

FEBRUARY
2020

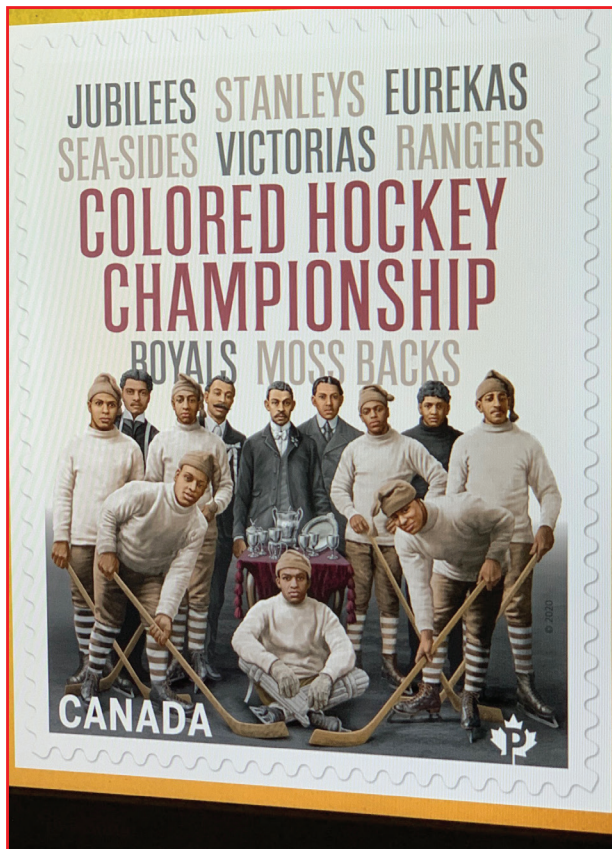


THE MEMBERS' VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF CUPE LOCAL 15, VANCOUVER MUNICIPAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WORKERS
We are on the unceded Coast Salish Territories of the x̱w̱məθkw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh)

Celebrating Black History Month in Vancouver

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THE HISTORY, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND CULTURE OF BLACK CANADIANS



FEBRUARY 2020

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

February 26, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.
Room 5, Italian Cultural Centre,
3075 Slocan Street, Vancouver
(@ Grandview Hwy) Free parking.

UNDER DISCUSSION:

- Election of Parks, Ray-Cam, Britannia, Bargaining Committee Member Alternate
- Bylaw Amendments
- Committee and Staff Reports

General Meetings provide all members with an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect the union.

Child care assistance & ASL Interpreter will be available upon request.

Recently I had the honor to be a panelist for the City of Vancouver recognition of Black History month.

The theme was Home, Homelessness, and Belonging and Being Black in Vancouver. Initially I was skeptical about the topic of homelessness as at the time I didn't see how being Black and homeless related to Black History month. Nevertheless, I agreed to be on the panel and I am happy I did.

I would like to thank Melissa Crump for being our emcee for the evening. I would also like to thank Anika Gibson, Founder of Meanwhile Black in Vancouver, Mebrat Beyene, Executive

Director of the WISH Drop in Society, and Felix-Marie Badeau, the Project Manager at Hendrix Place (Portland Hotel Society) Community Services for being on the panel with me and for their insightful contributions.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Christine Boyle, Deputy Mayor and Maurice Earle from Canada Post for their presentation of the newest stamp. This stamp honours a part of our Canadian history from 1895-1930s - the Colored Hockey Championship.

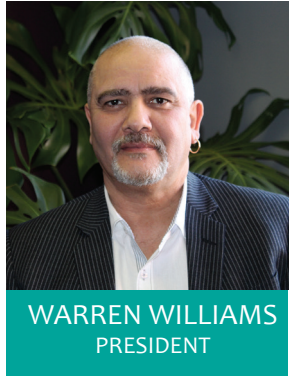
Check out www.nhl.com/news/canada-post-honors-maritimes-colored-hockey-championship/ to view it.

Return undeliverable
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CUPE Local 15
545 W. 10th Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 1K9



Acknowledging the rich Black history we have

By Warren Williams, President



WARREN WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

When we talk about home, being Black, and finding home in Vancouver what defined this for me was music. I recently attended Legends of Motown at the Queen Elizabeth Theater and would like to give a shout out to or

members who work there and make it such a great place to go to. It reminded me of why I decided to make Vancouver home.

