position over to successor Dennis Mol, Lanovaz took several swipes at the Alberta Conservative government – pointing out how badly paramedics and health care workers are being treated.

“We will not stand for this. Premier

Stelmach, Minister Liepert – we will fight you every step of the way.”

Lanovaz urged delegates to work hard to defeat the provincial Conservatives, whom he said are doing damage to the economy, schools and health care.

“Do you know why there are such long line ups at hospital emergency rooms?” asked Lanovaz. “It’s because hospital beds are filled with seniors who need long-term-care and can’t get a bed until another senior passes away.”

“We can’t be defeatist; we’ve been governed by Conservatives for too long. Even the Roman Empire and the Soviet Union fell. We are due for a change.”

Medicine Hat Security Guards form a union

MEDICINE HAT – Security Guards employed by G4S Security systems have voted to join the Canadian Union of Public Employees. The 60 employees are believed to be the first group of security guards in G4S to form a union.

The employees provide security services to the Medicine Hat Hospital, College, as well as other locations. They are also responsible for by-law enforcement for the City of Medicine Hat.

CUPE Alberta President Dennis Mol said employees came to the union with complaints of unfair treatment by their employer.

“With women earning a dollar an hour less than men doing the same job, and some employees getting preferential treatment by managers, it’s not a surprise these workers chose CUPE” said Mol.

This was the second attempt by the employees to form a union in under a year.

Newsletter contest winner



EDMONTON – The Union Leader is the name chosen by CUPE Alberta convention delegates. The name was entered by CUPE 30 member Sandy McAlear, who worked on it with her eight year old daughter Hunter. Hunter, who attended a Local 30 meeting with her Mom, was encouraged to enter the contest by National Representative Alf Hyciw.

Email list for education workers

Do you work in Alberta’s public education system? Have a few issues to get off your chest? Or maybe you just want to connect with other school board workers and see if the grass is any greener in other districts. CUPE Alberta has an email list for school board workers, sign up a <http://lists.cupe.ca/mailman/listinfo/alberta-schoolboards>

Alberta cancels privatized high school plans

By Karin Jordan, CUPE National

Alberta will pay for four new high schools publicly, cancelling privatized financing and upkeep plans.

The government says it has “refined” its model to deliver new schools, “in response to the economic climate.”

The global credit crunch is behind the decision, according to a government spokesperson, who told the media, “proponents would have trouble obtaining financing for a full 14-school P3 bundle.” The private financier involved in a first wave of 19 P3 schools in the province is on shaky financial footing.

Ten elementary and middle schools

will still be built with private financing and major maintenance – a move that costs twice the price of public borrowing and upkeep.

The four high schools will be publicly financed, and designed and built by the private sector – the traditional way of building public facilities and infrastructure.

Alberta’s infrastructure minister told the media the public approach was a “far better way” to meet the “special needs for programming”. The chair of the Calgary Board of Education agreed, saying the school was on “a particularly challenging site that required a really specific design.”

The comments underscore a significant problem with Alberta’s school plans.

The province has argued privatization will save money by using a standard building design for all the schools. But this cookie cutter approach leads to inflexible facilities that can’t meet neighbourhood and community needs.

New elementary schools in Calgary can’t plan for child care facilities, under the restrictions of the private contract. Calgary parents have also criticized the one-size-fits-all approach for not saying it doesn’t mesh with recommended class sizes.

Government attacks Paramedics, takes away choice from health care workers

By Lou Arab, CUPE Alberta



EDMONTON – Over 2,800 health care workers lost the right to be represented by the union of their choice after Employment Minister Hector Goudreau announced details of how health care restructuring will impact members of CUPE and the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers' Union (CEP).

After meeting with CUPE officials, Minister Goudreau announced new regulations which force 1,200 CUPE Paramedics, 1,200 CUPE health care workers and 400 CEP members would be merged into existing bargaining units with other unions. CUPE had been asking the government to make arrangements for health care workers to stay with their existing unions.

The 1,600 health care workers will be forced into a massive province wide

bargaining unit of hospital support staff, and represented by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE). As recently as 2005, many of these employees voted by a 2 to 1 margin to remain with CUPE over AUPE.

Speaking at a protest rally in opposition to the move, CUPE National President Paul Moist attacked the provincial government's disregard for the democratic choices of CUPE members.

"In this province, if 100% of employees sign a card to join a union, there has to be a vote," said CUPE National President Paul Moist. "But if you have belonged to a union for decades, and have recently voted to stay with them, your voice is still not heard."

"I've met with Premiers from every province in Canada except Alberta," said Moist. "But while Ed Stelmach refuses to sit down and meet, his government is making decisions that take democratic rights away from our members."

Paramedics will be moved into a bargaining unit of health care professionals, mainly made up of non-emergency personnel such as x-ray techs, nutritionists, and massage and speech therapists.

Rick Fraser, President of the Calgary Paramedics, explained that the move was really an attack on the pension plans of his profession.

"It took a long time, but paramedics recently won a pension plan that treats us like firefighters and police,

allowing us to retire early," said Fraser. "We've been told repeatedly by government authorities that when the transfer happens, we will no longer be emergency personnel, but rather health care workers. In other words, our pension is gutted."

"This is an attack on Paramedics and health care workers," said CUPE Alberta President Dennis Mol. "Our members are being denied hard fought rights because of political agendas of the Stelmach government."

