

BOARD REPORTS

NIAGARA FALLS, 2008

Sid Ryan

President CUPE Ontario

Dear CUPE Sisters and Brothers:

I want to begin by recognizing the tireless work of staff at the Ontario Division. Our staff includes brother Antoni Shelton and sisters Maureen Giuliani, Eileen Condon, Kerry Davenport, Valerie Dugale, Susan Jeffrey, Shadi Golic, Marta Posada, Jacqueline Newton, and Patricia Vanderputt. Sister Judy Wilkings has retired recently after years of dedicated work both with CUPE Ontario and the regional office. Sister Angela Kirby is on long term disability. We miss her presence. The commitment and dedication of our entire staff is truly an inspiration. I also want to thank the members that assisted our staff on a part-time basis: Patti Chapman, Janet McIvor, Kelly Belbin, and Stephanie Malinsky. My appreciation extends to our Regional Director, Randy Millage, for his leadership and all the directors, staff representatives and administrative staff that have supported members and locals in communities and through our various division committees. Many of our committees have had an extremely productive past 12 months and much of this can be attributed to the support of regional staff.

In communities across this province, our achievements have come as a result of CUPE Ontario working effectively with local unions, CUPE councils, sectoral committees, OCHU, CUPE staff and in many cases community coalitions. Together we are building the profile of our union and defending CUPE contracts against attacks from employers looking for concessions. It was those members and locals in Ontario since our last convention that hit the bricks to defend their collective agreements and make some real gains that made the largest sacrifices: locals 2424, Carlton University and 855, City of Kawartha Lakes.

The recent provincial elections in Ontario resulted in a majority liberal government. With their sizable majority, the political pundits are predicting four years of sluggish and unimaginative government – unless pressured. In the recent budget, corporations received a \$750 million tax cut while the poor got \$167 million and barely the rate of inflation for social assistance benefits. Minimum wage workers will still need to wait to 2010 to get a hand out of poverty. We expect the liberals will play it safe and not embark on bold visionary policy directions; however, we know they will respond on an issue-by-issue basis. Under the liberals, we have had some tremendous successes in areas such as home care, long-term care, association for community living; school board coordinated bargaining and fighting-off energy and health care privatization.

CUPE Members are Mobilized

I am excited by the mobilization of CUPE locals across the province in defense of public services. Recent examples of this mobilization are:

Competitive Bidding:

Two weeks after CUPE supported a massive mobilization in Hamilton, the Liberals placed a freeze on the competitive bidding process for home care contracts across the province.

Competitive bidding is a low-wage strategy in the provision of home health care through the Community Care Access Centres. It is a policy intended to drive down the wages of personal support workers at the expense of the workers, their non-profit employers and their communities. In fact, the Ministry of Health's own report on the sector found that home care workers in one city had lost their jobs 3 times to competitive bidding and that 57 per cent of home care workers surveyed had changed jobs in the past 12 months. Average wages for personal support workers were approximately \$12 an hour, about \$5 an hour less than what they would earn in a hospital. The government intends that only 10% of personal support workers will have regular full-time jobs and up to 70% will have only "casual" status.

We have set up a hotline at the OCHU office for home care workers and clients to bring forward their experiences with the current state of underfunding in home care. This is intended to result in press conferences in June.

Long-Term Care:

Our MPP lobbies, information pickets, radio ads, letter writing and petition signing for the 3.5 hrs. campaign put the issue of standards for seniors in front of the public and Queen's Park. We wrestled from the Liberals during the Bill 140 hearings the promise to write a minimum standard of care into the regulations. As a direct result of our constant pressure around levels of care for seniors, in the recent budget 4,300 additional nurses and personal support workers was announced.

One of the few times that Health Minister, George Smitherman, was portrayed negatively in the media was his heartless response to a labour sponsored press conference where we underscored that LTC operators are rationing 'diapers' for seniors-with a policy of 75% full before the product can be changed. Smitherman offering to wear an adult diaper was not the response the public expected from a minister. We are still fighting for government funding tied to standard of care. Ontario remains one of the few provinces without such a policy.

Hospitals:

Working with OCHU we have continued to press the Liberals on the implementation of LHINS. In communities like Ajax/Pickering, Uxbridge, Hamilton, Kingston, Toronto and North Bay, CUPE and OCHU have mobilized communities to stop the mergers that would result in the loss of jobs and local services.

I recently participated with the members of Rouge Valley Health system in mobilizing to save services at the Ajax/Pickering site. The demonstration was extremely successful in mobilizing our members and the community-at-large to defend their regional health services.

The Liberals announced \$661 million in the last budget for Ontario hospitals which is less than inflation. Seventy-five Ontario hospitals are in deficit. But the budget ignored that reality. Without adequate funding, hospitals will cut both staff and programs. Those who will be hurt directly are the sick and the elderly. The Liberals have already moved to centralize control of hospitals, now they are gutting them while taking credit for the smallest improvements.

Fixing the Flawed Funding Formula:

We have finally brought the Liberals to a central table to fix the funding for support staff workers in the Ontario education system. The current central bargaining table is positioned to begin fixing the funding formula that has worked against our members since the Harris years. We achieved this table because we have successfully used a strategy that coordinated pressure at

the bargaining table, strikes, lobbying at Queen's Park/Support Workers Advisory Group and provincial elections with our political goal: fixing the funding formula.

The key items that are on the table were approved at a leadership meeting for all CUPE school board locals and with this mandate the OSBCC, acting as a reference group, and the bargaining team under the leadership of Frank Ventresca (and now Terri Preston) have tabled our issues and we are expecting a breakthrough in several key areas such as benefits in the sector. The key issues are: violence in the workplace; 7 hour – EA work day; adequate staffing levels; supervision of students; instructional issues; professional development/training; roles and responsibilities of EAs; wages and benefits; commitment to term, common expiry date; green school initiatives.

Frank Ventresca and OSBCC deserve recognition for the work that was done to mobilize this sector and keep the pressure on the liberals throughout the last election.

It was also CUPE locals that mobilized their members and refused to accept concessions during bargaining. I'm referring to: Local 218 – Durham, Local 4222 Thames Valley (London Ontario) Local 4400 – Toronto, Local 1483 and 2026 – Dufferin Peel, Local 4155 Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'est ontarien, and Local 1176 Bluewater.

Social Services:

Again, through coordinating bargaining and making the connection to political pressure, the Associations for Community Living have made significant gains. The Liberals, after intense lobbying, have made the largest government investment in the Association for Community Living sector in years. Last Spring the Liberals announced \$200 million in funding for developmental services. Children's Aid locals also continue to move forward with coordinated bargaining. Locals with 2008 expiry dates have set priorities such as wages; workload; legal liability; use of personal vehicles; health and safety and professional fees and affiliations. The Child Care activists and locals are having continued success with the Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. From its modest beginnings now over 180 municipalities issued proclamations in recognition of child care workers. However, women working in child care centres, small community-based agencies, and women's shelters are being forced to work at discriminatory wages. In 2005 the Government stopped the designated pay equity funding, even though the pay gaps identified in the Act's pay equity plans have not yet been closed. \$369 million is owing to about 100,000 hard working women for delivering public services in predominantly female workplaces in 2006 and 2007. A further \$77.6 million is owed in 2008 and about \$1.32 billion from 2008-2011. Effective measures to close the gender pay gap should be a key part of the government's poverty reduction strategy.

The Liberals in 2006 gave \$1.49/hour to improve PSW wages and working conditions in home care but many employers did not use the \$1.49 to benefit PSWs directly. Community agencies, PSWs and Local 4308 have lobbied health minister Smitherman and now there will be a full review to determine where the funding went and how it was spent; and funds in the April 2008 budget that will be mandated to go directly to increase the pay of PSWs.

Universities:

CUPE Ontario's University Workers Coordinating Committee, seeing the gains made by the School Board Sector and ACLs are now working with CUPE Ontario to begin moving towards greater sector coordination. The sector has taken a significant step forward in lining-up common expiry dates.

CUPE Ontario has continued to provide resources and support to protest the Liberal decision to lift the freeze on tuition fees, alongside the Canadian Federation of Students. CUPE Ontario has also committed to helping CUPE members and other activists recently arrested and charged on the U of T campus for peacefully protesting against the high tuition fees.

Coming out of the OUWCC conference, there are three priority areas for coordination: a provincial, centralized communications web-based system that would include information on the best collective agreement provisions in the sector; a significant and major campaign on privatization, including targeting the private health insurance scheme that is forced on international students; an initiative to educate and mobilize members across the sector. Coordination can also lead to: common collective agreement language on employment equity; common benefits, improved pensions better and health and safety provisions against harassment.

There was also a resolution at the OUWCC conference to have the first CUPE Ontario conference for all members belonging to a trade across our sectors. This was a resolution whose time has come. Members in the trades regardless of what sector they originate share a number of important key issues, like apprenticeship and training. We have already moved on this resolution and the first annual CUPE Ontario Trades conference is scheduled for November 27-29, 2008 in Toronto.

Municipalities:

Ontario municipalities face an ongoing financial crunch. Cities pay at least \$3 billion per year to cover downloaded services, yet the Liberals refuses to pay bills for such services. These conditions have spawned a growing trend among municipalities to examine and in some cases adopt P3s to build community facilities ranging from arenas and sports facilities, libraries, ambulance headquarters and water and sewage treatment systems.

In November 2007, Harper announced a \$1.25 billion "Building Canada Infrastructure Fund" promoting P3s. Harper has created a P3 Secretariat to promote P3 infrastructure projects. June 2008, McGuinty will receive a report from the *Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Services Review* Panel which we expect will recommend P3s/privatization to fix the municipal financial crunch. Ontario 2008 budget earmarked a one-time extra \$1-billion for infrastructure dollars for roads, bridges, public transit, and repairs to affordable housing. This one-time fund leaves municipalities with no consistency and ability to strategic plan.

Based on the experience of working with L. 1115 in Welland, CUPE Ontario and OMECC are spearheading a province-wide Anti-P3 campaign that will include an "Early Warning System" (hinged on communications and lobbying council) and P3 educationals across the province. Locals will have a template for action when local councils begin entertaining P3s as a means to address their fiscal crunch. Currently we are working with Locals and the Ontario Electricity Coalition to defend against the constant pressure to contract-out work and sell-off the cities ownership of hydro-especially in Toronto and Mississauga. Funding for this campaign will be accessed through the anti-privatization campaign fund announced by CUPE national at their convention.

OMERS Lawsuit & Administrative Changes

One of the highest paid bureaucrats in all of Ontario in 2007 was OMERS President and CEO, Paul Haggis earning \$2.24 million. Haggis played a mischievous role during the Borealis affair and the Bill 206 debacle – he suddenly departed March 2007.

CUPE Ontario was awarded costs in the amount of \$210,000 in relation to the Borealis lawsuit. Defendants to the lawsuit brought numerous motions to dismiss and then to limit the scope of the CUPE Ontario lawsuit; these motions failed and we won costs. Importantly, along with the

real estate Vice President, Michael Latimer, Ian Collier and Michael Nobrega (current OMERS President and CEO) remain on the lawsuit.

Now, after constant legal back and forth, OMERS and CUPE Ontario have agreed to a mediated process as an alternative to the lawsuit. A mediator will engage in a fact finding exercise and all parties will be bound by the mediator's findings of fact. Finally, we are going to get access to the documents we have wanted all along.

CUPE Ontario has fought and won the right of pension plan members to hold the staff and directors that administer their pension to account.

CUPE Ontario has mounted a campaign to end the discrimination at OMERS against paramedics.

Unlike Police and Fire, Paramedics are not allowed to retire at 60 years of age with a full pension. The campaign is supported by SEIU, OPSEU, CAW and CUPE Ontario. This campaign centers on lobbying Mayors and councilors.

The first government review of Bill 206 will happen following the filing of the 2007 plan valuation in September, 2008. CUPE Ontario has to get ready for the review by developing a campaign that includes communication, and information on how Bill 206 has discriminated against CUPE workers.

Equality:

As a province I am very proud that within CUPE, Ontario was the first division to create equity seats on the executive board. This year is the 10th anniversary of this decision. Both the CUPE Ontario Aboriginal and Visible Minority executive board members have been attending sectoral conferences and outreaching to members. We are taking a resolution forward to expand the table officers to include our equity board members.

CUPE Ontario recently sponsored an equity retreat – that provided a positive space for equity-seeking committees of CUPE Ontario to come together over several days to look at issues of inter-sectionality and action planning. By all reports the retreat was a success. I've witnessed a real high level of activism among CUPE Ontario's equality committees; in many respects we are leading the rest of the labour movement on key human rights and international solidarity issues. I want to thank all the CUPE members and staff involved with moving Equity forward in our union in Ontario, especially Yolanda McClean and Joanne Webb our equality executive board members. They have both worked very hard over the past 12 months.

Concerning Africentric schools in Toronto, CUPE Ontario took a strong position early and advocated for local and provincial support for an alternative school to help address issues identified by the African-Canadian community as important to the success of students from their community. CUPE Ontario also worked with the Steelworkers and the OFL to ensure labour took a position on the Africentric school in support of the community. CUPE activists attended numerous community and labour forums to build understanding about the Africentric school proposal.

International Solidarity:

CUPE Ontario has also been on the forefront advocating for the federal government to rescind its position on the Durban II World Anti-Racism conference. Harper took a controversial decision to boycott the Durban II conference. For many human rights activists in Ontario and across the country this was a decision that was not only wrong but done without adequate

consultation. CUPE Ontario wrote a strongly worded letter to Prime Minister Harper on this matter.

CUPE Ontario has continued to support the Health Care Workers' Exchange. What started off in Niagara Falls as an international solidarity exchange among a small group of unions from Canada and Latin America has grown to a group that is currently at 15 and growing. This exchange continues to build our relationship with partners in the Americas to oppose the privatization of health care in all its forms. Contracting out and privatization is a real threat to the Canadian health care system, but we can learn from the campaigns and battles waged in many countries to the south.

Resolution 50 remains an important part of our international solidarity work. Calling for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until they fully comply with international law has picked up steam in Canada and internationally. Recently CUPW passed a BDS resolution at their national convention. The Quebec unions have done the same as well as the United Church of Canada.

Working with the National Union

CUPE National, in response to one of the key issues that need addressing from Ontario's perspective, established a Fight-Back Fund. The fund will provide financial help to members who face extraordinary attacks on their rights by governments and employers.