At one time this city drew many top name Black performers such as the Temptations, Bill Withers, Marvin Gaye, Tina Turner, and John Lee Hooker to name a few. It was a dream come true as it created a sense of belonging which is something that is now missing or not as easy to find.

At one time I could go to many places in the city and would find Black community, folks hanging out, laughing, sharing stories, connecting. Now we are spread out across the lower mainland with nothing that really brings us together. I use to think it was because of my age, you know - been there done that. It seems it is deeper than that. I learned from the other panelists that there is definitely a void in our community.

We need something that unites us, something that says I belong, and something that says

I am not alone. Vancouver is a great place to work, live and play and I love this city. It's true for me, I feel there is a piece missing and I don't think I'm alone nor do I think I am an innocent bystander.

Somehow we (the Black community) misplaced the importance of gathering to share our history with each other and with our youth so that history can be shared with others. It's important to know who we are and how we

its people; I am just acknowledging that finding home in Vancouver is not easy. It takes work to build community and keep it vibrant and alive.

I would like to say "all we need to do is..." but it's not that simple. I wish it was. As with anything worth having it requires work and in terms of the Black community we have faltered in our pursuit of community. The questions are why, what happened, and how did we misplace ourselves? I don't know the answer. All I know



got here, how we contribute to this wonderful place, and to be proud of being Black. Don't misunderstand. I'm not down on Vancouver or

is like the panelists and those in the audience "I'm Black and I'm Proud".

Secretary Treasurer's Report

By Sally Bankiner, Secretary-Treasurer



SALLY BANKINER
SECRETARY-TREASURER

The warmest of greetings to everyone on this chilly February day! We just had our first couple of snowfalls for the year and we really can't complain – or can we? I am remembering those days when we took

job action in 2007 and what it was like being rained on, all day, every day, wet, cold and frustrated out there on the picket line!

Today I am thinking about the "solidarity" we show with all union members who are in those same circumstances today. If at all possible, when you see one of those picket lines during your travels, maybe stop by and bring a hot pot of soup with you and donate a few hours of

your time to show them your support! Let them know that you bring the love and solidarity of CUPE Local 15 with you and that we all stand together, united as unionists.

This year as several of our sectors head into collective agreement bargaining with our various employers, remember that your individual and collective support of your staff and bargaining committees make all the difference in the world in how things turn out at the conclusion of negotiations. Although most of us will never know what it is like to be involved in bargaining face to face with your employers, try to imagine what it is like sitting across from someone who just says "no, we are not interested in that" and sets it aside on a pile as they read your proposals that you poured your heart and soul into for many, many months. And the most important thing to remember is that the employer doesn't come to the table to offer you anything! The Bargaining Committee bargains to get you everything you have and pay increases are just one of the many proposals on the table. It is difficult work they do, so attend those meetings you are asked to attend to have your agreement

explained to you so you can make informed decisions on whether to accept or reject what is being presented. It's your opportunity to ask questions and get answers.

You will see elsewhere in this issue some letters of appreciation from stewards who attended the Canadian Labour Congress week long winter school. Please take a read of those articles and take to heart what they are saying as our stewards really do appreciate the funds you authorize for educational training opportunities and they are expressing their thanks to you for offering that opportunity.

We still have a couple of spaces in our Intro to Stewarding course on March 4, 5 and 6 and also in April and May so please reach out if you are interested. If you miss the first one, we will get you into the next course. Also, if you are on your worksite OH&S Committee, please contact the union office for more information on what great courses are available for training opportunities paid for by your union.

CLC Winter School

Dear Members,

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity provided by CUPE 15 and its members in allowing me to take the course "Facing Management Effectively" at the CLC Winter School in Harrison Hot Springs.

The course gave me a broader perspective on the economic, political, and social forces that shape relationships between union and management.

I learned how to pay close attention to roles and rights, and to consider the balance of power, bias, and privilege in relationships between members and the management. Putting our new knowledge in practice through role playing, helped me sharpen my skills in communication, analyzing, strategizing, and critical thinking.

I was very pleased to meet other members from different sectors and locals. It helped open my mind to different views and approaches to the same issues while broadening my perspective on many issues.

