



# Newsletter

November 2007

Rm. 136, St. John's College,  
The University of Manitoba,  
Winnipeg, MB-R3T 2N2

Rm. 136 St. John's College  
Hours 9:00am-3:00pm  
Phone: 474-8804  
Fax: 474-7610  
E-mail: cupe3909@mts.net



Proudly Representing  
Teaching Assistants,  
Grader Markers, Tutors,  
Librarians, Student and  
Sessional Instructors  
at the University of Manitoba

Jason Kelly  
President

Kenneth Adebayo  
VP, Unit 1 (TA)

Suzanne Grierson  
VP, Unit 2 (Sessional)

Suresh Neethirajan  
VP, Social Policy

Roman Yereniuk  
Treasurer

Muthu Bagavathiannan  
Secretary

Lloyd Lawrence  
Office Coordinator

Lini Qiao  
Executive Assistant

Bill Sumerlus  
CUPE National Staff Rep.

Howard Curle  
Staff Benefits Rep.

Suresh Neethirajan  
Health and Safety Rep.

Editor: Muthu Bagavathiannan

Issue 9: November 2007

# 'A higher grade'

Newsletter of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3909

"Union solidarity is based on the principle that union members are equal and deserve mutual respect at all levels" - Equality Statement CUPE Constitution

## In this issue:

- ◆ Highlights from CUPE national convention
- ◆ Train workers on strike in France
- ◆ Announcements
- ◆ Events

## Highlights of CUPE national convention

The 23rd constitutional convention of our union was conducted between the 15th and 19th of October 2007 at the Toronto convention centre. Three delegates from our local (Roman Yereniuk, Kenneth Adebayo and Muthu Bagavathiannan) attended the convention and represented our local in the great bi-annual meeting.

It was one of the largest conventions in our union's history with 2031 delegates. About 40% of those were first-time delegates and 52% of them were sisters. The centerpiece of our strategic directions 2007-2009 policy paper is a multi-million dollar commitment to fight privatization in all of its forms, wherever it arises across the country.

The adoption of the strategic directions 2007-2009 policy paper commits CUPE to develop plans to increase the wages and pension coverage of all low-paid members of our union. The paper also puts environmental issues and the threats posed by global warming on the front burner for our union.

National Executive Board (NEB) elections resulted in doubling the number of sisters elected from three to six (out of 23) NEB seats. The national women's task force work has laid a solid framework for bringing down barriers to women's full participation within our union.

CUPE delegates observed the international day for the eradication of poverty with a spirited rally throughout the streets of Toronto. Our convention stood with 38 million people in 110 countries in a silent dedication 'Stand Up Against Poverty' sponsored by Oxfam and make poverty history, towards the eradication of poverty. This action broke a Guinness world record.



Delegates affirmed the 2001 convention decision to create a separate strike fund, to be used only for strike pay, strike averting campaigns and interest arbitration costs, by defeating a resolution seeking to expand the use of the fund for political campaigns against regressive government attacks. This decision, while approved by a majority of delegates, caused concern among some Ontario delegates who left the convention floor twice, during the last two days of the convention.

In closing, it was an exciting week in Toronto. We thank each and every member who sent the delegates to this wonderful convention.

### **French rail workers on strike!**

The last few days have seen extraordinary struggles taking place in France. These struggles also illustrated the need for the trade union movements to have their own independent media, says Eric Lee of Labourstart.org. France saw a huge wave of strikes this week. This gigantic struggle is the long-awaited counter-attack by unions to a right-wing government with an explicitly anti-union agenda. Eric Lee further adds that the common media coverage has focused entirely on the difficulties faced by commuters, with photos illustrating empty metro stations in Paris to make the point. The mainstream media portrayed only about Sarkozy, the president of France's toughness and the suffering of commuters and not about the actual workers on strike and what they are calling for. Nothing could better illustrate the need for unions to have their own media- including websites such as cupe.ca and labourstart.com.