The Fight-Back Fund will be established with an investment of \$2.5 million from the General Fund, 2007 surplus – and will be replenished as needed. The fund will ultimately be protected in the National Constitution, which will require endorsement at the 2009 National Convention. Ironically, it could be Saskatchewan that first accesses the Fight-Back Fund to defend their contracts against a government intent on stripping away their right-to-strike.

By addressing one of the main concerns that led to the national convention walkout, we have paved the way for dealing with other outstanding issues. Since the leadership meeting in December, CUPE Ontario's national executive board members have been working hard to put Ontario's issues in front of the national officers and the entire national executive board. After several meetings with the national officers including their visit to the last CUPE Ontario executive board meeting, we began to find common ground that resulted in approval at the NEB of the Fight-Back Fund.

Ontario has met with the national officers recently to begin working on the other outstanding issues, and I'm glad to report that there is progress.

Union Leaders in Ontario working to-gether cooperatively

Beginning at the 2007 OFL convention in Toronto, private and public sector unions in Ontario have entered a new phase of cooperation.

On February 21, 2008 a historic meeting of the major union leaders in Ontario representing (approx. 800,000) workers in the province took place at OPSEU's head office in Toronto. Leaders present vowed to increase the impact of unionism on the future of Canada.

Union leaders at the meeting want to move beyond the politics that has divided labour for much too long. They called for unity and for public and private sector leaders to map out a strategy for the future of the labour movement.

The meeting was one of a series leading up to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in May, 2008.

The leaders struck a broad consensus that the CLC must increase its role in creating a vision for Canadian workers and pushing for more active government helping the ailing manufacturing sector, enhancing public services, fighting poverty and bringing an end to inter-union "raiding" of existing members.

A Future of Economic Uncertainty

As we ponder the year ahead, it is hard not to consider the elections happening in the U.S. The U.S. is a superpower that is ailing economically and pulling other countries down in the financial vortex called the "sub-prime" meltdown. For CUPE, we will be faced with governments municipally and provincially that will seek to respond to economic hardship by seeking concessions from workers, further privatization and program cuts.

As we have seen very glaringly in 2007, our best inoculation against the attacks from employers is better coordinated bargaining. Failing to move towards greater coordination of our bargaining is at our own peril. But the coordination needs to be linked to a focused Queen's Park lobby agenda. This was the case with our school board sector, and seeing the results they moved at their conference to investigate the establishment of an OCHU like structure for the education sector.

It is this coordination of purpose and action that will also have the most impact if we are going to finally achieve, for example, a minimum of \$18 per hr for workers by 2010 and pensions for all our workers.

Denying the Right to Strike

Denying the right-to-strike, either through back-to-work legislation or permanently by essential service designation is not a solution to labour disputes. A real solution would be to fund public services adequately.

The City of Toronto and the province should anticipate province-wide labour unrest if there is a move to designate TTC workers as an essential service. CUPE Ontario will not stand by and watch the right-to-strike be taken away from any workers.

Mayor Miller and Toronto Councillors better think long and hard about asking the province to take away the right-to-strike from public sector workers. We successfully mobilized labour throughout the province when Mike Harris tried to suspend the right-to-strike during amalgamation, and we are poised to do that again. The right-to-strike is a fundamental right in any democracy. If you take that right away, workers are little more than indentured servants. We are not prepared to allow that to happen to any workers in Ontario's public or private sectors.

In memoriam

I want to recognize all those members (active and retired) and staff that transitioned in 2007. Our greatest testament to their work and dedication is to renew our pledge to defending the rights of all workers.

Michael Hurley
First Vice-president

Working to resolve the issues that led Ontario to walk out of the national convention

I was very proud to be a member of CUPE Ontario when we left the national convention floor in unity and solidarity, frustrated by the refusal of the national union to address issues of major significance for our membership.

Over the last several months CUPE Ontario's Table officers have been involved in negotiations with the national officers to try to resolve these issues.

In March 2008 the CUPE National Executive Board created a new \$2.5 million Fightback Fund, to support political strikes.

We have also made progress on the other issues approved by the delegates to the December 15 emergency all-presidents' meeting.

On representation at the national level there is agreement that CUPE's National Executive Committee will try to find a consensus prior to the 2009 national convention. In the meantime there is agreement to operate more consensually on significant matters for Ontario.

On staffing, there is acknowledgement that Ontario is under-staffed relative to the other regions. There is not yet agreement on the numbers of staff that should be added to correct this or on the timeline for correcting this.

On campaign funding, there is agreement that regional funding allocations should be proportionate to numbers of members.

On equality issues there is agreement that the diversity vice-president will be involved in processes to address employment equity in staff hiring.

On the implementation of national policy there is agreement to support CUPE Ontario to implement national policy in our region.

There is much work yet to be done to resolve these issues. But I am pleased with the progress that we have made to date.

I would like to thank the CUPE Ontario membership for your solidarity.

The overwhelming majority of our delegates walked out in unity and as a result we have been able to begin to resolve some significant issues.

Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agreement In Doubt

CUPE, ONA, CAW, SEIU and OPSEU met in 2007 with the Ministries of Health and Labour and with employers from the hospital, long-term care and community sectors to deal with restructuring and its impact on the workforce.

These talks followed commitments made by George Smitherman when the Local Health Integration Networks were established in 2005.

The unions reached agreement on a common position on labour adjustment. This proposal was presented to and approved by a conference of CUPE's health and social services sectors in February 2007.

The other unions moved to CUPE's position that an agreement could not compromise collective agreement or legislated rights. They accepted that a provincial agreement would need to be minimalist and that detail would need to be worked out at a local level. With our union's local autonomy, no other approach could work for us.

In August 2007 the Ministry of Health set a deadline for us to reach agreement with employers. We met that deadline.

The agreement reached between employers and unions provides for an incentive payment of up to 52 weeks pay for workers who transfer to another employer. The agreement also provides long-term care sector and homecare sector employees 52 weeks' severance pay.

After the provincial election the Ministry of Health criticized the agreement, that it captures more restructuring than simply those projects or transfers ordered by the LHINs and that it is too generous.

I do not believe that the Ministry of Health will fund this agreement. And while it would be great to get our members access to 52 weeks pay to transfer or for severance, it is better to rely on our traditional and effective strategy of opposing restructuring and to exercise our members' legal rights to the maximum.

In the case of the Eastern Ontario Regional Laboratory, a horribly flawed project that realizes our worst fears about health care restructuring, it is better to oppose the project, rather than to fall into the easy trap of negotiating labour adjustment agreements.

It seems increasingly clear that this government won't fund labour adjustment and that they have broken the promise they made in the Bill 36 process to enter into a fair labour adjustment process with their healthcare workforce.

Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan

I attended several meetings of the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) Settlers in 2007. The Settlers are the parties that established HOOPP as a jointly trustee pension plan: CUPE, ONA, SEIU and OPSEU & the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA).

The OHA has agreed to ask hospitals to contact all part-time employees to encourage them to join HOOPP.

HOOPP has prepared materials aimed at part-time employees. CUPE, ONA and OPSEU, will campaign this summer to boost part-time participation.

Pushing up part-time enrolment will mean fewer of our members retire into poverty and it will reduce the employers' incentive to convert full-time employment to part-time to save on labour costs.

HOOPP has again confirmed its opposition to P3 investments.

At the request of the unions, HOOPP prepared a study on the impact of healthcare restructuring on the workforce. Concerned about the impact of workforce downsizing in the institutional sector, HOOPP is considering expansion into community health.

HOOPP has lobbied the MOH and the Premier's office about the importance of a good pension plan to workforce stability (the homecare workforce with no pension plan has a turnover rate of over 57% a year).

HOOPP will push this issue in its corporate way, while we push CUPE to organize homecare workers and to drive up wages to make conditions livable for workers and to remove the incentive to move work from institutions into the community to achieve labour cost savings.

CUPE and OPSEU pushed HOOPP to change its position on trustee self-insurance, succeeded and signed an amended Agreement and Declaration of Trust Amendment # 4 in January 2008. The 4 unions have agreed that the position of union co-chair will rotate amongst the 4 unions.

Fighting to Save Healthcare Services

Debby Mink and her membership led a brilliant fight this summer to save womens' reproductive health services at the hospital in Midland. Public meetings with overflow crowds of 500+, demonstrations, petitions all forced the hospital board to retreat, after the Minister of Health was forced to intervene.

Lori Davis and her membership once again successfully mobilized the community of Uxbridge in a very sophisticated campaign, which resulted in the emergency ward at the hospital, which faced a June 07 closure, open and staffed. Huge crowds were the hallmarks of this campaign. Local 1999 president Pam Parks called all of her 1,000 members at home to participate in these protests.

Congratulations to Mike Tracey and the local union executive at St. Joseph's hospital in Hamilton and to Jan Ouzos and the leadership of local 4800 for their great work in mobilizing their community and forcing the Premier to enact a second moratorium on competitive bidding in the homecare sector.

Louis Rodrigues and the executive of local 1974 acted proactively, calling a town hall meeting when their LHIN threatened to cut hospital services at Kingston General hospital in the face of a 17 million dollar deficit. The LHIN came up with funding immediately after the campaign began.

Brian Davis and the executive at Rouge Valley Health system are currently energetically engaged in mobilizing their members and their community to save services at the Ajax Pickering site. All of our members were called at home and 300 came out for a public meeting two weeks ago, attended by over 1,000 people. Friends of Ajax held a very successful demonstration May 3 to protest the threat to services.

In each of these cases we have worked very closely with the Ontario Health Coalition.

Using resources from CUPE we follow a similar pattern of organizing in each community. We call all of our members to participate, we mobilize the community to a meeting where we develop an action plan. We run advertising, provide book-offs, buses and whatever resources the local community needs to make the campaign a success.

The hospital funding outlook is not good, next year the 2.1% budgeted increase is less than inflation. Hospitals are signing accountability agreements that simply postpone decisions about cutting services. LHIN's will put increasing pressure on the hospitals to cut staff and services. Each of these fights demonstrates that communities that defend their healthcare services are successful.

Nippissing Regional Laundry Services

The Board of Nippissing Regional Laundry Services voted April, 2007 to close the 26-employee laundry and move 9 jobs to Sudbury, rather than renovate the laundry at a cost of \$500,000.

North Bay Regional Hospital, which voted to close the laundry has revealed that its P3 project will cost \$1 billion, of which \$500 million is in interest and other payments related to the P3.

When she was lobbied to support keeping the laundry open, Ms. Smith MPP told the local that these kinds of cutbacks were going to happen everywhere. Ms. Smith was only re-elected by 300 votes in last year's provincial election, following our summer campaign.

The Action Plan for LHINs calls for us to fight vigorously every attempt to move services out of our communities. Together with the locals and North Bay CUPE Council, OCHU and CUPE Ontario held demonstrations, won the support of the municipal councils and media, ran two sets of radio ads and held a public meeting May 15 in North Bay. In June 500 hospital and long-term care workers bused to a demonstration in North Bay.

The message we sent is vital: we will fight very hard to save every support workers' job in restructuring. We opposed the North Bay laundry closure with considerable energy. North Bay city council asked the hospitals to reconsider and they did. The motion to close passed this time by a single vote. Most of the laundry workers have now been employed by the area hospitals.

Supply Chain Management

The Ontario government will soon introduce legislation to require broader public sector employers to follow best practices in purchasing and in materials management.

The pilot for the broader public sector is a supply chain initiative called Plexxus. Plexxus is a partnership of GTA hospitals funded by the MOH and Ontario Buys to reduce "back office" costs in purchasing, accounting and payroll and benefit administration.

In its original form, Plexxus planned to take 600 bargaining unit employees transfer them to a single employer, layoff 40% of them and reap huge cost-savings as a result. CUPE, OPSEU and SEIU formed a common front to oppose this plan.

I was at a meeting with one early generation of management where CUPE was offered voluntary recognition of the new workforce if we would agree to let the plans roll out unopposed.

GTA locals are to be congratulated on refusing to enter into labour adjustment negotiations to transfer their materials management membership to Plexxus. Their non-cooperation forced the employers to change their business model.

As a result, no union members transfer employment. 30 non-unionized employees work at a central warehouse, but the on-site materials management employees have remained employees of their respective hospitals.

These supply chain initiatives based on the Plexxus model are now rolling out in each of the 14 LHIN districts.

Eastern Ontario Regional Laboratory

14 hospital laboratories are being combined across Eastern Ontario as part of the Eastern Ontario Regional Laboratory Association (EORLA). As Plexxus is to the supply chain, EORLA is to hospital laboratories – the model for all others.

In a conference call with the leadership of the Champlain LHIN, we were told that most testing would be consolidated at a central laboratory in Ottawa and that a model for EORLA is the Riverside site, which had a fully functioning laboratory and which now has phlebotomy stations and no on-site analysis.

The plan for EORLA is to take laboratory services from 14 hospitals, move a significant part of analysis to Ottawa, move technologists there, downsize the workforce by 10% while spending 1 million dollars more yearly on management and consulting fees, all in a partnership with Gamma Dynacare.

And the best part of this project is that on a 10 year budget of 1.031 billion dollars, these hospitals may save 14 million. Worst case they lose 13 million. CUPE locals across Eastern Ontario are starting a campaign to change the EORLA model. Community meetings were held in May. Every CUPE hospital and affiliated long-term care local member will be called at home to attend their community meeting.

Radio ads pounding the EORLA model aired in May across Eastern Ontario. We hope to push the hospitals through community pressure to change their business model, not to move our members to a new employer and not to enter into a partnership with Gamma Dynacare. EORLA is the model for laboratory reorganization across Ontario. Affecting this model will affect the transfers or consolidations of all other laboratory projects just as HBS/Plexxus set a model for the reorganization of the supply chain.

Long-term care

CUPE Ontario worked hard over the last year in its campaign to introduce standards of care into long-term care.

The Harris government eliminated the 2.25 hours of guaranteed personal care a day that residents received in long-term care facilities.

CUPE and the Ontario Health Coalition have been campaigning to introduce a new standard of 3.5 hours a day of personal care.

While the province promised to introduce a minimum standard of care in the last provincial election campaign, in response to pressure, they have yet to do that. A review by Shirley Sharkey is underway.

In response to Valentine Day protests, the government did include in its budget staffing of an additional 4,300 RNs, RPNs and PSW's in long-term care. This campaign continues.

