



# Newsletter

## February 2009

**Rm. 136, St. John's College,  
The University of Manitoba,  
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2M5**

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# 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



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Librarians, Student and  
Sessional Instructors  
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Editor: Lloyd Lawrence

## BARGAINING FOR A NEW CONTRACT — RATIFICATION VOTE —

There will be a vote on **Monday, February 23, 2009** on an agreement that has been negotiated between the University of Manitoba and CUPE 3909 on behalf of all non-student sessional instructors, librarians, and counselors (i.e., Unit 2). This announcement was recently emailed to all unit members accessible by the University computer system's Mailman program.

Several members have expressed the concern that they do not have details of the agreement on which they are about to vote. It is the intention of the Executive Board that voting take place only in full knowledge of the contents of the agreement negotiated.

Bargaining commenced on November 17, 2008. An update was provided to the membership at the General Membership Meeting held on December 4, 2008. Since bargaining recommenced after the December break, it has moved along smoothly and there is currently an agreement being prepared for inspection.

In anticipation of the vote, an initial announcement was emailed to unit members so that they may arrange their schedules accordingly. When the agreement is available to be read, the membership will be informed.

**Note:** All voting will take place on the Fort Garry Campus:

**228 Helen Glass Building (Nursing)**

**10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Please bring photo/signature identification.**



Posters are being placed on notice boards throughout the Fort Garry campus in the week leading up to the vote. In addition, as Marc Zwelling of Vector Research and Development (Ottawa) says: "Word of mouth is the most effective and powerful form of advertising there is." [[http://ourtimes.ca/Features/article\\_52.php](http://ourtimes.ca/Features/article_52.php)] So all members are urged to encourage their colleagues to join them in making sure that this vote is an expression of the membership's will.

## WARNING! ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING COMING SOON!

Every year at this time, yearning for winter’s end merges with distant-but-approaching exam finals to send some of us into a contemplation of life after Easter. As seasonal daylight returns, the thoughts of a young-hearted and eager CUPE 3909 member naturally turn to running for office. . .

Usually the AGM is scheduled for the end of March, but this year’s business has been particularly time-consuming – what with two contracts to negotiate, a mid-year change of treasurer, by-laws under review, and no recording secretary until recently. However, the by-laws still require that the AGM be held between January 1 and April 30. As the membership must approve the amended by-laws at this meeting, sixty (60) days’ written notice must be given, which means the AGM can now only happen in April.

### Things you should know:

- ▶ If you are going to stand for election, you must be a **member in good standing**. To be a “member in good standing,” you must have worked as a CUPE 3909 member within four (4) months prior to the date of the election.
- ▶ Nomination forms are available from the CUPE 3909 office in the basement of St. John’s College (Room 136, below the main entrance).
- ▶ Nominees must each have two (2) nominators. All nominators must also be **members in good standing**.

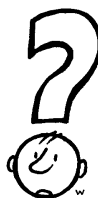


## STAYING ON OR OFF THE CUPE 3909 EMAILING LIST

When you are hired by the University of Manitoba for a position covered by CUPE 3909, your name, email address, and other details are entered into a database maintained along with the university’s computer system and utilized primarily by the CUPE 3909 office coordinator.

Periodically (usually once a month), an automated system updating program compares this database with membership lists and adds or deletes an entry as required. As you may or may not be aware, your membership in CUPE 3909 continues to the end of the academic year after the academic year in

which you were last employed. This means that you will continue to be included in the database with each monthly update until at least a year after you last worked at the university as a CUPE 3909 member.



Since this is an automated university system process, there is little that can be done to accommodate requests to successfully unsubscribe you before your membership lapses. You can, however, set your email filter to dispose of the emails (specify “cupe3909-member-list” as a general search-string), if you do not want to read them.



### Thank you, Lini



Lini Qiao, the executive assistant for CUPE 3909 since September 2007, has left her position at the local to focus on finishing her Master’s in Food Science. She expects to be around for the May convocation, but will eventually be returning home to Shanghai. Lini has taken on many different tasks in her time here, including comparative contract research for negotiations (with some very effective graphical analyses of her results), a long-overdue reorganization of the office filing system, and an ongoing audit of job postings, to name a few. Her hardworking spirit, conscientiousness, and cheerful disposition has been a consistent example of union solidarity and she will be missed.



# Black History Month

(From OPEIU February 2004)

Celebrating Black History Month is an opportunity for CUPE members and staff to acknowledge the contributions of people of African origin in our union, communities, Canada and throughout the world. It is also an opportunity to highlight the importance of building and strengthening membership solidarity, fighting for anti-racism and social and economic justice.