This course has empowered me to face management with more knowledge and confidence.

I am sincerely appreciative of all the members and CUPE 15 for providing this enriching experience and I intend to go forward, serving our members to the very best of my abilities.

In solidarity,
Tahmi Yazdanyar, VSB

Thank You

On behalf of our board, I am writing to express our gratitude for your donation in past years to the BC Labour Heritage Centre. We hope you will continue to support us in 2020.

An important achievement in 2019 was the completion of a commitment we made in 2018. With the proceeds from sales and royalties from the publication of our book, every public secondary school library in the province has received a complimentary copy of "On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement". In addition, our Labour History Curriculum Working Group is busy writing lesson plans that incorporate the book into course content. Our mission is to recognize and share the contributions of working people and their unions to the building of this province is made possible because of your support. We are looking forward to another busy year and will be writing to you again soon with details of an exciting new project.

Thank you again for being part of this important work. It is greatly appreciated.

In solidarity,
Joey Hartman
Chair, BC Labour Heritage Centre

Donation Thanks

Thank you for the donation of \$500 in 2019. Your support builds the voice of progressive Canadians and others struggling for justice around the world. We recognize that you receive far more requests for funding than you can address and we are proud to be recipients of your support.

Your support helps us to provide coverage of issues important to the labour movement across the country – stories that Canadians need to know, and that are skewed or ignored altogether by corporate media.

2019 has been a strong year for rabble.ca as we continue to add more voices and features to the site. We are thrilled to have your support and partnership as we move forward.

In solidarity,
Kim Elliott
Publisher, rabble.ca

Thank you for your participation. Your support helps us to publish our annual Military Service Recognition Book, to help recognize and honour the many brave veterans of British Columbia and the Yukon, who have served our country so well.

This annual publication goes a long way to help the Legion in the job as the "Keepers of Remembrance", so that none of us forget the selfless contributions made by our veterans.

Equally important, is that the proceeds raised are also used by the Legion to improve services to veterans and the more than 150 communities served by the Legion throughout BC and the Yukon.

The Legion is recognized as one of Canada's largest community service organizations, as they are an integral part of the communities in which they reside. This project ensures the Legion's continued success in providing these very worthwhile services.

Thank you for your support.
BC/Yukon Command, Royal Canadian Legion

On behalf of the Evelyne Saller Centre and its volunteers, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for your generous donation to our Christmas Hamper Program. Every year during the Christmas season we put together food hampers for our volunteers in recognition of the time they commit to helping out at the Centre and in the community.

Our volunteers, who live in the Downtown Eastside, have very few resources and your donation helped the Centre to provide 18 grocery give certificates valued at \$50 each. From all the volunteers and staff at the Evelyne Saller Centre, thank you again for your support. It certainly made a difference.

In solidarity,
Jacques Massé
Volunteer Coordinator, Evelyne Saller Centre

decisions

The Executive Decided

At the January 21, 2020 Executive and Society Board meeting the following decisions were made:

- To approve the attendance of a City et al Bargaining Committee member at CUPE Local 391 bargaining with the employer as an observer.
- To sustain the decision of the Grievance Committee regarding an appeal to the Executive by a member.
- To donate \$200 to the Council of Canadians.
- To participate in the City of Vancouver Family Fun Fair and fund the rental of a bouncy castle.

The Members Decided

At the General Membership Meeting on January 22, 2020 the members in attendance made the following decisions:

- To use all twenty credentials to send a full delegation to the CUPE BC Convention.
- To receive the financial statement to November 30, 2019.
- To elect the following members to represent CUPE Local 15 at the 57th Annual Convention of CUPE BC: Michele Alexander, Sally Bankiner, Starla Bayley, Allison Bell, Aaron Cook, Subrata Dasgupta, Kamal Gautam, Lilianna Gut, Bo Gembarsky, Azeem Kazi, Ravina Lal, Henry Lee, Emi Perera, Donna Petersen, Santino Scardillo, Cynthia Schadt, Emma Somers, Julianna Torjek, Desiree Williams, Warren Williams.