Homecare

When the Progressive Conservative government cut hospital beds by 5,000 and budgets by \$1.5 billion, the theory was that resources would be there to provide care in the home.

When that care did not materialize, managers of homecare agencies complained loudly that they did not have enough resources to provide the care with all of the patient's discharged early from hospital.

The Progressive Conservatives responded by taking over all of the boards and put in their own administrators.

Suddenly there was silence from the homecare sector, whereas previously there had been demands for additional staffing and funding.

Then the province introduced the competitive bidding model, with the community care access centres tendering for and buying homecare services.

Bidding for the contracts to deliver work were the not-for-profits like VON and for-profit corporations like AllCare and ComCare.

The corporations were not unionized.

The not-for-profits were organized, had contracts and higher costs.

The not-for-profits could not compete in the new environment.

As a result organizations like the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Visiting Homemakers Hamilton lost the contracts to provide services.

Thousand of workers lost their jobs and benefits.

Unions agreed to wage and benefit concessions to help their employers to compete for work.

Not-for-profit organizations used to deliver the great majority of homecare in Ontario. Now corporations deliver the majority. In the Champlain LHIN, for example, 1,100,000 hours of homecare are delivered by for-profits and 560,000 by not for profits.

Wages for homecare workers haven't lifted from \$12.00 an hour in 10 years. The province announced an increase of \$1.49 an hour in 2006/07, but in fact most of that money has been held back by agencies for training and other costs and the raise has not made its way to the workforce.

Most workers do not work more than 20 hours a week.

If they worked more than 20 hours a week they would have to paid benefits.

They don't have pensions.

They don't even get paid travel time if they drive an hour to and an hour from a rural client.

This wage ghetto is the vacuum sucking work from the institutional health sectors.

For people who receive homecare , the most basic supports at home have been withdrawn. Food preparation, laundry, housekeeping services used to be provided and is no longer. The care that is provided is minimal and focused on bathing and changing dressings and giving meds.

We are trying to change that.

The Ontario Health Coalition and CUPE Ontario have been very active in campaigning for the Liberals to end competitive bidding.

CUPE and the OHC has held a number of community meetings in March and April, attacking competitive bidding in homecare.

We have set up a hotline at the OCHU office for people who receive homecare to call in and we hope to bring those people forward in community media conferences in June.

The key to ending competitive bidding in this sector will be to never give up and to keep pounding away at the government until they do the right thing.

And so we shall.

P3 Hospitals

Natalie Mehra and the Ontario Health Coalition have done an outstanding job of organizing resistance to the P3 program of this government.

The OHC's community referendum strategy has allowed us to challenge the Liberal's policies at a very deep level in communities and made MPPs like Niagara's Kim Craitor call on his own government to review its policy.

Brampton (William Osler) and Ottawa (Royal Ottawa) were long-term contracts (30 years for William Osler, 66 for the Royal Ottawa) with all of the support services transferring. They were privately owned, financed, designed, built and operated.

After multiple community referendums against the P3 hospitals, with over 95% voting against P3's in the same or greater numbers that vote in municipal elections, the government may be changing it's course.

The new P3 announcements are privately owned, financed, designed, built and maintained. Only "hard maintenance" of the new buildings will transfer to the owners. The remaining support services will not be part of these contracts.

The fact that, unlike in Britain (where all of the services are privatized in P3 hospitals) we have managed to push this government back from the support services is a victory.

In 2007 the courts awarded to the unions disclosure of much of the secret contract for the William Osler Health Centre. That information is being analyzed now and will be used as we continue the battle against new P3 projects like Salvation Army Grace and Bridgepoint in Toronto over the coming months.

Thank you

It is a real privilege to be in a position of leadership in such a dynamic organization. Thank you for the last two years.

Yours in solidarity,

Candace Rennick
2nd Vice President

Sisters and Brothers, I must start by saying that it has been a great honour to serve as your 2nd Vice President over the past 2 years. It is hard to believe that 2 years has gone by already. I am more experienced now and have more of an understanding of our issues than ever. I thank you for selecting me to be your representative over the past 2 years.

Planning & Priorities

As a CUPE Ontario Vice President I participate in the P&P meetings. These meetings are an opportunity for elected officers and senior staff to come together to work to implement the priorities and mandate of our members. We all know that CUPE works best when staff and members work collectively on shared priorities for the union. I would be remiss however if I did

not share my concerns about the functioning of this group. Everyone agrees this body is vital to moving forward work in our union – yet – as I write this report (March 30, 2008), the P&P has not met once this year. I truly believe in order to ensure we are all working together and moving forward this group needs to nail down scheduled meetings and stick to them.

Provincial Elections:

CUPE Ontario once again played a critical role in last year's Provincial Elections. On the downside – we elected a majority government, but on the upside, our members were engaged like never before. Actively working on campaigns as workers and volunteers and an unprecedented number of CUPE members and staff offered themselves as candidates. The election campaign provided an opportunity to raise the issues that are important to CUPE members and the communities we live in and service.

During the campaign I had the pleasure of coordinating some of our Provincial activities including our mobile exhibit which traveled the Province highlighting that in many respects, Dalton McGuinty and John Tory were two sides of the same coin on, not all, but many policy issues.

I was also actively involved in the campaign of the NDP candidate in my riding, Dave Nickle. I spent Election Day working on Brother Sid's campaign pulling the vote. While no CUPE members were elected – they really did us proud and did a great job carrying the banner for CUPE and Public Services.

National Women's Task Force:

The work of the NWTF came to an end with a report to the National Convention in October. While the results on structural changes were not as many of had hoped – it is important to note that the passing of the 3 constitutional amendments on structure in no way defined the success of this massive undertaking. The NWTF moved our union forward on a number of fronts.

We elected 100% more women in '07 than we did in '05. Women on the board went from 3 to 6.

We passed several resolutions including a code of conduct policy; a mentoring program; a bargaining conference for women; a commitment to move towards more coordination of our bargaining in each sector. Many great things came out of the work of the NWTF. These are the true building blocks that will lead to an increase in participation from sisters in our union. We have a lot of work to do to ensure these recommendations come to life in our Province and to ensure that sisters in all of their diversity are reflected in our union.

I want to thank everyone that I worked with through this work. I met some pretty strong amazing sisters and brothers – many of them will be friends for life, I'm sure.

Strike Fund & National Issues

As your Regional Vice President on the National Executive Board I have been involved in several discussions post the National Convention walk out. This was a difficult time for many in our union. Nobody felt good about that walk out. I am pleased to report that after several discussions with the national officers and lengthy discussions with the national Executive Board – we have an interim solution to the Strike Fund Question. There was a strong feeling that convention spoke on the question of access to the strike fund. That this could not be re-visited until the 2009 national convention. This did not work for CUPE in Ontario as we needed a firm commitment that funds would be there and available should they be required for extraordinary circumstances. The interim solution lies in the creation of a "Fight Back Fund". \$2.5 Million

dollars has been transferred to this fund and is to be used for the sole purpose of defending our members rights, jobs and communities outside of collective bargaining. A commitment has been made to replenish this fund on an as needed basis and most importantly, a commitment has been made to draft a constitutional amendment from the NEB to the 2009 convention to make this interim solution a constitutional solution.

Now that this issue has been temporarily resolved – discussions will be happening in the very near future to start to address some of the other concerns inside of CUPE - Implementation of National Policy; decision making at the NEB; Equality and Resources.

Long Term Care – 3.5 hours

CUPE members in the LTC sector should be very proud of the work that we have done over the past year. From our MPP lobbies; information pickets; radio ads; letter writing and petition signing campaign - we have put the issue of standards for seniors on the agenda like never before. Our 3.5 hour campaign has brought to light a serious issue that is only getting worse – the state of Ontario’s Nursing Homes.

While we should all feel good about what we have accomplished – we must acknowledge that we don’t have our standard yet! Despite the fact that the government promised this through regulations attached to bill 140 – we are still waiting.

Rather than introducing the standard through regulation – the government decided to engage in another round of consultations led by Shirley Sharkey. The worst part – it is not even clear that Sharkey has a mandate to make a recommendation on a standard.

Most recently, the government introduced the provincial budget and it was a victory in that they finally recognized that the sector needs more PSWs. They have allocated \$107 million phased in over 3 years to hire 2500 PSWs. The bad part – it doesn’t even come close to what is required to correct the situation for workers and seniors in the province.

So our fight for standards continues and we look forward to having all of your support so that we can win this once and for all.

Long Term Care – Continent Care Policies & Products

Over the past couple of years, LTC operators have turned to a new product designed to allow briefs or ‘diapers’ for seniors to be changed less often. In several homes workers have been directed to not change residents until their briefs have reached a certain indicator mark also known as “the blue line”. This blue line in many cases has to be 75% full before the product can be changed. Homes have started to ration products and extra supplies are kept under lock and key.

The Ontario Federation of Labour and affiliates made a complaint to the Ontario Human Rights Commission asking them to investigate these conditions and we claimed that such policies and practices violate a resident Human Right.

The Human Rights commission responded by saying that they would not investigate the claims because they did not have the time nor the resources. At this point – the OFL and the affiliates are dealing with the Ontario Ombudsperson to have these claims investigated.

I had the pleasure to participate in a Queen's Park Press conference where we dramatized the situation by demonstrating for the media how much liquid one of these products require before it reaches the 75% full line.

Much to our surprise – Smitherman made an announcement in response to our press event claiming that he was going to wear one of these adult diapers to see how bad it really was. What ensued was a firestorm of criticism. The popular Minister of Health for one of the first times was under serious scrutiny for his remarks. Did he completely miss the point? This isn't about how good a product is or isn't! This is about the fact there are not adequate numbers of staff in the system to change the residents when required. And rather than adult diapers being used for outings, special occasions or extreme circumstances – seniors are being forced to become dependent on these products resulting from a lack of staff. Smitherman later apologized and took back his statement – but it really highlighted just how out of touch he really is when it comes to talking about the needs of seniors in our Province.

On this topic – I had the opportunity to participate in a taping of Global's Focus Ontario with Sean Mallen, Queen's Park Correspondence. This was another opportunity to highlight our concerns and the lack of response from government on these questions.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and thank Sister Sue Schmidt for her leadership and Sister Maureen Giuliani for her efforts in coordinating our activities and keeping us focused. And of course, Valerie Dugale and Stella Yeadon for their fabulous communication support.

Strikes & Lock outs

I want to thank and congratulate locals 2424, Carlton University; 1536-02, Hearst Power Distribution LTD; and 855, City of Kawartha Lakes for their efforts during their strikes since the last convention. I had the opportunity to join 2 of the 3 locals on their picket lines and am so proud to be a leader in a union whose members are so strong and united. Thanks to all of the members who walked the picket lines for respect, a fair contract and NO concessions.

Labour Relations Committee

Members of the executive board elected Sister Folk Dawson and me to serve with brothers Hahn and Ryan on the labour relations committee. We will support Brothers Hahn and Ryan in bargaining, labour management meetings; grievance meetings and other staff related issues.

I am proud to report that this was the first time board members have been involved in the bargaining process with our staff and we have achieved a collective agreement that provides significant gains for our workers.

We have started to work on an internal equity program and dates are being considered for to start the process of implementing an employment equity program.

Education Committee

The primary role of the education committee is to work with the education staff representatives in organizing and planning CUPE Ontario schools that are accessible to our members. Many members have expressed the need to broaden the role of this committee, open it up to members outside of the executive and participate in a more meaningful way in course development. I welcome any suggestions folks have to make our educational opportunities as meaningful as possible for our members.

Bev Smale Scholarship Fund

The Bev Smale scholarship fund is really exciting for our union. Members and staff have responded to the call for donations and this fund continues to grow. I have no doubt this fund will outlive all of us and continue on in our union providing opportunities for members for years to come.

This scholarship fund will be a way for CUPE to reach out to and support some of the most disadvantaged members in our union. Members who find it difficult to get access to education, come from small locals and equality seeking groups, have inadequate funds inside the local, etc.

Brother Dave Saunders was a big part of getting the Scholarship fund off the ground. He loved Bev and he loved union education. The day the committee had scheduled to meet to discuss the distribution of scholarships – was the day that Brother Dave passed on into a new life. We felt it was appropriate to honour Dave through a scholarship for a educational that he was very passionate about. The Huntsville Weeklong School. So not only have we renamed the school after Brother Dave – we dedicated a weeklong scholarship in his name. We have also named scholarships for the late Brother Livvy Holder and the later Sister Sylvia Diamond. Dedicated trade union activists that CUPE was lucky to have.

For information on how to apply for a scholarship, visit www.cupe.on.ca or contact CUPE Ontario or the Ontario Union Development staff.

Young Workers Committee

As a board member I have the pleasure of being assigned to the Ontario Young Workers Committee. This year, for the first time, the committee was elected at the Ontario Human Rights Conference as opposed to the Convention. This process seemed to work well and a new committee was elected. I must note that there has been an election for this committee each time since the committee became an official group. I think this highlights the interest from young members to engage and become involved. It offers an entry level opportunity for young activists.

The 2007/2008 committee members are:

Sister Kelly Belbin – co-chair, CUPE Local 2191

Brother Andrew Brett – OFL Youth VP, CUPE Local 1281

Sister Amanda Cassells – National YWG, CUPE Local 2191

Brother Dayn Gray – Co-Chair, CUPE Local 4207

Sister Toni Karner – Human Rights Committee, CUPE Local 4207

Sister Jesse Newell, CUPE Local 3903, was elected to the Women's committee as a young worker representative and the Young Workers Committee has made special effort to ensure there is a link between sister Jesse and the Young Workers Committee.

The committee members are mostly newly elected and have only had one opportunity to spend together creating their work plan for the next year. Their vision includes greater communication structures including a list serve, regular updates on the website, a newsletter and new group on Facebook. Please join the CUPE Young Workers Facebook group!!

The committee is also discussing ways to reach out to high school students through a Know Your Rights module. The idea is to see this module incorporated into high school curriculum. In addition, the committee is looking to start offering the Know Your Rights clinic within CUPE that is geared to young and new members. Members taking this course will learn all about their

collective agreement and rights at work. If you are interested in having this 2 hour clinic offered within your local – please contact the union development department, Young Workers committee or stop by the Equality table in the gallery and sign your local up. Someone will be in touch with you to set this up.

The committee also wants the union to move forward on mentoring program and intern opportunities. You will hear more about these ideas in the coming months.