February is Black History/African Heritage Month, now in its 79th year of celebration [2009 is the 84th anniversary]. This month is extremely important to people of African heritage. It is a time to celebrate their contributions, achievements, hard work, determination and strength to overcome obstacles.

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People of African descent have contributed to Canada's workforce and communities since the 17th century. Matthieu da Costa, originally from the Azores, is the first documented person of African descent to set foot on Canadian soil. He landed with the expedition of Pierre de Gua, which founded Port Royal in 1605. Da Costa worked as an interpreter for the French with the Mi'kmaq, suggesting that he had been to Canada on an earlier voyage. Since then there has been a continuous presence of African people in Canada. It is said that Black people were settled in Nova Scotia as early as 1604.



Montréal had a small Black population as early as 1628. The first Black woman in Ontario was probably Sophia Burthen, who was brought to the province around 1764 by Mohawk leader Joseph Brant. The first Black family in Toronto - then called York - was headed by Peter Long, who owned land east of the mouth of the Don River as early as 1793. In 1802, at a time when the city's population was numbered only in the hundreds, there was a Black community of 18 people. As depicted in a National Archives print of an 1807 function in Québec, Black musicians and guests took part in social activities.

In the 1950s, "And Still We Rise" chronicled the Canadian Negro Women's Association's bringing Black History celebrations to Toronto. By 1978, the Black History Society of Ontario peti-

tioned the City of Toronto to have a formal monthly recognition of the celebration. Black History Month is now proclaimed across Canada.

Black history extends into areas of identity building, role models and the sense of empowerment that comes from recognizing some of the notable roles and contributions of Blacks in Canadian Society. Here are just a few:

**William Edward Hall** of Nova Scotia was the third Canadian and first sailor to win the Victoria Cross for valour as well as being the first Black recipient.

**Herb Carnegie** was one of the best Black professional hockey players of his time. But, he was denied the opportunity to play in the National Hockey League. A hockey arena is named in his honour in North York, where he has resided for the past 78 years. Herb skated with the Boston Bruins and Montréal Canadiens but was not permitted to sign with the big clubs because of his skin colour. He skated with hockey stars such as the great Jean Béliveau.

**Portia White**, a renowned concert singer and teacher, established an international reputation as a contralto. When she sang at New York's Town Hall in 1940, one critic wrote: "Hers was the finest contralto voice to reach this city since Marian Anderson." Portia is the niece of the late Jack White, a CUPE National representative known as a Workers' Compensation Board/ Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WCB/WSIB) pioneer for precedent case setting.

**Danny Braithwaite**, with the help of his contemporaries, successfully challenged Toronto's Board of Education to remove the book, "Little Black Sambo" from its schools in 1956. Braithwaite's friends included Jack White, who worked diligently with him to get the book removed from schools. Viola Desmond was arrested for resistance in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, when she failed to adhere to racist segregation policy. Africans and African descendants were barred from sitting on the ground level of the theatre with whites. Ms. Desmond chose not to sit in the balcony and was arrested for defrauding the Town of New Glasgow of one cent. The news of her resistance resonated throughout the province and across Canada.

**Dr. Carrie Best** was an Equality rights activist known for subscribing to the motto "lifting as we climb". She challenged racism and discrimination in education, politics and communities throughout the province of Nova Scotia and to the highest levels of Government in Canada. Dr. Best is recognized as a pioneer and pillar in Equality rights work in Canada.



# NEWS FROM ELSEWHERE

## Lower or end tuition fees

### Bulletin/CAUT/CALM

More than half of Canadians believe tuition fees should be lowered, and almost 60 per cent believe tuition fees should be eliminated over time.

Support for eliminating fees is strongest in the Atlantic provinces, where more than 70 per cent of respondents said tuition fees should be abolished.

The Harris Decima poll, commissioned by CAUT and the Canadian Federation of Students also revealed that Canadians want more accountability over how federal education dollars are spent by the provinces, with more than 60 per cent of respondents saying conditions should be attached to federal transfers intended for universities and colleges.

When it comes to dealing with the economic crisis, most polled said the government should introduce stimulus measures that focus on direct job creation, with 43 per cent choosing investing in infrastructure to create jobs as the single most important measure.

Investing in education and research came second, chosen by 25 per cent of respondents, while 19 per cent chose tax cuts as the best way of providing benefit to the economy.



## Economic crisis is reason to reject P3s by Bev Pausche/The Report/HAS/CALM

While governments around the world direct billions of tax dollars into corporate bailouts, governments in Canada continue to push dependence on the private sector to build hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, roads, bridges and other public infrastructure.

Public-private partnerships (P3s) result in higher debt, due to higher private borrowing costs, extra service fees for the public and lower quality services. Handing over control of our public services to the corporate sector means we have less say

in how the services are delivered and the corporation cuts corners to deliver higher profits. Patients and citizens become customers and taxpayers become tenants.