Mol said CUPE would fight the move in court. "The Conservatives don't have the ability to take away the rights of our members," said Mol. "It may take a while, but we intend to ensure that these decisions are reversed."

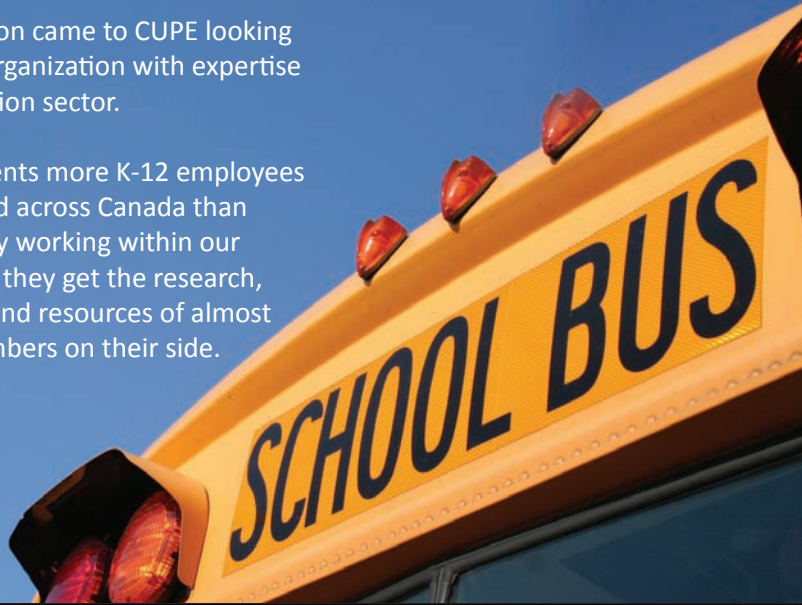


School bus drivers join CUPE

PEACE RIVER – A staff association representing 143 bus drivers in the Peace View School Division have voted to join CUPE. Members of the association voted 82% in favour of joining the national union.

The association came to CUPE looking for a larger organization with expertise in the education sector.

CUPE represents more K-12 employees in Alberta and across Canada than any union. By working within our organization, they get the research, experience, and resources of almost 600,000 members on their side.



The United Leader

The United Leader is produced by the CUPE Alberta Newsletter committee:

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Upcoming events

August 3rd -7th AFL Kids Camp
Oct 5th Communities Day
Oct 5-9th CUPE National Convention
Trades and Maintenance Conference – Nov 27th – 29th

For more information and other events, visit www.alberta.cupe.ca

Alberta Aboriginal Council

Oki, Tansi, bonjou – these are greetings you might hear from members of CUPE Alberta's Aboriginal council. Since its creation, the Council has had a busy first year, and is looking forward to doing even more.

Council members include Senator Gloria Lepine (Local 3550), Sherrie-Lee Balon (Local 8), Doreen Moisan (Local 1158), Bev Renaud (Local 38) and Rick Poole (Local 838) with Len Fagen as the CUPE staff representative.

The council hopes to increase awareness of the Aboriginal cultures

through support for Aboriginal workers, work to increase Aboriginal representation in the work force, and Aboriginal awareness training – including a new workshop being presented during the week long school in Alberta.

The Council has developed a website, www.albertaaboriginal.cupe.ca, providing terms of reference, current events, the latest aboriginal news, and the opportunity for members to self identify.

On the provincial front, the Council issued a press release condemning

Provincial and Federal governments for their failure to act on the deplorable conditions within Aboriginal communities regarding the rights to clean safe potable water.

The Council is supporting the Highway of Tears campaign and the Walk for Justice. Please check their website for more information. www.highwayoftears.ca

The committee has two vacancies and is actively seeking out new members. They welcome input from all Aboriginal members and allies.



Prairie School for union women includes the young and old alike

Madyson Carr is the daughter of a CUPE 3550 member Sally Carr. Last year, Madyson attended the Prairie School for Union women with her mom, and wrote the following report.

Hi, my name is Madyson Carr, I am 11 years old and live in Edmonton, Alberta. On June 15, 2008 I went to my first union event with my mom for 5 days. We drove to Lake Waskesiu in Saskatchewan to attend Prairie School for Union Women.

One of my favorite things was to swim in the lake. It was more beautiful than the pictures on the postcard! One day I went swimming all day and only got out to eat my dinner. I swam until 8:30 that night! It was too cold for my mom, but all the kids loved it! I also saw lots of wildlife like owls, chipmunks and one day even a deer walked through the park.

While my mom was in class I got to hang with 12 other kids and we had a blast. We went hiking, took nature walks, visited a museum, and went kayaking and canoeing. When it was time to go home I told my mom I didn't want to leave and suggested we buy a summer home there. I really wanted to move there and live there all year but didn't think she would agree to that. Yeh, it was definitely a sweet time. I would say if you are a kid and your mom asks you to go with her, you should, because you will have a sweet time like I did.

I think my mom enjoyed herself as much as I did. She hung out with the ladies from her class talking about solidarity and stuff, (I learned solidarity means a strong unity among the people you work with to reach goals and especially fairness for all). I liked the idea of everyone being treated



fairly and with respect. I heard my mom say she would love to attend every year if she could. So I would say to all women reading this please go, you'll be glad you did. You may

even say it was sweet!

For more information on the Prairie School for Union Women, visit www.sfl.sk.ca