I encourage you to check out the report that the committee has submitted to convention (which can be found in your kit) and ask that you do what you can to support the work of the committee and do your part in getting young people in your workplace involved.

In Closing, I want to thank all of the members of the executive board for the open and honest debates over the past 2 years. Even the touchy feely sessions that we had which I believe made us stronger. I wish you all the best in future endeavours.

I want to also acknowledge the out-going Regional Director, Brother Roger Neeley and thank him for his years of service to CUPE. I want to congratulate Brother Randy Millage on his appointment to Regional Director. I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

But most importantly, I want to thank all of you, the members, for your dedication and commitment to our union and the struggles that our members face. It is all of us together that makes CUPE the great strong union that we are. It is a great honour to serve on your executive board and I'm very proud to be your 2nd Vice President. I hope you will give me the opportunity to continue in this role – because as I have said from the beginning, my commitment to the members and our struggles will never waiver.

Submitted with Solidarity

Steve Sanderson
3rd Vice President

I was first elected to the Ontario Division Board in 2002. I served as a member at large for the 2002-2004 term, and have now served 2 terms (2004-2006 & 2006-2008) as 3rd Vice-President. The past two years have been difficult and daunting at times but they have been necessary in our struggle for fairness and respect for the members in Ontario. In fact I believe the actions of the Board on behalf of our members will prove beneficial for all CUPE members from coast to coast to coast.

Our members face an intensification in the challenges imposed by their employers and the provincial government. The Ontario Division Board has worked hard at building the structures, campaigns and solidarity that the members have said they need in order to be effective in their struggles. That is not to say that we have accomplished all that our members require. The structural enhancements, the staffing levels and the financial supports necessary to win are not yet what they should be. Though we are still far from maximizing our potential, what is different is that we have established the benchmarks. With the backing and support of the members we continue to build our union piece by piece and step by step, conscious of our present reality and fixing our gaze on the goals we have established. The Board's effectiveness and strength is determined by the solidarity and support of its members.

CUPE Ontario Action Plan

The *Action Plan* was created to capture the commonality in the struggles of all of our jurisdictional groups. The *Action Plan* was developed through broad consultations, debate and review at our last two Conventions. This allows us to build campaigns and political actions specific to the struggles facing our members. The equality agenda as envisioned in the *Action Plan* would also have to become an integral part of all our actions, campaigns and structures.

CUPE Ontario Agenda for Change

The *Agenda for Change* represents a manifesto of change necessary to bring CUPE into the 21st century. It was soundly endorsed by the delegates at the 2007 Ontario Division Convention and provided a blueprint with which to move forward and towards the 2007 National Convention. The elements of *Agenda for Change* were obviously designed for members in Ontario but their application would benefit all CUPE members. CUPE at all levels is in need of renewal. The *Agenda for Change* represents a radical departure from the usual efforts to move forward in a piecemeal fashion on required funding, supports and services for our members. As the saying goes it is 'member driven'.

National Convention 2007

The walkout that occurred at the National Convention was, in my humble opinion, the result of one lost battle after another for membership emancipation and support. The access to the strike fund was the last straw. Resolution 333 only called for a review of the guidelines on accessibility to the Strike Fund. Unfortunately fear tactics about potentially depleting the strike fund distorted the intent of the Resolution and led to its defeat. The result left many of our members feeling disenfranchised, and most of the Ontario delegation and its Board vilified. The Ontario membership was clear and determined in its message to the Ontario Board not to return to the Convention but rather to forge a plan to move forward. The members gave the O.D. Board a mandate to meet and hold discussions with our National Officers but were steadfast that no deal was to be struck without returning to the Ontario membership for its review and endorsement. The actions of both the membership and the Board were very positive signs of the democratic process in action.

December 15th, 2007

Although the leadership of the Board had numerous discussions with our National Officers no proposals for resolution were forthcoming. At a special meeting of the Ontario membership on December 15th a draft action plan was proposed. This was thoroughly debated and after considerable revision based on member input, the plan was endorsed. The result was a synthesis of the *Agenda for Change* blueprint streamlined into five broad categories of concern. These five pillars would represent the position that the leadership of the Board would take in any further discussions with our National Officers to resolve the impasse.

Ontario Board Meeting March 4-5-6, 2008

The National President and National Secretary-Treasurer attended the final day of the Ontario Division Board meeting on March 6th. The Ontario Board members were unanimous in their position that the issue of access to the strike fund was not the only issue. All five pillars needed to be dealt with and none were to be severed from the demands. The National Officers acknowledged the Ontario Board members' position, and progress was made toward resolving the deadlock. The debate that took place was honest, tough and candid but at all times remained respectful. Admittedly the five pillars cannot be achieved overnight but there was, in my estimation, a willingness to grapple with the five issues and work towards their resolution. This was very hard work and extremely demanding. I was proud of the Board members' actions and

to have been a part of this momentous debate. None of this could have been accomplished without the overwhelming support of the Ontario membership and their determination and courage to persevere during these tumultuous times. I want to express my heartfelt respect and appreciation to all of you. As the anthem goes “Solidarity Forever, for the Union Makes Us Strong’.

Let us now continue to move forward with our membership-driven agenda.

Wyman MacKinnon
Executive Board Member at Large

Sisters & Brothers

Welcome to the Ontario Division 45th Annual Convention. It has been an extremely busy past year. The Division is moving forward by leaps and bounds. We have several initiatives on the move. The whole issue as it applies to contracting out and privatization is an extremely hot issue and it is being threatened upon us by all levels of government. I have just been informed that the City of Sault Ste. Marie is threatening to contract out all of their garbage collection. This will demand us to spring into action and put forward all the factual reasons to Sault Ste. Marie council and citizens why outsourcing of this service is wrong.

There are several rounds of collective bargaining on the go in Northern Ontario. We are still holding the line on no concessions in all arenas and the employers have received that message loud and clear.

Northern Ontario has been extremely hard hit in the Forestry Industry and the trickle down effect of that is devastating. The lion’s share of the problems can be attributed to Free Trade and a very irresponsible right wing government in the United States which will take decades and decades to recover. CUPE Ontario has made major strides in re-building our relationship with our national union and that will be paying major dividends for years to come. We always have to work as a team. That is how we build and move CUPE forward. There are hundreds of issues to be addressed and hopefully we will have a good open discussion on most of them.

Please make sure that you participate as much as possible as we all want to make this a successful convention. I look forward to seeing and speaking with as many delegates as possible.

Have a great convention.

In Solidarity,

Dan Crow
Member at Large

In the summer of 2007 I was privileged to become a member of the CUPE Ontario Executive Board when Brother Gus Oliveira resigned from his position. Shortly after becoming a board member I took the position of Board liaison with the Injured Workers Advocates Committee.

The Injured Workers committee has been very active over the past year. On December we participated in rallies in several locations across Ontario to protest against the 20% loss in compensation earnings for injured workers over the past decade. As a result of the demonstrations, our committee invited representatives from the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG) to meet to discuss how CUPE and ONIWG can work together on future actions to make sure that injured workers' issues are front and centre on the political agenda in Ontario.

The committee has also been very active in planning for its annual conference, to be held in Niagara Falls from October 23 to 26. The conference has been designed to be useful to long-time advocates and newcomers to the fight for injured workers rights. We all look forward to seeing you at our conference. In the meantime, we encourage all members of CUPE Ontario to read the pamphlet on injured workers rights that the committee developed. The phrase "an injury to one is an injury to all" rings true in the most literal sense for our committee. Unless we fight for the rights, dignity and well being of injured workers, we will all be weaker.

In addition to my work with the Injured Workers Committee, I have been active in the OUWCC. As the Brock University campus rep for the past few years I have participated in the development of coordinated bargaining in the university sector. In December 2007 I was elected as the vice-chair of the committee, after Sister Jessica Squires stepped down from the position. In February I was re-elected as vice-chair at the OUWCC conference. The OUWCC has a big year of coordinated bargaining in 2008, and we are working with a good plan to make 2010 a watershed year for coordinated bargaining, when potentially more than 50 collective agreements in the sector in Ontario will expire. This will be an important opportunity to make solid gains at the bargaining table, and to make broader political gains for university workers.

Denise Hammond

Board Member

Firstly, I want to extend my thanks to the membership for providing me with the opportunity to serve on the Executive Board since May of 2005. Since my re-election at the May 2006 I have played an active role on the Executive Board to raise issues, put forward motions and further dialogue amongst and within the Board. This past year has gone quite quickly due to a series of ongoing actions including: the provincial election, National Convention, the December 15 leadership meeting, the first ever Equality Committee's retreat and much more. As a member at large, I have played a role in campaign development to continue our collective battle of fighting privatization in all of its destructive forms and worked to implement structures to better integrate equity as a pillar of CUPE Ontario's work. The work done this year needs to continue to strengthen and unite a strong fight back.

I am proud of the stance that the Executive Board took at the National Convention to send a message about solidarity and more importantly for supporting the right of political strikes and strike action to be funded. Although I work in a sector that has the legal right to strike, the University sector, I walked out with members at Convention because it is a principled position I support. The union needs to have the ability to leverage its collective strength and use political strikes to push back against the government. It is vital that CUPE Ontario find a way to continue to push forward on this issue and support the ability of political strikes to access the strike fund.

Board Committee Liaison Work:

I was appointed to be the liaison with the Pink Triangle Committee. This committee is one of the seven equality committees and the work focuses on advocacy, outreach and lobbying to improve the working and living lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and transgender members. Elections for the committee were held at the CUPE Ontario Human Rights conference in November and all seats were filled with a diverse group of new members who are eager to get active and create queer and trans positive space in our union.

In mid-February, the Pink Triangle Committee met and developed an action plan. Priority areas are: outreach to queer and trans members throughout Ontario and generating awareness of queer and transgender issues through campaigns and community events. It is a great pleasure to work with the members and CUPE staff involved with the Pink Triangle Committee. The work of queer and trans CUPE activists, including both those involved in the committee and on the ground, plays an important role in building profile and capacity for openly queer and closeted queer and trans members in the union.

Equality newsletter: The Pink Triangle committee has proposed to write and distribute a regular newsletter to be distributed via the CUPE Ontario members' e-list. This original idea has since grown into a large initiative and recommendation to involve all equality committees. The committee has proposed that CUPE Ontario produced a monthly equality newsletter where each committee could take responsibility for an issue and rotate articles so that every edition could include an update from the equality committees. This initiative would help to raise the profile of our equality work and further it allows for an integrated approach to equality work which breaks down the silos amongst the committees and the work of the union. I fully support this initiative and hope that the next Executive Board ensures this idea is implemented.

Note: At this Convention, the Pink Triangle committee has brought forward several motions and I want to encourage Locals to support these important resolutions. Specifically I am asking that the resolutions be supported not just for the sake of extending solidarity, but to ensure that our equity work / agenda includes queer and trans issues.

Cupe Ontario's Pride Presence:

In June of last year I worked with members of the committee, CUPE staff and the Secretary-Treasurer to organize a CUPE presence in the Toronto Dyke march and PRIDE parade. This event was observed by over one million people and is an important tradition that allows CUPE members to show their public support for queer and trans folks. I am delighted to say that we were able to garner a strong presence in the DYKE march and used the opportunity to put forth a political message about the Ontario election that took place in the Fall of 2007.

Although this event was held in Toronto members from outside the area attended and are encouraged to attend. So, mark your calendars to attend the Toronto Dyke march and Pride parade – everything happens on the weekend of June 28 & 29. Events also happen in several cities across the province and the Pink Triangle committee is eager to support mobilizations and events outside of Toronto.

If you are aware of a PRIDE event in your community or you can connect the Committee with members or the CUPE District Council in your area to organize an event please contact the Pink Triangle Committee via Joanne Martin, e-mail jmartin@cupe.ca.

CUPE Ontario Women's List

Over the past year I have continued to moderate the CUPE Ontario Women's List. The list functions as an information list to provide announcements, resources and a virtual link to join CUPE women across the province. To date there are close to 200 members and staff subscribed to the list.

If you know of any women or women-identified individual that wants to get connect and subscribe, please email me at denise.hammond@gmail.com with the request "subscribe CUPE ON Women".

CUPE CONFERENCES

Reflections on the Human Rights Conference, November 2007

Although I had no formal role in planning the Human Rights conference I was responsible for logistics, and set-up. The Human Rights conference, held at Ryerson University, was well attended with a combination of veteran and new activists. Elections for the equality committee's took place at the conference and this was the first election for the Women's Committee under the new representative structure. Elections at the conference enable a diverse group of new activists to be elected and all of the committee seats were filled.

Future Conference Recommendations

Although the Human Rights conference was well attended by over a hundred members, I would recommend that the equality committee's work with the next Board to ensure wider outreach and participation of members outside of Toronto. A majority of members that attended were from the GTA and perhaps a rotational structure for the conference should be considered or a discounted fee or travel pool for members from a variety of geographical locations in Ontario.

The second recommendation I would make for CUPE Ontario conferences is for members and organizers to carefully consider how to utilize the final hours of the conference. This is an important piece for all conferences to ensure that the skills and information learned ties back into action plans established by members at the Division's Convention. I think that this would help to better integrate and relate the work of human rights committees or jurisdictional committees into the overall provincial plan.

Equality Retreat

As a Board liaison to an equality committee, I participated in the planning and development of CUPE Ontario's first ever Equality Committee retreat. There is always so much work to be done on our retreats and much was accomplished through open dialogue and peer to peer conversations. Due to the active participation of members the retreat simply ran out of time and some original discussion including the role and purpose of CUPE Ontario Human Rights Committee was not dealt with. The retreat was however a step in the right direction and will provide a strong basis for committee members to work from for the years to come. Many members commented that they appreciated the initiative and the funding from the National to hold the retreat; this financial commitment enables the Union to put our words and demands in to action. I would recommend that the incoming Executive Board work with the equality committees to discuss and tweak the role of the Human Rights Committee to ensure it is an effective space with defined purpose.