VSB JOB SHARE OPPORTUNITY

1. SSA looking to work Monday and Tuesday with a Permanent SSA starting September 2020. Please contact Judy at judithlynn57@yahoo.ca or jheintz@vsb.bc.ca.
2. SSA looking to share permanent position at Hastings Elementary two days a week beginning September 2020 (deadline to hand in application with shared SSA is April). Please contact Christine Ham at 778-991-1516 or cham@vsb.bc.ca.

Mental Health First Aid at the CLC Winter School

by Aaron Cook, CUPE 15 Trustee and OH&S Committee Member

I had the opportunity to attend CLC Winter School at Harrison for Week One and the class I took was Mental Health First Aid. I had many thoughts and insights going into this course with my own firsthand experience in dealing with mental health during my time working security on the Downtown Eastside and also in my personal and family life with my own issues. Having been to doctors, psychologists, and counsellors myself, I thought I was quite well prepared with a lot of information and experience for these topics. Oh how I was so very wrong.

The first day was quite light and fun with the usual get to know others type of friendly banter and games. There was a light atmosphere in the air from being away from home and work and the meeting of new people helped to keep an almost fresh restorative feeling. We were all away from all the family and work obligations and it was shaping up to be a great relaxing time.

The next day we dove right into mental health problems and mental illness. We learned about the differences between the two and that one in five people in Canada will experience some problem with their mental health in the course of a year. This ranges from common things such as depression and anxiety to more complex things like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Having reflected on the numbers that one in five people will experience something in any given year it was talked about that those numbers are grossly under represented. I would argue that it might be closer to one in three or even more. The one in five number is of reported and known cases where people have spoken up or sought help for said problems. Our class discussed how many may not have stood to be counted in such a survey.

Over the week we had classes on topics that included mood-related disorders such as bipolar disorder and depression, anxiety and trauma related disorders such as social anxiety disorder, PTSD and phobia disorders, substance related disorders, dealing with concurrent disorders where people have a mental health problem or illness and are also dealing with substance abuse or misuse, and psychotic disorders such as people living with schizophrenia and psychotic depression. It was an information packed week that got real heavy real quick from that first light day being the only light day.

The resounding information on each of those different days remained the same and was summed up with one acronym, **ALGEE**:

- A**ssess the risk for suicide and/or harm
- L**isten non-judgmentally
- G**ive reassurance and information
- E**ncourage the person to get appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage other supports

These steps in dealing with mental health can make a difference in another person's life. We spend (generally) five days and a 35-40 hour work week together as co-workers and union brothers and sisters. We get to know our office or pod mates fairly well on many different levels. The course brought to light the need to be mindful of the people around you and recognize when others are having off days or things that might be different with them. The steps also encourage us to have those conversations with people and ask

them how they are doing or what is going on with them. Even if they don't respond to the openness of these conversations at least they know the door is open and available to them should they have a need to talk.

Mental health, in my opinion, is one of the most crucial issues that we face in the workplace. Twenty percent of all sick leaves in Canada are related to mental health and 30% of all disability insurance claims are related to mental illnesses. One Desjardins Financial National Health Survey (2007) reports that 34% of respondents had seen a colleague go on leave for a mental health problem and only 26% said that their colleague came back to work after the leave. These numbers are staggering and are only getting worse.



For myself, I think the biggest take away was to not judge a book by its cover. We can see a broken leg by noticing someone on crutches or with a cast. We can see a surgery by its scar or bandages that are apparent. Mental health problems and mental illnesses do not always have something noticeably apparent about them. Outwardly someone can look fine and internally they may be suffering terribly. It doesn't have to be a sad face or tears; people can mask internal issues with smiling and joking behavior.

The course was nothing short of amazing and insightful. It was led by some first class facilitators who let the class take its own form and run with it. I encourage anyone interested to look into taking this course either the two day BC Federation of Labour course or the CLC Winter Weeklong School course. It has encouraged and empowered me to keep on my OH&S path and to help fight for those that may not have the strength to do so on their own.