Given all the coverage of the financial crisis, it's hard to believe we haven't seen much attention devoted to how government programs and services are exposed to debt and private capital by P3s.

They're starting to talk about it in the UK, where the private financing initiative (PFI) model has been used for decades to finance, build, operate and manage a whole host of public services formerly owned and managed by the public sector. Canada's P3s system is modeled on the British PFI.

## Public services over tax cuts

### PublicValues.ca/CALM

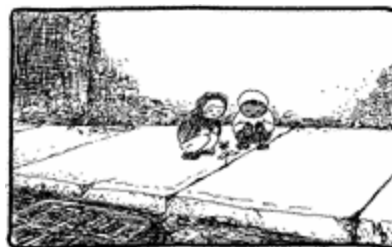
A new poll shows broad support for a social safety net in tough times. Canadians want to see a stimulus package with investment in public services at the top of the agenda.

The Nanos research poll commissioned by the National Union of Public and General Employees asked Canadians about

- how the government is handling the economy
- running a deficit during the current economic crisis
- whether cutting government services will make the economic crisis better or worse
- the importance Canadians place on services like health care, social services, education, and justice.

When asked how important it is for the government to increase investment in public services like health care, education, social services and the justice system during an economic downturn, 70 per cent of respondents ranked it important (25.3 per cent) or very important (44.5 per cent) compared with nine per cent who felt it was not important.

In addition, a majority of Canadians also said that cutting government services would make the economic downturn worse.



Graphics courtesy of CALM

# NEWS FROM ELSEWHERE

## News from Canada's Unions

Reflecting improved relationships over past tumult, UNITE HERE negotiated new contract with the Canadian Niagara Hotels that improves wages and working conditions for some 450 workers. They are employed at Sheraton on the Falls, Crowne Plaza Niagara Falls-Fallsview and Skyline Inn. "Our relationship with this hotel has been not very positive, so having a peaceful, positive, productive resolution to a new contract is a change for the parties and something we're really pleased with," said Alex Dagg, Canadian co-director of UNITE HERE. Union has had a bitter history with the hotels. In early 2008, for example, actor Danny Glover was fined \$100 for trespassing at the Sheraton on the Falls while there supporting a worker's union labor rally. Current pact was concluded without arbitration or dispute.

## Canadian Auto Workers union Local

**1285** members ended three-week blockade of SKD Automotive in Brampton after judge issued court order to force workers to stand down. Injunction gives General Motors permission to remove \$1 million in auto parts equipment. Union officials expect SKD to file for temporary protection from creditors which will give company time to seek potential buyers for the plant's assets and possibly keep it open. Workers blocked the plant after GM scrapped its contracts with the firm. They feared they would be left with no financial compensation if the company suddenly closed. "We couldn't win this legally," CAW staff representative Paulo Ribeiro said.

**Ottawa transit strike continued** after workers Jan. 9 rejected city's latest offer by 75% vote. Some 2,300 bus drivers, mechanics and dispatchers, represented by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 279, struck city's Transpo system Dec. 10 over work

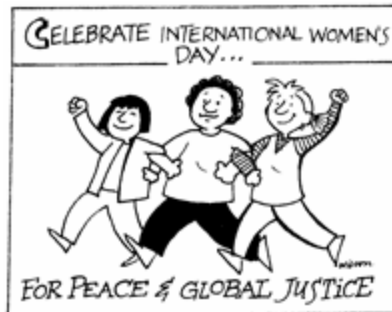
scheduling, route assignment, hours of work and working conditions. "Despite their personal sacrifices they are clearly saying we want a fair collective agreement," said Local 279 president André Cornellier. Union accused the city of spending "thousands of taxpayers' dollars" on a media campaign which "only hampered the bargaining process and has spread misinformation."

**Strike by 3,300 contract faculty, teaching assistants** and graduate assistants at York University, which began Nov. 6, continued at press time. Walk-out at York University, Canada's third largest, has shut down classes for 50,000 full-time students. Workers are represented by Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3903 in three bargaining units. York University Faculty Association, meanwhile, continued "to support its striking co-workers," president Arthur Hilliker said Jan. 17. Union represents full-time professors who are not on strike. According to news reports, number of Ontario high school students applying to York University for next September is down nearly 15 per cent over this time last year.

*AIL Labour Letter February 2009*

(Note: The strike at York University ended with back-to-work legislation passed by the Ontario government on January 29, 2009. CUPE 3903 workers resumed classes on February 2, 2009. For further details, go to the strike website at <http://www.3903strike.ca/>.)





Send your comments, suggestions, and contributions to:

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**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**



**3909**