International Solidarity Work

In conjunction with members from the International Solidarity Committee I have been working with a coalition group of labour activists, Labour for Palestine, to both educate members and

other trade unionists on the myths and reality of CUPE Ontario's resolution 50 and the plight of the Palestinians. To date I have worked to create promotional and informational postcards that were distributed at Labour Day, the National Convention and the Ontario Federation of Labour Convention. Additionally a success forum was held during the National Convention where over 50 activists from across the country came to ask questions about resolution 50; the discussion also centred on why the union must continue its international work. Discussions around "why trade unionists should engage in international solidarity work is an important area of political literacy that the union needs to engage in.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Making the links

The following are some highlights that I have attended or been invited to participate in as a rep from the Ontario Division Executive Board

- Dyke March, PRIDE Parade in Toronto
- Labour Day Parade in Toronto
- Labour for Palestine committee
- Co-facilitated community forum during National Convention, 50 CUPE members attended
- Attended the Ontario University Workers Coordinating Conference, as a committee member representing Ryerson I was involved in conference planning and facilitation
- Participated in the women's canvass during Ontario election
- Toronto Leadership meeting for Provincial election organizing
- Trade Unionist Coalition Meeting organized by the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War to plan for the October 28 day of action against Troops in Iraq & Afghanistan
- Participated in CUPE Socialist caucus meetings
- December 15 Leadership meeting

In solidarity

Patricia Homonnay **Board Member**

Health and Safety

The violence campaign is well underway. Phase 1 included the committee members visiting various communities to raise awareness of what violence at the workplace means and to educate the membership on what their rights are. Earlier this year, committee members met with the Ministry of Labour to engage in a serious discussion regarding the introduction of a violence regulation as part of the Health and Safety Act that will address and prevent violence in the workplace inclusive to all workers. Phase two of the campaign is in progress to include organizing the members and resources in order to be ready for the continuing action. I respectfully ask that you visit the Health and Safety Booth while at Convention to view the anti violence video and to receive an important update on how the campaign will be moving forward with your help.

Education Committee

I have also been selected to sit as a member on the Education Committee.

The Division education courses continue to be very successful attracting hundreds of members. The committee has met diligently on a regular basis to ensure that the membership's education

needs are supported by delivering a wide variety of courses and doing their utmost to accommodate everyone's school registration.

Another primary task the committee has been involved in is the Bev Smale Scholarship. This fund promotes and assists more members to attend union education courses and the committee recently commenced awarding the scholarships to members and activists that have applied for the education opportunity.

Moving Forward

It is clear that we must continue the path of renewal at CUPE Ontario. Since my last report local disaffiliations from the Division have occurred. Should these locals decide to re-affiliate they should be welcomed back with a commitment that their opinions will be valued and that new locals are also attracted to join CUPE Ontario. This makes CUPE stronger.

As Chief Steward of CUPE 1750, I've continued to work hard at the responsibilities that I have in the local and I wish to thank all those who elected me to the Ontario Division Board. Although the work has been quite challenging I have appreciated the encouragement and ongoing support that you have provided me with. I wish to thank my fellow committee members and staff for their tremendous dedication and I also thank the membership for your unwavering determination and activism.

In solidarity

Henry Bosch

Executive Member at Large

This past February I was asked to join the OD board for the remainder of this term. From the middle of February until present I have been working on the NRA60 Campaign. This campaign is designed to get the OMERS Sponsor Corporation to recognize the paramedics in Ontario as a Public Service Occupation (PSO), and as so, they are entitled to early retirement at age 60 as normal retirement age, not 65.

As a backgrounder, we thought the big fight was over when we convinced the Federal government in 2005 to include Paramedics in the PSO designation. They did and amended the Income Tax Act to reflect the designation. Boy, were we wrong. The real fight is now with the OMERS Sponsors Corporation.

In this campaign we are calling on paramedics in Ontario to lobby and write to their Local, Regional and Municipal politicians and ask them to pass resolutions calling for the OMERS Sponsors Corporation to allow NRA 60 for the paramedics, as it allows NRA 60 for the police and fire members. It is allowed for police and fire within OMERS because they are PSO designated by the Federal government. So are paramedics but they are currently excluded. This campaign is a joint one involving CUPE, OPSEU, CAW and SEIU. We felt we needed a joint campaign so the OMERS board would see a united front of all paramedics in Ontario. There have been many meetings all over the province to inform and arm the paramedic groups to lobby and write and pressure their local governments.

The next phase is rallies at the OMERS building and Queen's Park to get the issue at the forefront. This is time sensitive as the OMERS Sponsors Corporation will be voting on this in early June. I have been kept busy.

As well, I have been working on the CACO (CUPE Ambulance Committee of Ontario) conference which is planned for September 15 and 16, 2008, in Niagara Falls. More info to follow as it becomes available.

Respectfully Submitted
In Solidarity

Johanna Ellis
Board member

Greetings Sisters and Brothers!

Welcome to your 2008 Ontario Division Convention!

It's been quite a year of change! In many areas our work force has recruited many new and younger workers. There have been many retirements and many municipal employees leaving the Public Sector to go and work in the Private Sector. I cannot speak for other municipalities but where I work, at the City of Kitchener, we've seen many of our members, who specialize in certain areas, leave us to go to either the Region or the private sector. Being one of the lowest paid Cities in Ontario hasn't helped!

Pay equity issues seem to be recurring in the Municipal Sector as well; another fight we need to press on with. We need to continue to work on organizing. In the case of most municipalities, part time employees are non-union. Our employers tend to lean more toward hiring part time employees rather than permanent full time employees. After meeting with and discussing this with some of our part time staff, it has been brought to our attention that many of them prefer to work part time hours for personal reasons. What we need to do is organize them to enable them to be treated with the same dignity and respect as permanent full time employees. It is appalling how they are treated in the workplace.

In the short time I've been back on the board there have been some wonderful success stories. Some include keeping public sector jobs public and others include negotiating fair and decent collective agreements. I hope, for the future of CUPE Ontario and it's entire membership, we can all learn to work together. We need to stand together in solidarity to maintain a union that is strong and united and deal with the issues that affect ALL CUPE members.

I would like to leave you with a little saying CUPE Local 791 (City of Kitchener – inside) has on bracelets given to us for negotiations. **“United we bargain, divided we beg”!** That is so true on many levels.

I wish you all a safe and productive Convention!

Peace & Solidarity,

Joanne Webb
Aboriginal Representative

The Medicine Wheel's and Four Directions Teachings have been handed down by the Elders. In Traditional Storytelling many Elder teach about Equality and Respect for all Peoples of the four colours which are Red, White, Black and Yellow. That is what happened at the first Equality Retreat that was held in January by the Division. We got together and shared our concerns and ideas.

It was very heartwarming and exciting to see all the sharing of ideas as we came together. The Retreat was very well received. The use of the Sharing Circle is not a new concept to the Aboriginal Peoples and this is what was used at the Retreat. It seemed to put many members at ease and there was much sharing of different ideas. It was wonderful. There was a lot of good work shared.

Yolanda McClean (the Visible Minority Representative) and I have been following the Sector Conferences trail this year. We have been holding Equality Caucuses at all of the Conferences. They have been very successful and the Equality message is getting out to our members. At the Social Services Conference there was a Méti Sister and a Visible Minority Sister elected to the Coordinating Committee. We would like to thank the women. We are very proud of you.

I had the honor to help facilitate the first weekend workshop of Creating Racial Justice at the Division Spring School. It was very successful. We had a few of the Member Facilitators sit in on the workshop and then debrief for the next couple of days afterwards. Some suggestions were made and the course is ready to go. We hope to start presenting this workshop in the near future all across Ontario and hopefully Canada. Much Thanks to those Member Facilitators, along with Joanne Martin (the Ontario Equality Rep.) who worked hard on project. Also much Thanks to Jane Stinson, who without her knowledge and patience we could never have put it all together.

The members of the Council are Glen Le Blanc the Co-senator, Judy Moreau, Maryanne Lensiewski, Joanne Hull, and Sonia Nadon. These members were elected at the Human Rights Conference last fall. Glen LeBlanc and me are the Regional Senators to the National Council.

The Ontario's Council hopes to bring many of our initiatives to the Division and hope to involve as many of our Aboriginal members as possible along with our Allies. One of these initiatives is to have a Gathering on 2009. Another is to continue to attend Pow Wows to introduce CUPE to the Aboriginal Communities. We also want to let our Aboriginal members know that there is a place for them in CUPE. We still must keep on bringing forward the issues of poor water conditions, Land claims, claims, poverty, missing women among other things. We do know that CUPE will be there on all these issues. On behalf of the Council, I would like to Thank Joanne Martin. She is a true friend to Council and is a wealth of knowledge and always has time to share with us. Also I would like to thank the Staff at the Division Office, for all their time and effort that they spent on us. Much thanks to the Union Development and Organizing Department for listening to us. It goes without saying, much thanks to the Division Board for the help in pushing the Equality Agenda forward.

I want to thank the Creator for giving me the strength to keep going and my Mother for giving me Life's Wisdom and always looking over me at: Joanne Webb [webbjoanne5@cogeco.ca]
Chi-Miigwech

Yolanda McClean

Visible Minority Representative

Introduction

The past term has been very exciting for me as your representative. We have been learning and growing together as we have been expanding our knowledge in the labour movement. Workers of Colour have been playing a greater role in our organization. We have to be proud of our accomplishments and proud of our successes. We have made some gains and we have a long way to go. Let us strive to move our work forward together.

CUPE Ontario Anti-Racism Forums

The Rainbow Committee launched a series of Anti-Racism Forums on the following issues: Employment Equity, Political Participation, the Education System and Racial Profiling. What a great success with standing-room-only. Our key note dynamic speaker Loretta Ross, the founder and former Executive Director of the National Centre for Human Rights Education in Atlanta, challenged us to look at our practices and our movement to make positive changes. This Forum included a panel that demanded action in employment equity. There are now Workers of Colour in temporary positions. We have a long way to achieve equality, but we are on the way.

Our second Anti-Racism Forum focused on Political Participation that was held during the Provincial Election Campaign. We invited Workers of Colour who were running as political candidates to speak to us. Many Workers of Colour were then booked off from their locals to work with these candidates.

At this Forum, a Three Point Action Plan was developed by the participants:

1. Improve the equity language and structures in our locals through by-law changes;
2. Encourage as many Workers of Colour to attend the national convention with voting rights; and
3. Ensure Workers of Colour are represented at each of our Ontario Division Committees.

The third Anti-Racism Forum on Racial Profiling was held the first day of our Human Rights conference. Our key-note speaker, David Mitchell, the founder and past President of the Association of Black Law Enforcers, gave a dynamic overview of the history of racial profiling across North America. It was clear to all who attended why David is one of the leading experts on the subject.

Human Rights Conference

After an energizing and exciting discussion on Racial Profiling, the Division's Human Rights Conference opened. Our own CUPE members were on a panel sharing their own experiences with us. The action plan was discussed as was The Colour of Poverty Campaign. Each Committee had well attended caucuses. The food and entertainment was terrific. One of the Rainbow Committee's key successes was that for the first time ever, a Worker of Colour was elected to each of the Human Rights Committees.

Some actions that resulted from the Conference included the push to integrate an Equality Agenda into the December 15th Leadership Meeting, insisting that Ontario's concerns about Equality be taken up by the National Union.

Member Organizing

Along with the Aboriginal Representative, I have been attending our sectoral conferences and CUPE Schools to hold caucuses with our members. It is a time for us to share and get feedback on any assistance they may need from us. Engaging is important and it allows us the ability and opportunity to listen to their concerns so we can address them in our committees. At the Social Services Conference an Aboriginal sister and a Worker of Colour sister were elected to their committee. We are making gains. Caucus meetings were held at the following conferences:

- Hospital Workers (OHCWC) Sector Meeting
- CUPE International Solidarity
- University Workers (OUWCC) Conference
- Social Services Workers (OSSWC) Conference
- CUPE School - Caucus- 35 members attended
- Municipal Workers (OMECC) Conference

In addition, I have attended many internal meetings, in addition to the Executive Board, to deepen the understanding of the Equity Agenda and move us forward together.

- Education Committee Meeting
- Joint Jurisdictional Meetings
- Equity Retreat Planning Meetings
- Priorities and Planning Meetings

Rainbow Caucus members attended the Women Breaking Barriers week-long school. Members were also trained as Member-Facilitators and are now delivering Union Development courses at CUPE Schools around the Province. A new course called Creating Racial Justice was piloted in March and all leaders across Ontario are being encouraged to take it.

Strengthening Community and Labour Links

The Rainbow Committee sponsored and sent members to the Coalition of Black Trade Union's Dinner, the Black History Brunch and the December 6th Fund. We attended the Ontario Federation of Labour Employment Equity Seminar. The committee has written statements in support of Africentric Schools and Durban II.

I have also had the opportunity to attend other events to advance our agenda including:

- Ontario Federation of Labour's Human Rights Committee Meeting
- Falconer Report Caucus Meetings

Employment Equity

Our National Staff Representatives and the Staff at our Ontario Division office still do not reflect the diversity of our members. Workers of Colour and Aboriginal Workers are still under-represented. Future hiring needs to focus on improving these statistics. There have been several Workers of Colour who have finished temporary representative assignments. We must move forward to ensure these fully qualified 'temps' move into permanent positions in the near future.

There will be a Trainee-Rep Program held in the summer for Aboriginal and Workers of Colour only. There will also be an opportunity for Workers of Colour to take the Member-Facilitator training course.

The committee will continue to have education sent to our locals to encourage more diverse participation within the locals.

Ontario Division pushes the National on Equity Agenda

As a result of a breakdown in communication and the lack of concrete support of crucial issues like organizing and equality, CUPE members from Ontario walked out of the National Convention in October. In preparations for a Leadership Meeting held on December 15 in Toronto, we were able to articulate the ***Equality Now!*** document that was circulated to members across the province. The demands that were discussed were organizing, employment equity, bargaining and representation in leadership. These measures should include education, mentorship, code of conduct and harassment, equality committees and aboriginal councils and the action plans developed by our National Diversity Vice Presidents

As you can see from this report, we are on the road to making more gains on our Equality Agenda – but still need to remove some of the roadblocks along the way.

Equality Retreat

In January, all Equality Committees and the International Solidarity Committee participated in the first ever Equality Retreat. Let me reassure you though – all thoughts, words and actions were on moving forward and not retreating!! Despite a few bumps along the way, the Retreat was a great success.

The first day of the retreat, we participated in Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Training. Many of us have since drafted resolutions for this convention that would make it mandatory for all Board Members to participate in this training and for CUPE Ontario to use an Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Framework.

Morna Ballantyne facilitated energizing Open Space and World Café learning sessions, in which we learned among many other things, how to be more inclusive. The structure of the retreat allowed members to speak up on the broader issues of equality. A key recommendation coming out of the get-together is that we hold Equality Retreats on an on-going basis.