At the CLC Winter school there is a tradition of choir. All the classes have to come up with a relevant and original song and then perform it before the entire school. There are judges and all sorts of comedic relief. Our class discussed songs like Staying Alive and other fun type songs we could possibly do. I brought up to

the class that mental health wasn't super fun and light and maybe we should do something a bit more serious. I came up with the suggestion of doing a version of The Sounds of Silence by Simon & Garfunkel. The words already were on topic and it is a bit of a dark song anyhow. They loved the idea and the class formed a music committee of sorts to work out the wording. We performed the song before the school and absolutely crushed it. After the dust had settled, we won the choir competition. Judges and people who have been going to the CLC Winter School for 30 plus years had said to our class that the song and words were the best they have seen in the time they have been coming there. I personally counted at least 15 people in the crowd that were in tears and we garnered a standing ovation from the rest of the school.

Here is the song written by CLC Winter School Week 1 Mental Health First Aid Class, sung to the tune of The Sounds of Silence by Simon & Garfunkel.

*Hello depression, my old friend
We've come to talk to you again
Mental illness is so hard to see
Makes you feel you might never be free
And the stigma, that is planted in our brains
Must not remain
It's time to break the silence*

*The suffering can feel alone
Can be afraid to leave their homes
I was approached by a member today
Who shared his pain in a meaningful way
And when I spoke to the member he told me
something wasn't right
A restless night
We're here to break the silence*

*We all applied to Winter School
You should try it, it was cool
So glad we took mental health first aid
It's a great course that was union paid!
Now we can recognize, respond and refer,
Do you concur?
It's time to break the silence*

Martial Law Not Over in Mindanao

THE PLIGHT OF THE LUMAD INDIGENOUS PEOPLE CONTINUES

International Solidarity Report
by Kamal Gautam, City Sector Representative

In July 2016, marking the 40th year anniversary of the Algiers Universal Declaration, comrade Beth Dollaga and I, along with other *Canadian and international delegates participated in the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) conference and joined the International Solidarity Mission (ISM) in Davao, Philippines. It aims to build on the gains and strengthen efforts to forge international solidarity, not only for the Filipino people, but also for all struggling peoples of the world.

The Algiers Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples recognizes the indivisible link between individual and collective rights; the interrelations between economic, cultural, and civil and political rights; and the right of the oppressed peoples of the world to fight for their liberation (Algiers, July 4, 1976).

Today, these rights enshrined in the Algiers Declaration are more gravely threatened than ever with the rising state sponsored terror and militarism aimed at pushing back the historical gains made by the peoples' movement in favour of corporate interests.

A few weeks ago, I was disheartened to learn of the continuing plight of the Lumad Indigenous People. These are the same people we met at the 2016 ISM, taking refuge at a church sanctuary.

They continue to experience forcible displacement and politically motivated violence linked to **multi-national corporate interests in the region. Military harassment of ***Lumad schools has worsened after President Duterte's declaration of martial law in Mindanao in May 2017.



We condemn the closure of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) sanctuary for Indigenous people in Davao City, calling it "an act of blatant harassment against displaced Lumad and those who provide sanctuary and support for distressed communities."

According to the Alliance for Advancement of People's Rights (Karapatan), the church compound currently provides sanctuary to at least 500 Lumad residents from militarized communities. Through the years, there have been attempts by government officials and state forces to forcibly enter the facility, burn down its structures and abduct those who sought shelter in the compound. Member of indigenous communities in the compound have already been subjected to numerous attacks. Their homes and communities have been bombed and pillaged by soldiers and paramilitary groups. Their schools were also forcibly closed. Their leaders have been hunted and some were killed. These attempts

to continuously harm them and put their lives at risk need our strong condemnation. Mindanao and the entire country continue to suffer under a de facto martial law crisis. We call on institutions, humanitarian and rights organizations, and communities to continue to defend people's rights amid such attacks.

**CUPE Local 15 and CUPE BC supported and enabled the participation of Kamal Gautam and Beth Dollaga to attend the 2016 ICHRP Conference and International Solidarity Mission.*

**Canadian mining giants Oceana Gold and Toronto Ventures Inc. have been the subject of a major research study done by the Institute of Policy Studies and Mining Watch Canada in relation to the companies' dangerous and irresponsible mining activities.*

****The Alliance of Concerned Teachers is a CUPE National Global Fund partner.*

2020 VDLC Women's Committee

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY DINNER

Tickets Available!