### **Our executive assistant wins international award!**

A team of University of Manitoba graduate students from the department of food science won the first prize in the international product development competition hosted by American Association of Cereal Chemists International (AACCI) at San Antonio, Texas. They also made a history by becoming the first Canadian team to be invited to the competition and thus the first Canadian team to win this prestigious international competition. Our executive assistant Lini Qiao is one of the team members who made this happen. Congratulations for everyone who brought the name and fame to our university.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Renewal of the collective agreement!**

The Unit 1 collective agreement (TAs, graders, markers, student-instructors) between our local and the University of Manitoba expires on August 31, 2007 and negotiations are on the way for the new agreement. We will provide details as soon as they are available. The bargaining team is scheduling dates with your department representatives for information sessions. These sessions are scheduled during the lunch time and the food will be sponsored from your local. Please meet your representatives and convey your suggestions/concerns regarding the bargaining.

### **By-laws review!**

A by-laws review committee has been formed in an effort to review the current by-laws and suggest any amendments, if necessary. The committee was comprised of the president (Jason Kelly), VP unit 1 (Kenneth Adebayo), VP unit 2 (Suzanne Grierson), VP social policy (Suresh Neethirajan) and chaired by Muthu Bagavathiannan. The committee has identified some of the amendments and they will soon be passed on to the CUPE national office for suggestions before it is put forward for ratification by the members of the local.

## EVENTS

### International day of remembrance and action to end violence against women!

CUPE national is part of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Campaign for Social and Economic Independence for Women. The Campaign calls on the federal government to take action on pay equity legislation, a universal child care program and funding for women's organizations and services, such as shelters for women and their children. The campaign will run from December 6th to March 8th, International Women's Day.

For more information, visit

<http://www.cupe.ca/events.php?submit=viewEvent&eventid=6215&calendar=default>

### Transgender day of remembrance!

CUPE is a recognized leader in the fight for equality. We have fought for and won collective agreement and human rights protections for women, workers of colour, Aboriginal workers, workers with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers. In our commitment to advancing equality of rights, CUPE members have adopted an Equality Statement that reflects our ongoing commitment to fight all forms of harassment and discrimination including sexism, racism, ablist, heterosexism, and transphobia.

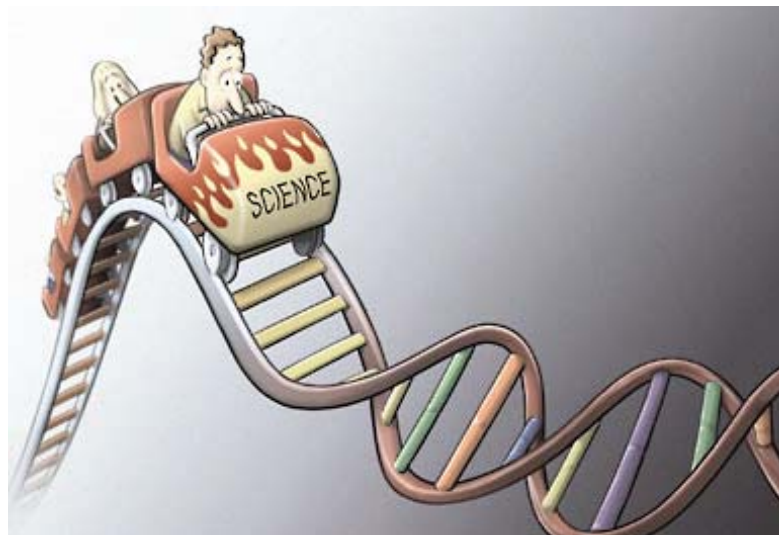
When: November 20, 2007 (All Day)

For more details, please visit

<http://www.cupe.ca/events.php?submit=viewEvent&eventid=6213&calendar=default>

### Health and safety 2007 weeklong school

This weeklong school is a replacement to the bi-annual health and safety conference. When: Sunday November 18, 2007 03:00PM - Friday November 23, 2007 11:30AM (15:00 - 11:30). For more details, visit [http://cupe.ca/workshopsavailableinregio/Southern\\_Ontario\\_Calendar](http://cupe.ca/workshopsavailableinregio/Southern_Ontario_Calendar)



Thanks: Claybennet