The Way Forward

The past two years have been very exciting and productive as we move our Equality Agenda forward within our locals and the Division. When I was elected Diversity Vice-President of CUPE National at the October Convention, I quickly began to see the urgent need to build support for changes we have been working on diligently at the Division level to the National Union. There is still much work left to do.

I am proud and honoured to have served as your Visible Minority Representative over the past two years. I want to thank all workers of colour across the province that have come aboard for this journey. I remain optimistic that the space has been created to make the equality gains that have eluded us for years. We need to keep our eyes on the prize and move forward together.

Respectfully Submitted

- ❖ Dietary posts into a temporary position in any other department, temporary duration ends they return to their dietary position

No “Not a New Hire”

These are just some of the implications of this new requirement.

UNISON HEALTH CARE CONFERENCE

Keep the NHS Working

Being invited by CUPE Ontario to attend the UNISON Health Care Conference in Brighton, England as an International Delegate was an honor. I attended the conference with Brother Doug Allan, CUPE National Research Representative, Sister Irene Harris Secretary/Treasurer, Ontario Federation of Labour, Sister Catherine Bowman, Supervisor Health Care, Ontario Public Service Employees Union and Sister Marcelle Goldenberg, Executive Vice-President, Service Employees International Union.

Issues that the members face in England are similar to those in Canada; UNISON members are facing marketisation, privatization, the introduction of pricing and fee for service funding, the introduction of social enterprises (the introduction of competing, private, not-for-profit providers) changing relations between public sector and private sector unions, “off-shoring” of public services, modest wage increases, health care restructuring and the closure of hospitals, the transfer of hospital services to the “community”, and changing relations between the union and social democracy.

UNISON is 450,000 Health Care Workers Strong, with a very wide variety of health care employees, from senior managers, registered nurses to support staff. UNISON is the main union in Britain representing health care employees.

The Conference focused on 2 main issues:

Both issues lead to heated debate about UNISON’s support of the Labour Government

- Privatization and Marketisation of health care delivery.
Despite big increases in overall funding that the government is so quick to boast about, millions of pounds are being funneled away from direct patient care and into the pockets of private businesses. Government initiatives such as PFI, outsourcing, Independent Diagnostic and Treatment Centers, compulsory “patient choice” – enable private businesses to make a profit out of healthcare.
- Pay and the Method of Pay determination.
The Pay Review Body brutally limits the opportunities for the trade unions to influence the outcome of a wage adjustment. Submissions are made by the union, management, and the government then the PRB announces its conclusions, which the government implements, or not.

Their structure is quite different from CUPE’s

- Country-wide collective bargaining for National Health Service Employees (NHS).

- Receives only voluntary dues payments from members (employees need not join or pay dues to any Union).
- Organizes senior health care managers, along with non-managerial staff.

Their Conference structure too, is quite different from CUPE's

- Conference – some things never change.
 - Fringe Meetings - Lunch Break and at Adjournment.
- Motions put forward by Branches and Regions.
- Logical and easy to understand sequence of motions.
- Delegates are articulate when speaking to a motion (most probably with preparation, we suspect).
- Relative quiet and set up unlike CUPE's.
- Delegates address the conference not the Chair.

Respectfully Submitted

Dharam Boodhoo

Chair, Ontario Municipal Employees Coordinating Committee (OMECC)

Preliminary - Structure

The Ontario Municipal Employees Co-ordinating Committee (OMECC) is the primary jurisdictional tool for communications and coordination of almost 200 bargaining units in CUPE Ontario.

OMECC is comprised of 15 elected CUPE members – ten regional representatives, representatives for Health and Safety and for Injured workers, and three chairs of sub-jurisdictional groups (libraries, electrical utilities, and emergency services). OMECC annually elects its own officers. The work of the committee has been very ably and greatly assisted by CUPE staff, including the coordinator and researcher

Basic concerns; Current issues

These two categories naturally show a significant of overlap; and include:

- ***Furthering cooperative (coordinated) bargaining*** – cf. below
- ***Fighting privatization in its many forms*** – cf. below
- ***Downloading costs, Uploading services*** – this refers to ensuring that our services are retained at the municipal level, where they can be most effectively delivered, while restoring provincial funding lost during the term of the Harris government; this is also related to our support for local, divisional and national actions related to the Fair Deal for Our Cities campaign.
- ***Organizing*** – organizing new groups of workers; and re-organizing, i.e. remobilizing, already organized groups of workers. Organizing per se is carried out by the national union with the assistance of local activists.
- ***Renewing and expanding affiliations*** – OMECC is committed to working with the Division and locals to retain, restore and expand the Division's membership.
- ***Communications***
- ***Monitoring legislative and political developments*** – OMECC has stayed abreast of numerous initiatives including the ongoing Provincial & Municipal Finances & Services Review; changes to OMERS (especially in regard to emergency service workers), and Bill

198 (involving Ontario & US – “Great Lakes Agreement” – implementation) –
Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario’s Water Act

- **Elections** – cf. below
- **Literacy and Basic skills training** – cf. below
- **Water** – OMECC has taken an active role in CUPE’s struggle to ensure that this key asset and service remains publicly controlled and delivered
- **Post-65 Issues** – the focus here is on ensuring that older workers are not discriminated against, and that they continue to be provided with adequate benefit plans
- **Health & Safety issues**
- **Injured Worker issues**

Concerns and Issues – some summary details

Bargaining

OMECC’s central role is to assist CUPE’s Ontario municipal locals with coordination, especially in regard to collective bargaining. The main way we do this is by the sharing of information in various ways, including:

- Information gathering and sharing by the OMECC area, issue and sub-jurisdictional representatives
- Information sharing directly between locals and bargaining units on an ongoing basis
- Reports and discussions at our annual spring conference
- Key issues for locals tend to be **wages and benefits**
- Other key current issues have recently included:
 - ❖ **Job evaluation, pay equity, classification and compensation mechanisms**
 - ❖ **Job security**
 - ❖ **Contracting-out**
 - ❖ **Accommodation in the workplace**
 - ❖ **Sick-leave**
 - ❖ **Hours of work**
 - ❖ **Violence in the work-place**

Privatization

This includes both the immediate loss of our work and service to the private sector, and private partnerships or P3s which take many forms.

Primary municipal and provincial targets for privatization and P3s *include*:

- Water and wastewater operations
- Employment services for social assistance recipients (*JobsNow*)
- Childcare
- Homes for the aged
- Sports and entertainment complexes
- Information and library services (cf. e-services)
- *Local Health Integrated Networks*

Although our members have often been successful in addressing these initiatives – either by stopping them outright, or by ensuring their implementation is as moderated as possible – to address them successfully requires a recognition that they are endemic and systemic in nature, and not merely local issues.

Municipal and provincial elections

Locals and members are regularly encouraged to participate actively in politics at all levels; and to meet and consult with politicians on an ongoing basis – not only at election time. This is done in recognition that not only our funding but the terms and conditions of our employment are ultimately – and sometimes very immediately and dramatically – political and legislative matters.

OMECC strongly supported CUPE's actions and candidates in the last round (fall 2007) of provincial elections in Ontario, where CUPE members ran for ten positions.

Literacy and Basic skills training

This is an issue that has been raised repeatedly by the libraries, but one which has great significance for all of our sectors. Educational requirements continue to rise even as our members continue at work but their work changes. In addition many of our members – reflective of Canadian society as a whole – are scarcely functionally literate or numerate. This creates huge problems for them at work, in their private lives, and in terms of their ability to participate effectively in their union. OMECC encourages locals to work with CUPE's national literacy program in furthering jointly run workplace literacy and basic skills training as a way of ensuring our members are less disposable, and better equipped to handle their present and future work and life. We have also made a submission to the Employment Ontario initiative which will be

Conclusion and Action Plan

So far, we have successfully struggled to protect our contracts and our members. That struggle will continue. Our **action plan in 2007** reflected our sector's needs and essentially identified the following:

- Participation in Elections
- Fighting privatization and P3s Increase communication and coordination between CUPE locals
- Literacy and basic skills – enhance within and outside of workplace for members
- Encouraging development of retirees' groups
- Enhance interest in / participation in OMECC

Following the 2008 conference we will draft a plan for 2008.

In solidarity

Frank Ventresca

Chair, Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee (OSBCC)

Greetings Sisters and Brothers, and welcome to our country's impressive city of Niagara Falls. Our convention is being held in a city whose history has defined Canada as a leading country to work and live in.

As educational workers we continue to face challenges. We remain true to our principals and our beliefs as we continue to defend our collective agreements through these challenges. The next three days we will share our experiences, information and map out our defenses for protecting workers' jobs and collective agreements. Our strategies, campaigns, local meetings, leadership meetings, radio Ads, press conferences, demonstrations have paid off in the school board sector!

We have achieved one of our objectives, as directed by our members in the school board sector, as to our bylaws and as to direction from our Conferences. Our objective is getting the government to meet with us directly.

We hit the ground running in September 2006 with our Flawed Funding Formula Campaign and the EA Campaign. The locals participated physically and financially with CUPE Support.

Leadership meetings, radio ads, media coverage, press conferences, joint CUPE/OSSTF support workers conference and hand delivering 4,000 EA survey cards to the Education Minister at our 2007 OSBCC Conference made a huge impact on this government.

Many of our Locals made the central issues that we are addressing with the government a huge priority at their local bargaining tables and it received the government's direct attention!

-Local 4222C (Thames Valley DSB, EAs): spring 2006 strike (3 weeks) re hours of work for EAs. Won 30 extra minutes, implemented over life of agreement;

-Local 218 (Durham DSB, all units): spring 2007 strike (2 weeks). Won 15 extra minutes for EAs, more hours for OCT and increased custodial staffing, wage & benefit improvements; a loud successful demonstration at Queens Park

-Local 1483 (Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB): went to the brink before settling, June 2007. The settlement includes improvements in job security and wage provisions and a new custodial staffing ratio based on facility square footage;

-Local 4155 (Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'est ontarien): also went to the brink this past summer, but settled without a strike or lockout. The new four-year collective agreement includes wage increases of 4, 3.5, 3.5 and 3 per cent, a formula for custodial staffing, improved bumping rights in the case of layoffs, improved benefits.

-Local 1176 (Bluewater DSB): went to brink Sept. 2007. The board was looking to layoff 22.5 custodial/maintenance personnel. A strong show of solidarity forced the board to remove all concessions from the table, paving the way for a settlement.

-Local 2026 (Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB): OCT local was bearing the brunt of a provincially-appointed supervisor who aimed to balance the budget on the backs of support staff. They achieved a settlement that fought off proposed staff cuts, preserved the existing bargaining unit complement, and that offered wage and benefit improvements similar to what the custodial & maintenance local received.

Provincial Elections for October 2007 was approaching fast and CUPE was very active heading into the elections.

In May 2007 the SUPPORT WORKERS ADVISORY GROUP (SWAG) was formed with the objective to sit down with CUPE SCHOOL BOARD WORKERS to address our concerns.

At this table we have our researcher Paul O'Donnell, Associate Coordinator Dave Chezzi, CUPE Government liaison Judy Wilkings, our past Co-ordinator Betty Sommers, our newly assigned Coordinator Vickie Houston, Brother John Weatherup – President 4400 and I.

At the SWAG table we delivered our sector's issues and concerns with very vivid examples of how the flawed funding formula impacts on students and workers.

On Nov. 14/2007 Brothers Sid Ryan, Brian Atkinson – ARD, John Weatherup and myself attended a meeting called by the Education Minister Kathleen Win. The Minister stated we need to address our sectors concerns collectively. The Minister acknowledged that the funding formula is flawed, that the government concentrated on the teachers, now they need to concentrate on support staff.

She asked if CUPE would be interested in a central table.

We made it clear we were very interested to sit at a central table.

We made it clear that we still want the SWAG TABLE to continue.

Two more meetings were held with the ministry and then we sent all the locals the communiqué on Dec. 11/07, to commence this process with our locals.

More than 300 CUPE school board sector members attended the sector-wide emergency meeting in Toronto on January 21/08, unanimously endorsed participation in a provincial common issues negotiations process set to begin at the end of January.

Local union leadership acknowledged that the provincial process is the culmination of several years of sector-wide mobilizing initiatives, political lobbying, bargaining campaigns and key strikes geared to fixing faulty education funding for school support services.

The parties met on January 28, 2008, in Toronto, Ontario. Dates were confirmed for February, March, April and May.

Our bargaining committee:

Frank Ventresca

Susan Hanson

Marc Boisvert

John Weatherup

Linda Thurston-Neeley

Brian Atkinson

André Lamoureux

Brian Blakeley

Paul O'Donnell

Elizabeth Nurse

Luc Tittley

Antoni Shelton

OSBCC Chair

OSBCC

OSBCC

CUPE Local 4400

CUPE Assistant Director

CUPE Assistant Director

CUPE Assistant Director

CUPE School Boards Coordinator

CUPE Research

CUPE Legal

CUPE Communications

CUPE Ontario Division

Our issues:

Violence in the Workplace

7 hour – EA Work Day

Adequate Staffing Levels

Supervision of Students

Instructional Issues

Professional Development/Training

Roles and Responsibilities of EA's

Wages and Benefits

Commitment to Term – common expiry date
Green school initiatives

I would like to acknowledge and thank our past Coordinators, Sister Betty Sommers and Sister Vickie Houston, our past Associate Coordinator, Brother David Chezzi, and our past CUPE Ontario Liaison, Sister Judy Wilkings.

Our OSBCC Committee Darrel Day– Injured Workers Representative,

Area 1- Rob Roy	Area9 – Patti Chapman
Area 2 – Jennifer Noel	Area 10 – Don McAngus
Area 3 – Jim Homuth	Area 11 – John Tompa
Area 4 –, Marc Boisvert	Area 12 – Mark Luciani
Area 5 - Susan Hanson,	Area 13 – Judith Callahan
Area 6 – Lee Ann West	Area 14 – Dan Meyerink
Area 7 – Vern Andrus	Area 15 -
Area 8 – Terri Preston	Area 16 – Sylvain Piche
	Area 17 -

Our Health & Safety Representative –Don Postar

Our Researcher –Paul O'Donnell

Our Coordinator –Brian Blakeley

Brian Atkinson - Assistant Regional Director

Roger Neeley – Regional Director,

Randy Millage, Assistant Regional Director

CUPE Communication Officers, Stella Yeadon, Valerie Dugale, James Chai, Pat Daley.