Fraserview Hall, 8240 Fraser Street
MARCH 8th, Doors open at 5:15 p.m.
Welcome: 6:00 p.m.
An ASL Interpreter will be on site.
Speaker: April Sims from the Washington State Labour Council

Email the Secretary-Treasurer at sbankiner@cupe15.org by noon on March 2nd noting IWD in the subject line. If there is more interest than tickets available a draw will be held.

City et al Bargaining Committee News

The City et al Bargaining Committee would like to welcome our newest member, Ravina Lal, to the committee.

After the next general membership meeting we will have our full complement of committee members when facing the employer. By the time you read this article, if all goes according to plan, your City et al Bargaining Committee will have already met with the employer, signed off on our protocol agreement, and exchanged proposals.

The committee will strive to keep the members posted on the status of your bargaining and highlight any major concerns when we are able to in a prompt and efficient manner.





The Members' Voice is published nine times a year for members of CUPE Local 15 - Vancouver Municipal, Education and Community Workers. The deadline for submissions is 9:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. All submissions may be edited for brevity and clarity. Signed articles and letters do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of CUPE Local 15.

CUPE Local 15

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Local 15 is a chartered affiliate of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and is also affiliated with the CUPE British Columbia Division, CUPE Metro District Council, the Vancouver & District Labour Council, and the BC Federation of Labour. CUPE 15 is a member of the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).

CUPE Local 15 Executive Board Table Officers:

President: Warren Williams
Secretary-Treasurer: Sally Bankiner
1st Vice President: Santino Scardillo
2nd Vice President: Gaye Fowler

Sector Representatives:

City: Kamal Gautam, Ravina Lal
College/University: Alex Fowler, Rose Palozzi
Cultural: Noel Graves
Health/HSSCBA: Allison Bell
Health/HSPBA: Mia Nickel
Parks: Kyle Larson, Starla Bayley
K-12: Carley Romas, Cynthia Schadt

Trustees:

Donna Petersen, Michele Alexander, Aaron Cook

Staff Representatives:

Kathie Currie, John Geppert, Steve Salsman, Gail Johnson, Joy Tullos

Office & Administrative Staff:

Mark Gloumeau, Accounting Coordinator
Rosemary Matheson, Office Manager
Barbara Simpson, Office Assistant
Nadia Thibault, Office Assistant
Nancy Strider, Accounting Assistant
Tia Tang, Office Assistant

Building Service Worker:

Elaine Duan

CUPE National Representatives:

Chris Losito, Patrick Barbosa

The CUPE Local 15 office is very old and unfortunately not accessible. For our members with mobility challenges please note that the office is on the 3rd floor and there is no elevator. If you are attending an appointment or meeting with one of our staff, please contact them in advance to make alternate arrangements for the meeting place or call the Secretary-Treasurer at 604-879-4671.

We sincerely apologize and want you to know we are working very hard to rectify the accessibility issues with our building.