We must acknowledge the staff at the National Office and Ontario Regional Office for all their work on our behalf.

Our sector required many resources to educate, strategize and prepare us to where we are today and we know that will continue.

On behalf of the education workers of Ontario, thank you to our National Officers, Brother Paul Moist – National President, Brother Claude Généreux – National Secretary Treasurer, and thank you to our Provincial Officers, Sid Ryan - President, Ontario Division and Fred Hahn – Secretary Treasurer, Ontario Division.

Sisters & Brothers

We are all here for our members, with our members' support and input we have the strength and direction to protect our contracts and make effective changes to our contracts that will benefit all the members.

Have a great conference!

In solidarity

Janice Folk-Dawson**Chair, Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee (OUWCC)**

“TOGETHER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION”

As chair and vice chair of this vibrant and active committee representing 23,000 post secondary education (PSE) Workers at 17 universities across the province, We are privileged to submit a brief summary of the diversity and effectiveness of our coordinating actions over the past year and our vision for the future.

We come to CUPE Ontario Convention - 2008 as a sector that has just reaffirmed our commitment and focus on Coordinating our Future. At our February OUWCC conference, we unanimously endorsed an action plan setting out priorities on three fronts; coordinated bargaining, political lobbying for public funding and organizing. All three are in direct response to the privatization agenda being pushed by both levels of government and university administrators.

Over the past number of years, due to the sheer determination and commitment of OUWCC Executive, assigned staff and the local executive and bargaining committees, we have aligned 31 of the 45 collective agreements with 2008 expiry dates. At the Coordinating our Future conference held in Kitchener this February delegates developed a three year action plan including strategies for strengthening provincial coordination and outreach for a national PSE coordinated bargaining agenda leading into 2010.

Our strategy is built on the principal that we must engage with both federal and provincial levels of government in our bargaining if we are to be successful in obtaining comprehensive public funding for post secondary institutions. That public funding must come with a responsible commitment to resources, providing a transparent transfer and allocation of such funds. With **that debate occurring at PSE bargaining tables, representing over 54,000 workers across the country**, we will have an unprecedented opportunity to re-frame the discussion and outcome.

As a sector we continue to advocate for:

- the mandates of the national and provincial strategic directions documents;
- an employment equity strategy to be developed and implemented not only in our workplaces but also for adoption by CUPE National and CUPE Ontario;
- improvements to our pensions and benefits plans and not just the continued battle to defend our current levels. As well, we want to extend access to of our pension and benefit plans to those workers currently denied them; and
- continued building on our coordinated bargaining issues, at every PSE bargaining table across the province for 2008 and leading into 2010.

Please contact us at:Chair: Janice Folk-Dawson jfd@members.cupe.caVice Chair: Dan Crow danielcrow@sympatico.caCoordinator: David Michor dmichor@cupe.ca

Hamilton Area Office, 1030 Upper James Street, Suite 400, Hamilton, ON, L9C 6X6 Phone:

(905) 575-5411 Ext. 226 Fax: (905) 575-2826

Rebekah Condon

Chair , Social Service Workers Coordinating Committee (SSWCC)

The Social Service Sector in Ontario is made up of workers in Associations for Community Living, Children's Aid Societies, Child Care, Community Agencies, Workers Compensation and Municipal social services workplaces. These approximately 30,000 members are in over 300 bargaining units.

The **Association for Community Living** representatives have continued the "We Make it Possible" campaign developed to support improving working conditions (including wages, benefits, pension, job security and health and safety) and making the connection to quality of service. Tools in this campaign have included membership mobilization, coalition building, lobby efforts, education and coordinated bargaining. There are 7 units at the table in 2008. It is anticipated that there will be 58 ACL units at the table in 2009. An ACL leadership meeting was held on November 17th at which time 70 members approved a plan ensuring that a strong foundation is in place as we build towards 2009. Ongoing lobby and advocacy strategies have resulted in \$200 million in new developmental services monies being announced by the province in the 2007 budget. These new monies are welcome in terms of addressing the wage gap in the sector, but collective bargaining remains a challenge. A one day ACL leadership mobilization workshop was held prior to the start of the 2008 SSWCC conference – a great success! Privatization threats in the form of individualized funding also continue to pose a threat to our members in the sector. A research paper was developed by staff and members opposing the government's position to provide more individualized funding supports and services. The paper was submitted to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The jurisdiction continues to monitor developments at the local level. Locals engaged in coordinated bargaining have had success in negotiating language restricting the employer's right to contract out and privatize the work of the bargaining unit.

The **Children's Aid Societies** representatives have continued to move forward the co-ordination of bargaining. Units with expiry dates in 2008 set their priorities at a November meeting. These priorities include wages, workload, legal liability, use of personal vehicles, health and safety (specifically violence in the workplace) and professional fees and affiliations. Coordination with the OPSEU CAS units at the table continues with a meetings, calls and information sharing to ensure a unified labour front. In an effort to ensure support to individual members, the CAS representatives have also been working on developing a "Critical Incident" resource kit to assist locals in supporting workers who are directly impacted by serious occurrences such as child deaths. A priority for 2008 for this sector has been to develop a PR campaign to improve the public's understanding of the work done by our members in this sector. These workers are also continuing their work to document the impact of legislative, policy and procedural including funding changes on workers, families, children and communities. These findings will be presented to the Ontario Association for Children Aids (OACAS) and the Ministry of Children and Youth.

The **Child Care** representatives, in conjunction with our coalition partners, have continued success profiling the value of a not-for-profit, universal child care system as the threat of multi-national childcare and for-profit centres escalates. Also CUPE again partnered with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care for the 7th Annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, which took place on October 24th, 2007. Over 180 municipalities issued proclamations in recognition of the value of this work, and the workers that do it. This past year's day allowed the coalition to highlight the fact that so many of these workers live in poverty because the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to fund pay

equity. The event drew significant media attention from across the province. The three main priorities for child care for the coming year are:

1. Strengthening and moving the Organization of CUPE Child Care Workers forward through the regional representatives to improve bargaining and organizing in the sector.
2. Support and campaign to protect the non-profit sector - from corporatization
3. Pay Equity and improved funding for community based child care.

The **Community Agencies** representatives report continued downloading of services and severe underfunding, which puts enormous strain on workers. Locals continue to fight concessions as they bargain for improved wages and benefits working conditions, and job protection language. This past year, a coalition of labour and community agencies have continued their efforts of shift how funding flows in this sector. In June 2007 the Community Social Services Campaign was launched in Toronto. The campaign seeks to shine the spotlight on the important contributions of workers and agencies; identify and promote provincial funding issues and solutions among provincial politicians; and rebuild government reinvestment in community social services. The campaign launch event June 5th 2007 on the lawn of Queen's Park entitled "Joining Hands" involved the participation of over 80 agencies, their staff, their unions, their program participants, and community volunteers. Though this effort has been piloted and launched in Toronto, the hope is that it will expand into Ottawa and other communities across Ontario. Additionally, a research paper titled "Heads Up Ontario" has been written that chronicles a decade of underfunding that has left the sector in peril and what we can do to improve these conditions. CUPE has also accessed opportunities to participate in policy discussions at other table. On the matter of coordinated bargaining, a group of multi-service agency locals are looking forward to co-ordination in their next rounds of bargaining. The Community Agency representatives have also started the process of making recommendations regarding the issue of accessibility, specifically as it relates to our deaf, deafened and hard of hearing members. Other priorities for these group of workers includes starting a north caucus/conference and/or networking forum, and looking at ways to link into internet coverage of conferences, conventions for those locals not able to attend.

The **Municipal Social Service** representatives report that issues of privatization and contracting out are ever present for this group of workers. Our municipally run child care centres are often the first to be targeted. Also we continue to wait for the Ministry's evaluation of the "Job's Now" pilot projects. Once these results are known, the working group (representatives of both the SSWCC and OMECC) and staff will reconvene to review the findings and strategize about how best to proceed. Other priority areas for this group are workload, effect of technological change and the development of accessing services on-line and violence in the workplace.

Sectoral Work

- The Governance working group has begun to draft a resource kit for locals.
- This past fall, the Ontario Federation of Labour Social Service Committee held a forum to highlight sector issues. The joint CUPE/ OPSEU campaigns in the ACL and Community Agencies jurisdictions were spotlighted, in addition to the coordination of bargaining in both the ACL and CAS jurisdictions.
- The first National Social Service meeting was held in Ottawa November 21st – 23rd. Approximately 160 delegates from across the country were in attendance. There were three languages being spoken at all times, thus translation in English, French, and American Sign Language was ongoing. We also had Real Time Captioning. The delegates offered positive feedback, and by all accounts, the hope is that this will become a regular event.

- LHIN's working group continues their work
- Issues of attendance management continue as a big concern
- All groups of workers are committed to active participation in the Provincial Anti-Violence Campaign

Social Service Conference

This year's conference was held in Toronto at the Park Hyatt. It began on Thursday March 6th and adjourned on Sunday March 9th with approximately 250 people in attendance. This year's theme was "Celebrating Our Victories". The Associations for Community Living had a leadership day leading into the conference and for the first time we had an Equity Caucus which was well attended and by all reports a huge success. We also passed a number of bylaw changes. Our annual fund raiser was held on the Saturday of conference. It was organized jointly by the SSWCC and the Women's Committee. Funds raised exceeded \$3,000.00 to be matched by CUPE Ontario; all monies will be going to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. This year's conference was also an attempt in moving towards a "Green Conference". Delegates received very little paper rather a disk of resource documents was created for all to take back to their respective locals. We also made use of power points in our workshops and sub-jurisdictional sessions. We posted notices, flyers and agendas instead of copying hundreds of each. Thus far, member feedback has been positive.

Respectfully Submitted

Don MacLeod

President Municipal Retirees Organization of Ontario

Looking back at last year's report, I noted that OMERS Governance was adopted after months in the making and many meetings with the coalition for pension fairness and the three retiree groups.

The final version of Bill 206, which rewrote the rules for OMERS governance, was accompanied by separate legislation, which requires a review of the efficiency, fairness and effectiveness of the new OMERS governance structure by 2012.

Throughout the process MROO (Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario) raised the concerns that were specific to pensioners especially the removal of the .6% Cap on the CPP offset and a retiree representative with a voice and vote on the Sponsors Corporation and the Administration Corporation.

In 2006 OMERS indexing was 3.36% and CPP indexing was 2.3%. There were no complaints from our members. 2007 OMERS indexing was 0.7% when CPP was around 2.1%. There were many complaints from our members to MROO and to OMERS. Early in 2007 the Sponsors Corporation agreed to change OMERS' methodology to match CPP. This was a good idea until we found out that it would have a negative impact compared to our old methodology which would have generated a 2.48% increase in indexing, while the CPP indexing is only 2%.

We asked the Sponsors Corp to reconsider their decision and to postpone the change to 2009. To reconsider the Sponsors Corp needed a two thirds vote. The vote to reconsider was less than 50%. We have written FSCO (Financial Services Commission of Ontario) asking them to ***not*** approve OMERS' new method of indexing as it has a negative impact on our pensions. OMERS notified pensioners that the CPI (Consumer Price Index) increase was 1.99% without the

approval from FSCO. FSCO asked OMERS for more information about the new method and how it was advertised. To date (the 1st of March) FSCO has not approved the new indexing method.

Chris Charlton, my MP, discovered that Stats Canada made a mistake with the CPI from 2001 to 2006. Chris made two motions in the House of Commons asking that Stats Canada publish the corrected figures and that the government reimburse all OAS (Old Age Security) CPP (Canada Pension Plan) and GIS (Guaranteed Income Security) recipients' for the short fall. We also asked OMERS to adjust our pensions and we were told that the government hasn't recognized the mistake. We joined a coalition of many retiree groups, chaired by Jack Layton's office, to pressure the government to adjust the CPI. This could be costly for the government (we don't know how much). This has a bearing on OMERS, CPP and OAS.

In our last newsletter, we asked our members to mail their MP's complaining about Stats Canada's error. Some responses were unbelievable. They said if the mistake was negative they wouldn't be adjusting the pensions down therefore they wouldn't adjust the pensions up.

This year I facilitated three CUPE OD Division Education courses on Pensions (OMERS) and one, one day course for Local 1328 with a packed hall of over 100 members. I attended the Division Pension meetings as well as the OD Board meetings.

MROO amended its constitution to create an additional zone just north of Toronto and last fall held three additional zone meetings in the larger populated zones which were very successful. Last year 2007 MROO offered 6 scholarships to children and grandchildren of its members. This year we are offering 9 scholarships. The scholarships are \$1000 for first Year University or Community College.

At MROO, we believe that municipal and public service retirees should have access to affordable health and dental care and we realize that provincial plans don't provide enough coverage. That's why we are committed to ensuring retirees have access to valuable life and health benefits at a reasonable cost.

MROO continues to offer our extended health and dental care benefits plan to retired CUPE members who lose their employer benefits through early retirement or at age 65. This year we have enhanced our prescription drug benefits under the extended Health Care Plan to keep benefits current with changes and cut backs in OHIP coverage. Our standard Health Care Plan offers guaranteed coverage without medical questions as long as retirees apply within 90 days of losing coverage under their employer sponsored plan.

We are pleased to announce a **Special MROO Guaranteed Enrollment Offer for Retirees Aged 50 to 75 for a limited time only.**

From April 15 to June 15, 2008, we have a special offer for municipal retirees and their spouses between the ages of 50 and 75 who missed the 90 day guaranteed enrollment period when their group coverage ended. We are giving them another chance to enroll in our Health and Dental Care Plans without medical questions asked. During this limited time period, retirees and their spouse can chose Plan II or Plan III of the MROO Hospital, Health and Dental Care program and **enrollment is guaranteed** regardless of their current or previous health condition(s). Once enrolled they can continue their coverage for life.

Any CUPE retiree who did not purchase private health and dental insurance after their employer benefits ended, or who previously did not qualify for coverage should **act now** and take advantage of this special guaranteed enrollment opportunity.

More information is available at our Booth in the display area.

MROO continues to offer Property and Auto insurance to OMERS Retirees and again I invite you to visit our booth in the display area for brochures and liability card holders from our Property and Auto Insurance Broker.

Membership in MROO

We request that locals pay the \$25 lifetime membership in MROO as a retirement gift to their members receiving an OMERS pension. This membership keeps retirees up-to-date on what is happening to their pensions. Presently Locals 53, 87, 218, 841, 1022, 1358, 1764 and 4400 pay the \$25 lifetime membership. Multiple application forms are available at our booth.

If your local, or district council would like a speaker, or you need more information, please contact MROO at 1-800-595-4497 or Don MacLeod at 1-800-561-4600 and or visit our booth. **MROO welcomes your visit to our booth in the display area.**

CUPE Ontario Retirees' Committee

CUPE Ontario Retirees' Committee urges all locals and district councils to establish Retired Members Associations.

In the National Constitution, "local unions and district councils may establish Retired Members Associations, which shall be chartered by the National Union."

IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR UNION

Having an association of retired union members adds strength to the local union. Retirees can focus on issues like pensions, early retirement and political action.

They can help the local organize in the community when there is a campaign. They can use their experience and status to speak out on your behalf.

IT'S GOOD FOR RETIREES

Retirees can help themselves by working for pension improvements and legislative change on issues such as health care, Old Age Security, the Canada Pension Plan and service to seniors. An association can also play a recreational, social and educational role among retired members.

OMECC, at their conference in March 2006, passed the following resolution.

This is part of the resolution:

"Therefore be it resolved that OMECC encourage local unions and district CUPE councils to establish retiree chapters, and that these chapters affiliate with the Municipal Retirees Organizations Ontario (MROO) and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that OMECC encourage CUPE to create a national umbrella group of CUPE ELDER's (Enhanced Leadership, Development and Equity for Retirees) whose membership will be comprised of all members within CUPE retiree chapters."

Much more information is available from an established Retirees Council.

Durham Region CUPE Council Retirees' Chapter is very successful and would be pleased to pass on information.

Contact Bill Harford 905-623-8440

185 Duke St. RR2 Bowmanville ON L1C 3K3

william.harford@sympatico.ca

Denise Hammond

Co-Chair Pink Triangle Committee

CUPE Ontario's Pink Triangle Committee recognizes the collective strength of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex and queer/questioning (LGBTTIQ) workers and the challenges these members face in the workplace and in our union. The committee is working to organize these workers and their allies. Elected at the Human Rights Conference in November 2007, the committee is preparing a number of campaigns aimed at eliminating transphobia and homophobia in the workplace, the union, and the broader community.

The CUPE Ontario Pink Triangle Committee has worked on:

- Sponsored the University of Toronto forum, "The Sound of Hate: Where sexual orientation, race, dancehall music and human rights collide," held in February 2008.
- Supported the work of the Trans Human Rights Campaign, a project of the Trans Health Lobby Group of the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario (CLGRO).
- Supported EGALE's Safe Schools Campaign by attending the Rouge fundraising event in April 2008.
- Planned 2008 pride events around the province.
- Supported "Opening the Closet on Aging," a conference presented by the Senior Pride Network in April 2008.

Over the next two years, the Pink Triangle Committee will:

- **Push the equality agenda** at local, divisional, and national levels by working collectively with all CUPE Ontario's equity committees to build on the momentum of the January 2008 Equity Retreat.
- **Develop a profile of LGBTTIQ workers within CUPE** by surveying the provincial membership in order to identify structural barriers preventing these members' full inclusion and participation in their workplaces and in the union.
- **Develop strategies for closeted members to safely participate in union activities** without hostility from homophobic members, and create safer environments where people are comfortable to be themselves without the threat of violence by working collectively with district councils.
- **Continue to combat transphobia and homophobia** through member education and direct action.
- **Raise awareness of same-sex partner abuse** as it impacts CUPE members' well-being and mental health and their involvement in workplace and union activities.
- **Challenge homophobic blood and organ donation policies** of the federal government, which target individuals based on sexual orientation rather than unsafe sexual practices.

Through these, and other activities, the Pink Triangle committee will raise the profile of LGBTTIQ members and the value of our collective strength. We are committed to working with

locals from across the province to create positive spaces where all members are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender and sexual orientation.

Invite us to your District Council meeting for a presentation about our committee!

Members:	Local	Sector/Jurisdiction
Carolyn Millington	3798	Social Services
Jesse Newell	3903	University
Graham Potts	3903	University
Martine Stonehouse	4400	School Board
Jane Walsh	2316	Social Services

To contact the committee please email us at pinktriangle@cupe.on.ca.

Executive Board Representative: Denise Hammond
Staff Representative: Joanne Martin

Iliam Burbano

International Solidarity Committee

Global Solidarity is Fundamental to a Progressive & Fighting Union

In the coming two years CUPE Ontario's International Solidarity Committee will continue actively organizing to keep global solidarity struggles' front-and-centre on the union's agenda. The main way that this will be achieved is through rank-and-file member education and mobilization throughout the union's structures/forums and in alliance with union and community allies.

On February 16th 2008, the International Solidarity Committee held a visioning session that was open to all rank-and-file CUPE activists in order to formulate key global solidarity principles and an action plan. This session was attended by nineteen (19) activists representing diverse sectors and locals. It was agreed that the committee should strive to be an open and participatory space for CUPE activists that promotes resistance to the global impacts of neoliberalism, the corporate-privatization agenda, war, militarism, occupation and racism.

Activists who attended the session discussed the history of international solidarity organizing within CUPE and in the labour movement. It was agreed that instead of a top-down charity approach, the committee will continue to promote an activist worker-to-worker model of international solidarity organizing within the union. This will be achieved by: prioritizing member outreach/education; by building the activist base of the committee; by increasing the committee's organizing both within the union and broader community; and by mobilizing members around an action plan and campaigns. The committee will also continue to foster partnerships and alliances with labour and grassroots social movement organizations both locally and in the global south (see "***What We Stand For***").

Tentative Action Plan:

For the coming 6 to 8 months, the International Solidarity Committee will focus its work around the following campaigns:

Action Campaigns:

1. Resolution 50 – Palestine Solidarity Work:

Resolution 50, passed by CUPE Ontario in May 2006, has been one of most important and successful global solidarity campaigns in CUPE's history. The International Solidarity Committee will continue to prioritize and build on this work in opposition to Israeli Apartheid and strengthen ties with Palestinian workers and solidarity organizations in Canada. A focus of this campaign will be member education based on the materials produced by CUPE Ontario and CUPE BC and also highlighting the current conditions of Palestinian public sector workers. The campaign will also look at the possibility of organizing a tour of Palestinian trade unionists to Canada to speak to CUPE members about the situation in Palestine and to explore worker-to-worker projects in Palestine that CUPE Ontario and CUPE National could support.

Within CUPE and the broader labour movement, the committee will continue to proactively build support for the call by Palestinian workers for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it fully complies with international law.

2. Natural Resource Extraction Mining in Latin America and Resistance:

A Canadian owned GOLDCORP INC, mining corporation has been investing and exploiting various mines in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Colombia, which has resulted in serious environmental problems, such as water contamination, deforestation, and in particular displacing indigenous peoples from their communities. Worse yet, this corporation is been using CUPE members' pension plan money (OMERS) to achieve its corporate profits. The campaign will increase awareness of the issue among rank-and-file members through research, education and speaking tours in order to organize and support the resistance movement against mining. Our International Solidarity Committee will make recommendations to CUPE Ontario to work with our municipal locals, OMERS share holders, CUPE National, the Canadian Labour Congress, progressive NGOs and the affected communities in Canada as well as in the South to oppose these mining investments with the goal of stopping mining and eventually defeating this corporation.

3. Health Care Workers' Exchange:

This campaign will build on and strengthen our relationship with our partners in the Americas, in order to create a continental movement in opposition to the privatization of health care in all its forms, the so called free trades, the Private Public Partnership (P3) schemes and the usage of our pension funds. The main goal of the campaign is to oppose the privatization of the health care system and preserve it as outlined by the principles of the Canada Health Act, such as universality, portability, accessibility and publicly administered.

4. Supporting Peace, Anti-War & the Human Rights Agenda:

In the context of Canada's extended counterinsurgency mission in Afghanistan to at least 2011, this campaign will prioritize moving forward the peace and human rights agenda within the union and the broader community. The International Solidarity Committee will continue to build on established links with Canadian peace and anti-war organizations/coalitions, in order to increase rank-and-file member education and mobilization around these important issues. CUPE Ontario's District Labour Councils, Human Rights Committee and Equity Committees, as well, as the CUPE National Global Justice Committee will be some of the spaces/structures used to move this campaign forward. Within the broader labour movement a strategic area of organizing will be to establish links with progressive leaders and activists within the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress.

Locally, this campaign will focus more generally on human rights and equity issues, including the discrimination and exploitation faced by non-status and undocumented workers and communities in alliance with partners like No One Is Illegal.

In solidarity,

Kristy Davidson and Rachel Besharah
Co-chairs Women's Committee

In 2007, the Women's Committee met twice and teleconferenced in between those meetings so that we could work together on our Action Plan which prioritized the following:

- Increasing the visibility and accessibility of the committee by incorporating educational women's activities into existing CUPE events.
- Following up on past work such as the National Women's Task Force and resolutions from CUPE Ontario Convention 2007.
- Creating an annual International Women's Day community event in Ontario.
- Developing a committee that is more reflective of CUPE's diversity.
- Continuing to work on the committees' ongoing mandate of addressing issues of women's inequality in the Union, workplace, and society

In 2007, the Women's Committee submitted three resolutions to the CUPE Ontario Convention. We continue to work with the CUPE Ontario Executive Board in order to enact those resolutions which are summarized here:

- Provide support for the Women Breaking Barriers workshop.
- Initiate a Women's Activist Award within CUPE Ontario.
- Ensure that there are appropriate and engaging youth activities at CUPE Ontario Conventions.

We have been working with the Education Committee and Union Development to develop an education program for 9 – 14 year old children / dependants of delegates and staff at conventions. The resolution described a curriculum of Canadian Labour history, the importance of Unionization, unions' roles in the social justice movement, and the structure and governance of CUPE. It is our hope that this unprecedented way of involving our youth will pave the way for up and coming leaders while breaking down barriers to members' involvement at conventions.

At the 2007 Convention, the Women's Committee and Communications Staff, Valerie Dugale, organized a "Women at the Mic" session. This was a practical and educational event for women who wish to work on their public speaking skills in the context of a CUPE convention. Another "Women at the Mic" session will be offered at this year's convention and will also focus on women's involvement in convention, committees, and elections.

In November 2007, we attended the Human Rights Conference where we arranged for women artists to sing, drum, and perform spoken word pieces about equality. We also helped organize an Equity Roundtable featuring Mary Cornish, a lawyer and Pay Equity activist. Sister Cornish highlighted that women in Ontario still earn 29% less than men despite the fact that we now celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Pay Equity Act. We urge all CUPE members to visit the Equal Pay Coalition's website (www.equalpaycoalition.org) to both support the coalition and learn more about the wage gap which affects women of all ages, races, and educational levels.

We also encourage all CUPE members to access the valuable tools on the coalition's website as well as CUPE's existing resources for Pay Equity and Bargaining Equality.

Also at the Human Rights Conference in 2007, we were able to take our first steps in developing a committee that is more reflective of CUPE's diversity. Interim elections to the Women's Committee were held in each equity-seeking caucus. The new equity representatives to the Women's Committee are listed at the end of this report along with members from the previous committee structure which was based on District Council representation. These changes to the committee structure are the result of a Constitutional Amendment which was passed at CUPE Ontario Convention 2006.

Other changes to the committee's membership include the resignation of long-time committee member, Linda Caldwell; the retirement of CUPE National Representative and the committee's CUPE Ontario Liaison, Judy Wilkings; the loss of our Executive Board Liaison, Helen Kennedy, due to the disaffiliation of Local 79; and the loss of Helen Gibb-Gavel to the ranks of CUPE National Representative. We thank these sisters for their solidarity and work on women's issues and are deeply honoured to have been able to work with them. We welcome and look forward to working with our new committee members, our new Executive Board Liaison, Denise Hammond, and our new CUPE Ontario Liaison.

In December 2007, we submitted a proposal to the CUPE Ontario Executive Board in order to establish an annual event called "Sisterville". We envision "Sisterville" as a community-based mobilization which will happen in a different Ontario community each year on International Women's Day. We continue to work with the Executive Board to bring this project to fruition in the hopes that it will raise awareness of the struggles of women; examine them in a hopeful manner; and support CUPE Ontario's Action Plan by putting equality front and centre in our Union and in our communities.

In January 2008, we attended the Equality Retreat which was the first time that all CUPE Ontario Equality Committees were brought together. We are happy to begin working with our equity-seeking brothers and sisters on an integrated equality agenda within CUPE Ontario.

In March 2008, we worked with the Social Services Conference Planning Committee to organize a "Soiree of Sisters". The 2008 Social Services Conference coincided with International Women's Day and we were happy to be able to support women performers and artists and a woman DJ while fundraising for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and engaging conference delegates on issues such as pay equity, child care, and violence against women.

None of this work would have been possible without the solidarity and many hours of hard work of CUPE National Equality Representative, Joanne Martin, and CUPE National Clerical Staff, Deborah Morris and Gilles Bouffard. We are extremely grateful for their dedication to our committee and are equally inspired by their tireless efforts.

In 2008, we look forward to continuing our work in advancing women's issues in the Union, workplace, and society by organizing a Women's Conference. Please check the CUPE Ontario website (www.cupe.on.ca) for more information about the December 2008 Women's Conference.

We also urge all CUPE members in Ontario to contact the Women's Committee at our e-mail address (ontariowomen@members.cupe.ca) We are eager to support your work on women's issues such as starting a Women's Committee in your Local or District Council. Networking and

information on women's issues and events in Ontario is available through a listserve. You can subscribe to the listserve by e-mailing ON-women-request@grace.cupe.ca .

Thank you for taking the time to read our report which was submitted by the Women's Committee Co-Chairs on behalf of the CUPE Ontario Women's Committee.

Women's Committee Members

Aboriginal Caucus Representative:	Joanne Webb
Pink Triangle Caucus Representative:	Carolyne Millington
Rainbow Caucus Representative:	Chitra Kanhere
Workers with a Disability Caucus Representative:	Jayne Warner
Young Workers Caucus Representative:	Jesse Newell
Hamilton District Council Representative:	Lori Whiteford
Lakehead District Council Representative:	Heather Nolan
Niagara District Council Representative:	Christine Wyley
North Bay District Council Representative:	Corinne Haber
Sudbury District Council Representative:	Christine Merrick