Vancouver Art Gallery Strike – One Year Later

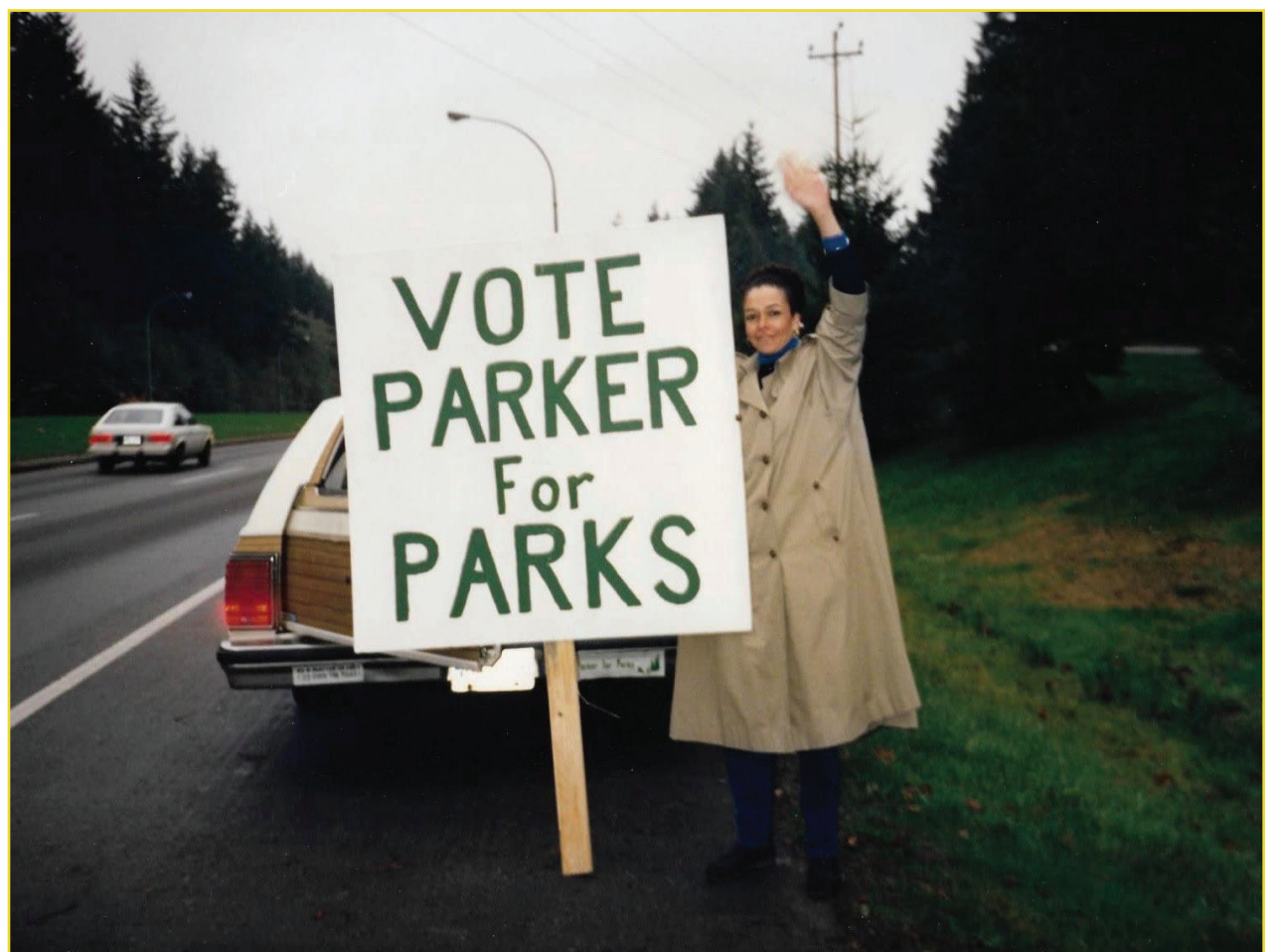
by Noel Graves, Chief Shop Steward, Cultural Sector Representative, and Chair of the Vancouver Art Gallery Bargaining Committee

On February 5, 2019 CUPE Local 15 members at the Vancouver Art Gallery went on strike. After 18 months of negotiations talks broke down and the committee led their fellow workers out onto the picket line. While on strike we saw the support of union workers, political advocates, and the arts community at large pour into our daily lives. Fortunately we were able to reach a mediated settlement quickly and were back to work after only one week.

This past year we have seen a lot of change at the Gallery. Senior managers have resigned, the Director has stepped down and our voice is being heard. Looking back, many of us feel we've come a long way since the job action and positive changes are being made. This would never have happened if it wasn't for all of your support. I thank you greatly and look forward to standing by your side, if ever needed.



Vancouver Art Gallery, February, 2019



Listen to Valerie Jerome at the MOV

Black History Month Lecture hosted by the Vancouver Historical Society – February 27, 2020 @ 7:30PM @ Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut Street (Vancouver).

While we know the newsletter will come out halfway through this important month, there will still be time to catch this great event being held at our worksite of the Museum of Vancouver. Come join in the celebration of Black voices in Vancouver. Valerie Jerome – athlete, educator, mentor, political activist, and active community member – recalls her

family's record of triumphs and frustrations in the context of systemic racism at our February lecture. She also looks at how the conversation about being Black in Canada and Vancouver is changing, exactly the topic we need in Black History Month. Valerie Jerome first came to public attention at the Pan-American Games in 1959 and the Rome Olympics the following year. Her late brother Harry Jerome held the title of 'fastest man alive' in the 1960s. Since then she's had a distinguished career in education and Green Party politics.